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EMBRACING CHANGE:

EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



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한국어 IN MELAYU!

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ABSTRACT:

한국어 (Han-gu-geo) in Melayu! is an eBook inspired by all the other original Korean textbooks available in the market. When it comes to determining one's language proficiency, it is generally based on the four basic aspects of language which includes reading, writing, listening and speaking. As the Korean language is becoming a more apparent trend amongst the youth these days with the emergence of K-Pop in the entertainment industry, quite a number of teenagers have sought to self-learn the said language. Therefore, this eBook aims to provide infographics and notes to learn the fundamentals of Korean. When researching the Korean textbook market in Malaysia, most of them are mainly written in English. This might have contributed to the demand for Malay-Korean books. This is the fundamental idea behind the design and creation of 한국어 in Melayu! This eBook has the potential to help the Malay-speaking community who are interested in learning Korean by providing them with the experience of engaging in active learning activities by providing a tactile experience. In addition to this, the reason for it being chosen to be published as an eBook instead of a physical copy, is because publishing a book online makes it more easily accessible for the community.

Keywords: Korean; Malay; eBook; self-learning; foreign language

1. INTRODUCTION

Primarily, one of the major factors of the spreading of Korean culture is due to the overwhelming spread of the Hallyu Wave. According to Najwa & Samsudin (2019), the Hallyu wave has become a global phenomenon as a result of its globalisation from the early 1990s. Hallyu wave refers to the popularity of Korean culture and entertainment that consists of K-pop, K-dramas, and Korean films, reality shows and many more. Hence, this Hallyu wave has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of people interested in Korean cultures, language, fashion and food. As day passes, we can see more and more people, particularly youths, being influenced by this phenomenon of Hallyu, especially with the rise of social media, such as YouTube and Instagram, causing huge transnational media consumption. As stated by Lee (2018), the demand for Korean language lessons has been steadily increasing due to the popularity of K-Pop. As a matter of fact, according to the annual Duolingo Global Language Report written by Blanco (2021), Korean is observed to be the second fastest-growing language in the world in 2020. She also added that the Korean language is also the world's seventh-most popular language to study on the *Duolingo* language learning app. This is once again clearly due to the influence of Korean culture leading to many interested in learning the said language.

Malaysians are also seen to be current with the trend as many Malaysian youths have expressed their interest in the Korean language. As stated by Nikitina et al. (2020), the popularity of Korean pop-culture in Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries has caused an uproar of interest towards all things Korean which inevitably led to the introduction of Korean language courses in universities. Other than attending language courses in universities, there are many language centres in Malaysia that allow language learners to learn directly or indirectly online with tutors that offer Korean as part of their syllabus. However, these private classes are unfortunately on the higher end of price. On top of that, many are unable to commit to these classes as they are already burdened by other daily commitments and responsibilities. Therefore, most of the time, language learners settle for self-learning.

Self-learning a new language has never been an easy task. In fact, Hartshorne et al. (2018) discovered that learning a second language after the age of ten makes it nearly difficult for learners to achieve native-level fluency. This is due to the effort and energy required in order for our brain to adapt to switching across linguistically complex structures. Our brains are aware of the similarities between languages, and will continuously employ the syntax and characteristics of our mother's tongue to make sense of a similarly-structured foreign language (Weber et al., 2016). With the rise of technology, self-studying a language is not as hard as it used to be thanks to the abundance of online and offline materials available through language learning apps such as *Duolingo* and *Papago*, as well as text books such as *Vitamin Korean*. However, as a Malay-speaking community, the difficulty doubles as these resources are inconvenient for the Malay-speaking community as these resources are mainly in English. As a matter of fact, there are not as many Malay materials to utilise when it comes to learning Korean. This would be quite discouraging, especially for language learners with very little English proficiency.

1.1 Project Objective/Purpose

한국어 in Melayu! is an online educational book aimed for those who are interested in learning basic Korean. The main purpose of this project is to provide learning resources to everyone, especially the Malay community who are lacking in English proficiency but at the same time are interested in learning the Korean language. This book, unlike other Korean textbooks out there, provides explanations in both Malay and English, aiming to cater to those who are interested in learning but are not as fluent in English. Moreover, this eBook aims to create accessible language learning resources for language learners out there, providing a more updated and improved syllabus. Having three languages (Korean-Malay-English) in one book also expands the market and widens the target audience not only for those who are not as fluent in English but also to anyone who would want to learn basic Korean in general. Furthermore, this project also plays a huge role in helping the author in terms of polishing and sharpening entrepreneurship skills. Through this project, the author is given the opportunity of gaining experience in handling production and marketing components of this project, which would be valuable to their life skills.

1.2 Entrepreneurial Opportunities

The entrepreneurial opportunity from this project is to cater towards the consumers' demands of wanting a book that can make it easier for the Malay-speaking communities to learn a new language. This includes providing Malay resources for better understanding and attainability to learn Korean as most resources available in the market are found to be in English. By recognising the problem that there are not as many Korean-Malay textbook in the market, the



concept of 한국어 in Melayu! was developed as a deliberate attempt to make learning Korean more accessible. Not only that, the success of this eBook in the future may result in the possibility of publishing more series of this book with more advanced Korean with each upcoming book.

2. METHODOLOGY

To carry out this project, an online survey was conducted to investigate and identify the demand of Malay-Korean learning materials amongst youths in Malaysia. A total of fifty Malaysian high schoolers and university undergraduates with ages ranging from 15 to 24, were specifically approached to answer the survey. The survey considers the following general research questions:

- Are you familiar with the Korean language?
- How were you introduced to the Korean language?
- Have you ever learned Korean? If yes, what material(s) are you using to learn the language?
- How would you rate your knowledge in the Korean language when it comes to writing, reading, listening and speaking?
- Would you be interested in learning the basics of the Korean language?
- Would you rather learn through an eBook or a physical book?
- What is your preferred language to learn Korean?

When it comes to the planning of the project, a thorough and detailed plan was created and recorded to ensure the success of the eBook. Chart 1 below shows the timeline throughout the making of the project, showing project milestones and tasks performed against time.

Task/Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Idea Pitching										1	l			
2. Designing of the ebook														
3. Progress Report Presentation 1														
4. Progress report presentation 2						'	1	1						
5. Working on the Portfolio														
6. Publishing the eBook										1				
7. Poster Presentation Preparation														

Chart 1. Project Planning and Scheduling

Furthermore, 한국어 in Melayu! is fully a non-profit project. In fact, the idea behind the project specifically focuses on wanting to test the Korean-Malay learning market to research the demand of Korean-Malay-English learning materials rather than being profit driven. This research would be beneficial for future plans in expanding the 한국어 in Melayu! in the near future. As a result, there would be no cash inflows or outflows the whole duration of the project. The software and platform that was used throughout the whole project is also free and *Canva Education* is already provided by the affiliation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An online research survey was undertaken to collect data on Malaysian teenagers' interest in studying the Korean language. It was also carried out to ascertain the demand for Malay-Korean learning materials. This survey was separated into three sections: demographic profile, respondents' knowledge of Korean language, and market demand research. This survey garnered fifty responses in total.

3.1: Demographic Profile

Out of fifty respondents, 15 (30%) are males and 35 (70%) are females. It is also shown that 30 (60%) of the respondents are under the age of 18 and the remaining 20 (40%) are between the ages of 18 and 22. Furthermore, the respondents' educational levels are as follows: 30 (60%) are in high school and 20 (40%) are in the Diploma level. Therefore, it is easily determined that this survey is focused on the demand of Korean-Malay books amongst youths in Malaysia.

3.2: Respondents' Familiarity with the Korean Language

Through the survey, it is revealed that all fifty respondents are familiar with the Korean language. However, they were introduced to the Korean Language through various ways. Table 1 shows the percentages of how these respondents were introduced to the language.

	Respondents (%)
Entertainment (K-Pop, K-Drama, etc.)	88
Self-discovery	-
Through studies	1
Through friends/relatives	10

Table 1. Percentages of how the respondents were introduced to Korean

With the majority response to the question being 88% through the entertainment industry, this further proves the level of influence that the Hallyu wave has brought to our country especially towards the youths.

The next question from this section of the survey is: Have you ever learned Korean? If yes, what material(s) are you using to learn the language? The table below presents the percentages of whether the respondents have learned Korean or not.

	Respondents (%)
Yes	16
Never	46
Currently learning	16
Had attempted to learn	22

Table 2. Percentages of respondents who have and have not learned Korean

The 16% of those who responded that they have indeed learned Korean as well as the 22% who have attempted to learn Korean are asked to list down the materials that they used throughout the learning process. The responses are as follows; *Duolingo*, physical textbooks, *YouTube*, materials found on Google, eBooks such as *Vitamin Korean*, K-Dramas and lastly, online classes such as *Talk To Me In Korean*.

The final question for this section is that the respondents are asked to rate their knowledge of the Korean language on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being little to no knowledge and 5 being fluent. The questions are separated into four sections based on the four basic aspects of languages which includes reading, writing, listening and speaking. The results are presented in the table below.

	Responses (%)							
	1	2	3	4	5			
Writing	44	20	28	8	-			
Reading	46	24	28	2	-			
Listening	22	48	28	2	-			
Speaking	42	48	10	-	-			

Table 3. Percentages of the respondents knowledge of the Korean language

3.3: Market Demand Research

The last section of the survey, which is the market demand survey, is the most crucial for this project as it investigates and backs up the whole purpose and objective of 한국이 in Melayu! As the project heavily relies on the respondents interest in wanting to learn the Korean language, a general question of whether they would be interested in learning the basics of Korean language is brought up. Table 4 presents the percentages of respondents who show an interest in learning the Korean language.

		Respondents (%)
Yes		72
No		2
	Maybe	26

Table 4. Percentages of respondents who has an interest in learning the Korean language

As aligned to the project, the respondents were also asked of their preferred language to learn Korean. The choices given were both the Malay and English language. Even though this eBook provides explanations in both languages, the question was asked for the purpose of investigating the demand of Malay-Korean books in the market. Table 5 below presents the percentage of the respondents' preferred language to learn Korean.

	Respondents (%)
Malay	72
English	28

Table 5. Percentages of respondents' preferred language to learn Korean

Lastly, to underline the choice of publishing this project as an online book rather than a physical book, table 6 presents the percentage of respondents' preferred learning method, with choices either through an eBook or a physical book.

	Respondents (%)
E-book	90%
Physical book	10%

Table 6. Percentages of respondents' preferred learning method

4. CONCLUSION

한국어 in Melayu! is published with the intention to provide learning resources for all the language learners out there and after 14 weeks of hard work, it is safe to say that the project has successfully reached its objectives. Even though there were many challenges and limitations that had to be conquered, the end result is still as envisioned and the author is satisfied and content with the execution of this project. On another note, it is interesting to see that the neverending Hallyu wave has the potential in gathering the interest of thousands of youths into learning a foreign language. As stated by Touhami et al. (2017), the Hallyu wave not only delivers entertainment, but also a way of life that includes cultural traditions, delicacy, form of living, and, most significantly, a new language. This project has opened the doors to many other opportunities to create the path of Hallyu influence amongst the Malay community and considering the overall perspective of the project, 한국어 in Melayu! has been nothing but a success in many different aspects.

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