Oppa, salbangheyo and annyeonghaseyo: Which Korean words have you learnt from famous K-dramas?

By - Niha Riya Sharma | Updated: April 25, 2023, 01:07 PM

A little of interest in Korean language and culture has also been generated due to the popularity of K-pop groups like Blackpink.

The Hallpov wave has been slowly growing its popularity in the country for some years now, but even since the pandemic, the popularity of K-dramas and K-pop, including beauty products and food, have grown significantly.

Drum the Chan-won and Hong, Pacehak, Bandits like BTS and Blackpink have been making their presence felt in global events and music awards. This has also become evident when a spokesperson from an OTT platform said that the viewing for K-drama in India increased more than 300% in 2020 as compared to that in 2019.

As the number of people who started showing interest in the Hallpov wave grew, followers also became interested in learning the language through the shows. To understand the phenomenon, the Korean Cultural Centre, India, conducted a survey among its language course students and found out five words that students know before they enrolled themselves in the course. For those students who watched K-dramas and follow K-pop, catching up and learning a word or a phrase from the shows they are currently binging on, is another way to flourish that they have been following a specific show or a band.

The phrase ‘Oppa’ was originally used by women to express a sense of love or admiration for a person of the opposite sex as a compliment. It is a Korean word that is also used by Korean men to address other men. ‘Salbangheyo’ is another Korean word that has been widely used in K-pop songs and shows. It means ‘I love you’ or ‘I like you’ in Korean.

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90% of the students said that they knew ‘annyeonghaseyo’ and ‘gamsanmamida’ when watching K-dramas.

90% of the students said that they knew ‘han, han’, ‘opp-sa-opp-sa’, ‘opp-sa-opp-sa’.

70% of the students said that they knew ‘opp-sa-opp-sa’.

80% of the students said that they knew ‘han, han’.

60% of the students said that they knew ‘opp-sa-opp-sa’.

‘Find the language interesting’

‘I learnt the word oppa, which means brother or a romantic interest, after watching Hometown Cha-Cha-Cha and What’s Wrong With Secretary Kim. The way they use oppa in these dramas is funny as well as endearing when the lead couple is using it. So, I researched the meaning on the web and now every time I watch a show and see it, it’s a reference to the word. I feel I know at least a word in the language,’ says Aakini, a 22-year-old student from Delhi University, a school teacher, adds, ‘I’ve learnt ‘gamsanmamida’ (thank you) and ‘annyeonghaseyo’ (hello), by watching K-dramas like Desi Boys and Good Doctor.’

‘Greetings among the first words that followers learn’

A KCC representative interviewed and found that there are various reasons for people showing interest in the language. Some students like to learn new languages and some find it to be more interesting in Korean and Indian languages. Greetings are also among the first words that the students knew before learning the language. A lot of the interest in Korean language and culture was generated by papa as well as dramas, said the KCC representative.