Article

An Analysis of Expressive Speech Acts in Engene Comments on Enhypen's Weverse

https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i1.709

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ABSTRACT

This research evaluates the expressive speech acts employed by Engene in their comments on Enhypen's Weverse platform posts, focusing on the role of these speech acts in fan-idol interactions. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with a pragmatic perspective, the study examines selected textual comments from Engene, classifying and identifying the speech acts embedded in their words and expressions. The analysis centers on how these speech acts function within social interactions, particularly in fostering emotional connections between fans and idols. The study identifies five main types of expressive speech acts present in Engene's comments: admiration, encouragement, gratitude, celebration, and expressions of sadness or regret. Among these, admiration is the most prevalent, reflecting the deep emotional bond fans establish with Enhypen. Encouragement serves as a means for fans to motivate and support their idols, while gratitude expresses appreciation for Enhypen's efforts and impact. Celebration often appears in response to achievements or significant moments, reinforcing the shared joy between fans and idols. Conversely, expressions of sadness or regret emerge when fans resonate with emotional or difficult experiences shared by Enhypen. By analyzing these speech acts, the study highlights how fan discourse on Weverse extends beyond simple interactions, shaping the dynamics of parasocial relationships and reinforcing the idol-fan connection. This research underscores the significance of language in digital fan communities, demonstrating how expressive speech acts create a sense of closeness, emotional investment, and mutual engagement between Engene and Enhypen within the Weverse platform.

Keywords: *Expressive Speech Acts, Fandom Communication, Weverse, Enhypen, Engene.*

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of Enhypen came through the I-LAND reality show in 2020 that created this South Korean boy group. Enhypen falls under BELIFT LAB management within HYBE Corporation and developed a worldwide group of fans called Engene. The transformation of fan-idol relationships through digital platforms led to Weverse becoming a HYBE-developed communication platform that enables these contacts. Through Weverse users can post comments to their preferred idols and share emotions while using digital conversation tools that create connections even though they are physically apart.

People rely on language as their basic means for communication because it allows them to share messages alongside thoughts and personal emotions. Language expression on Weverse along with platforms like the one operate through word communication but users also utilize punctuation marks and emojis and letters with varying cases for enhanced emotional messaging. Message intensity receives an emotional boost through these elements which produce more expressive and compelling communication (Crystal, 2011). The complexity of a structured human communication system enables a wide range of communicative expressions including speech acts according to Yule (1996). According to Agha (2007) language serves as an instrument for building social bonds and identity

formation so it specifically applies to fan communities such as Engene. The investigation of verbal elements called expressive speech acts holds unique significance for fans expressing their admiration and appreciation toward Enhypen.

Austin (1962) first introduced and Searle (1979) further developed speech acts which represent verbal statements that do more than convey information since they execute actions. Throughout communication the speaker may employ expressive speech acts to reveal their current mental state by demonstrating admiration along with gratitude and encouragement and affection. Previous studies have analyzed expressive speech acts in literary texts (Selviyani & Pujiati, 2019) and political discourse (Indriyana et al., 2021) however research about such uses in fan-idol exchanges on Weverse is currently limited. Digital fandoms according to Jenkins (2013) develop into interactive groups because fans participate actively to construct shared emotional and linguistic cultures while making sense through comments and discussions.

Despite extensive studies on speech acts in various contexts, research on expressive speech acts within fan-idol interactions, particularly on digital platforms like Weverse, remains limited. Most prior studies, such as Searle (1979), primarily categorize speech acts into directive, commissive, declarative, representative, and expressive types without emphasizing their role in online fan discourse. While researchers like Austin (1962) and Yule (1996) have explored pragmatic functions of speech acts in everyday communication, these works often overlook how expressive speech acts contribute to emotional engagement in digital fandom spaces. Additionally, studies on parasocial relationships, such as Horton and Wohl (1956), predominantly examine the psychological dimensions of fan-idol interactions rather than the linguistic mechanisms through which fans express admiration, encouragement, gratitude, celebration, and emotional responses. Furthermore, research on computer-mediated communication, such as Herring (2013), tends to focus on broader digital language trends rather than the specific ways expressive speech acts function in structured fan communities. Given that platforms like Weverse facilitate direct interaction between artists and their fanbase, analyzing the expressive speech acts used by Engene in their comments on Enhypen's posts provides valuable insights into how language fosters intimacy and a sense of belonging. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the specific linguistic patterns and pragmatic roles of expressive speech acts in Engene's Weverse interactions, highlighting their significance in shaping fan-idol communication and strengthening digital fan communities.

Various scholarly research has shown digital platforms transform the connection patterns between fans and their favorite celebrities. Through its 2019 launch HYBE established Weverse as an essential platform which enables fans to access agency news and artist updates and album purchases and merchandise selection (The Korea Times, 2023). Fans have built a smooth interactive operation on this platform which now forms an essential foundation for building fan communities. Users on Weverse form stronger personal bonds with their idols through interactions that exceed normal social media interactions compared to Instagram and Twitter. Weverse offers a unique connection space for real-time fan communications which lacks on regular social media thus making it an exceptional research space for linguistic and pragmatic assessments.

The behaviors of digital fan communication transform based on the cultural and social aspects that define fandom activities. (Jenkins, 2013) explains that digital fandoms shifted from being passive consumer-friendly spaces into active participation zones where fans actively create meanings today. Fans utilize comments together with their discussions to construct emotional and linguistic common cultural experiences with their fan communities. The theory relates to participatory culture by showing how active participation replaces passive consumption between fans who take part in ongoing conversations. The patterns of communication that occur in these exchanges result from digital communication and fan emotional devotion.

Researching expressive communication patterns within digital fan networks helps explain the operations of online group languages. According to computer-mediated discourse analysis (Herring, 2004) users use emoticons together with abbreviations and symbolic language to substitute the missing verbal and non-verbal cues in computer communication. Users of Weverse share their emotions through direct statements using stylistic variations and non-verbal markers which include both emojis alongside capital letters and repeated punctuation. The examination of Enhypen-related admiration and gratitude from Engene members shows vital understanding of fan language operation in Internet formats.

Research on digital communication continues to grow but researchers need systematic investigation of expressive language acts which occur during K-pop fandom activities. Digital everyday communications (Danesi, 2017) together with political discourse (Indriyana et al., 2021) along with literary dialogues (Selviyani & Pujiati, 2019) have received most scholarly attention on speech acts however experts have yet to deeply analyze the unique language patterns that emerge on Weverse fandom platforms. The study intends to add scholarly value to pragmatic research and sociolinguistic investigation of digital language usage within fan communities.

K-pop fans use specialized digital language expressions when interacting with each other that emerge when cultural traits unite with fan participatory practices. Through Weverse users experience an active engagement with idols because the platform offers direct communication that allows them to demonstrate support by expressing themselves linguistically. According to Baym (2015) digital communities develop their special languages together with unique social conventions that stem from their common cultural elements and internal specific jokes and conversational rules. English K-pop fans use digital communication expressions that follow both South Korean cultural principles and linguistic standards while communicating on Weverse. This dual style shows why discourse analysis studies the interactions among fans.

The impact of technology stands paramount in developing fan communication patterns. According to social media linguistics studies (Papacharissi, 2015) digital platforms create innovative means for users to create identities while developing friendships. Through Weverse users express messages to talk with idols directly and connect with other fans who help strengthen the sense of community among the Engene members. The expressive language expressions adopted in this situation perform two essential duties by connecting fans to their idols and binding members of the fandom together. Research on how language transforms through social media communication requires investigation of expressive speech interactions on Weverse because of expanding social media influence on modern fan culture language development. These linguistic patterns will be investigated in greater depth through this study which supports broader knowledge development for online fan discourse pragmatics.

This research analyzes the expressive speech acts which Engene uses to comment on Enhypen posts appearing on Weverse. This examination of speech act features in combination with their respective emotional functions aims to deliver comprehensive knowledge about online fan-idol interaction dynamics and fandom community emotional and social dynamics. Practical implications for entertainment industry social media management together with fan engagement strategies form potential outcomes from this study.

METHOD

The research adopts a descriptive qualitative method to evaluate Engene's expressive speech acts within Enhypen's Weverse comments. The researcher uses qualitative descriptive methods to study emotional and linguistic textual data in its original setting (Creswell, 2014). Researchers use this method when examining written texts to uncover their meanings instead of running statistical measurements. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth analysis of intricate fan communication phenomena (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011), making it well-suited for this study.

The research data consists of 230 comments collected from Weverse posts made by Enhypen members between May and November 2024. These comments function as the core dataset, providing insight into how Engene express their emotions through language—ranging from admiration and encouragement to gratitude, celebration, and sadness. The dataset was selected using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that only comments containing explicit expressive speech acts were analyzed. The full dataset can be accessed via the following link: https://weverse.io/enhypen/artist/3-16878972.

The research period represents an important window because it allows researchers to observe current fan activities and communication habits on social media platforms (Baym, 2015). Trends within the selected comments, which varied by linguistic attributes and emotional characteristics, were classified according to Searle's (1979) category system for speech acts analysis. Purposive sampling enables researchers to make targeted data collection (Patton, 2002), ensuring that the chosen comments align with the research focus on expressive language behavior.

The data analysis procedure involved several key steps. First, expressive speech acts were identified, particularly those conveying appreciation through admiration, encouragement, gratitude, celebration, and sadness/regret. Next, linguistic features were categorized using an analytical procedure that examined: 1) Lexical choices (emotional vocabulary used by fans). 2) Syntactic structures (direct or indirect expressions). 3) Stylistic elements (emojis, punctuation, and capitalization).

The analysis applied Searle's (1979) pragmatic theory of speech acts to understand how linguistic structures facilitate emotional communication in digital spaces. Additionally, Herring's (2004) computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) was used to examine how stylistic features such as emojis, capitalized text, and elongated letters enhance emotional expression. Finally, the researcher examined the social and interactional aspects of fan communication, incorporating Goffman's (1959) footwork analysis to explore how fans navigate digital identity, emotional expression, and fandom community adaptation.

In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the key instrument, conducting both data collection and analysis through active interpretation. Digital discourse analysis requires researchers to extract meaning beyond literal text, as online spaces lack traditional non-verbal cues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The descriptive qualitative approach allows this study to provide critical insights into the linguistic patterns and pragmatic functions of expressive speech acts in digital fandom communication.

The research findings will enhance knowledge of digital communication, particularly in community language use and fan-idol interactions (Herring, 2004). The study's results could also benefit the entertainment industry by offering practical insights into how language fosters engagement and fan loyalty within social media networks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of Weverse comments on ENHYPEN member posts revealed five main types of expressive speech acts in the user comments: admiration, encouragement, gratitude, celebration, and sadness/regret. These speech acts function as key elements in shaping the emotional and social dynamics of digital fandom communication. Using descriptive qualitative procedures, this study examined how Engene utilize specific lexical choices, syntactic structures, and stylistic features to express their emotions and strengthen their connection with ENHYPEN.

According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach enables an in-depth exploration of digital discourse by focusing on the linguistic and emotional aspects of fan communication. The findings indicate that admiration is the most dominant type of expressive speech act, highlighting the deep admiration and attachment Engene feel toward ENHYPEN. Encouragement acts as a means of providing moral and emotional support, while gratitude reflects fans' appreciation for ENHYPEN's presence and efforts. Celebration appears in response to significant milestones, reinforcing the shared joy within the fandom. Meanwhile, sadness/regret emerges when fans express longing, concern, or personal emotional struggles in relation to their idols.

Admiration

Admiration is the most prevalent expressive speech act, illustrating the high level of emotional investment Engene have in their interactions with ENHYPEN. Fans frequently express admiration for the visual appearance, talent, and personality of the members, often using hyperbolic language and intensified expressions. Examples of admiration comments include:

"OMG! So handsome ❤" (Sunghoon)
"Jungwon with glasses is sooo adorable!!! SLAY"
"The most perfect person in the world ❤❤❤" (Jungwon)

Linguistically, admiration expressions frequently feature exaggerated adjectives (e.g., 'perfect,' 'adorable'), repetition of letters ('sooo'), and capitalized words ('OMG!') to enhance emotional intensity. Searle (1979) classifies these as direct expressive speech acts, where speakers explicitly communicate their emotions. Furthermore, according to Herring (2004), stylistic features such as emojis, capital letters, and punctuation play a significant role in conveying emotions in computer-mediated discourse, compensating for the absence of vocal tone and facial expressions.

Encouragement

Encouragement expressions serve as a form of emotional reinforcement, where fans support and motivate ENHYPEN in various situations, such as performances, comebacks, or personal well-being. Examples include:

"Hwaiting for today☐." (Jay)
"Always know that there are fans who will always support and cheer for you." (Heeseung)
"Please wear more and eat more for us, take care☐☐." (Sunghoon)

These expressions are often delivered using imperative structures (e.g., "Take care," "Stay strong"), reflecting fans' desire to influence or guide their idols' actions. Encouragement speech acts also frequently include indirect speech acts (Austin, 1962), where fans embed their support in statements of concern (e.g., "I hope you stay healthy and happy ☐☐"). This aligns with Horton and Wohl's (1956) concept of parasocial relationships, where fans form one-sided emotional bonds with their idols, treating them as close acquaintances despite the lack of reciprocal interaction.

Gratitude

Gratitude expressions highlight fans' appreciation for ENHYPEN's dedication, impact, and presence in their lives. Examples include:

"Thank you for being born ☐." (Jungwon)

"Thank you so much Jay for everything. ily♡."

"Thanks for making my day brighter." (Jungwon)

These comments typically feature explicit expressions of appreciation using phrases like "thank you" or "I'm grateful", reinforcing the emotional significance of ENHYPEN in fans' lives. In linguistic terms, gratitude expressions often utilize direct speech acts (Searle, 1979) and emotional intensifiers such as crying emojis (☐) and heart symbols (❤). Crystal (2011) emphasizes that such stylistic markers enhance digital text richness, making online communication more emotionally expressive.

Celebration

Celebration speech acts appear in comments related to significant milestones, such as birthdays, anniversaries, and achievements. Examples include:

"Happy belated birthday Sunoo☐"

"Congrats on your comeback!" (Ni-ki)

"Happy 4th anniversary Sunghoon! I can't wait to celebrate again and more to come ❤"

Celebration expressions are characterized by festive language, emojis, and capitalized text to convey excitement. These comments function as a form of communal bonding, reinforcing the idea of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2013), where fans actively engage in shaping fandom traditions through shared discourse. Furthermore, Baym (2015) notes that such celebratory interactions contribute to the formation of digital community identity, strengthening the sense of belonging among fans.

Sadness/Regret

Sadness and regret speech acts emerge in comments where fans express longing, disappointment, or emotional struggles in relation to ENHYPEN. Examples include:

"I miss you so much wonie ☐." (Jungwon)

"Why are you getting thinner Sunoo?...."

"I wish I could meet you someday ☐☐." (Jay)

Linguistically, these expressions often utilize rhetorical questions (e.g., "Why are you getting thinner?") and hedging phrases (e.g., "I wish" or "I feel"), which soften the impact of the statement while maintaining emotional depth. From a pragmatic perspective, these comments align with indirect speech acts (Austin, 1962), as they imply deeper emotional states rather than explicitly stating them. Goffman (1959) describes such expressions as part of face-saving strategies, where individuals navigate social interactions to maintain emotional equilibrium.

Table 1. Expressive Speech Acts Analysis

No	Types of Speech Acts	Expressive	Engene's Comments
1.	Admiration		1. "So handsome!!!" (Jay)
			2. "you look amazing!! happy anniversary!" (Sunghoon)
			3. "Heeseung sweet yuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu☐☐☐."
			4. "CUTIEEEE" (Heeseung)
			5. "The most perfect person in the world ❤❤❤"

(Jungwon)
6. "JUNGWON WITH GLASSES IS SOOOO ADORABLE!!! SLAY"
7. "OMG! So handsome ❤" (Sunghoon)
8. "bisco is so cute" (Ni-ki)
9. "you look so good with glasses istg" (Jungwon)
10. "WAAA CUTIEEEE JUNGWONAAAAA"

2.	Encouragement	1. "Hwaiting for today□." (Jay)

2. "take care of yourself□□."
3. "Being an Idol isn't a simple thing... Only care about your health and happiness□." (Heeseung)
4. "Good luck with your performance!" (Jake)
5. "please wear more and eat more for us, take care□□ See u soon in the Philippines on 1206" (Sunghoon)
6. "ni-ki you make my darkest day brighter. Your existence gives me hope and strength!□ love u both babies"
7. "Always know that there are fans who will always support and cheer for you." (Heeseung)
8. "things have been really hectic for you with all the tours, comebacks and schedule so i genuinely pray for a break." (Sunghoon)
9. "I hope you stay healthy and happy □□." (Ni-ki)
10. "Take care of yourself, my prince ❆□□." (Sunoo)

3.	Gratitude	1. "Thank you so much Jay for everything. ily♡."

2. "I'm relieved that you are okay and we love youuu❣."(Jay)
3. "Thank you for being born □." (Jungwon)
4. "Thanks for the hard work today." (Sunoo)
5. "Thank you, I am glad that we are with a handsome person like you. Good night, we will meet on the day of judgement." (Jake)
6. "HEESEUNG-AH, YOU'RE MY INSPIRATION ASIDE FROM MY FAMILY."
7. "I truly appreciate everything that you all do. Trust me, engenes are literally spoiled in a good way." (Sunghoon)
8. "Thank you for always being kind and inspiring." (Jay)
9. "I'm so grateful for your presence in my life." (Heeseung)
10. "Thanks for making my day brighter." (Jungwon)

4.	Celebration	1. "happy belated birthday sunoo□"

2. "Happy 4th anniversary Sunghoon ❤."
3. "HAPPY BIRTHDAY HEE□□."

	4. "Congrats on your comeback!" (Ni-ki)
	5. "happy 4th anniversary sunghoon I can't wait see celebrate again and more to come i love you Sunghoon ❤''
	6. "let's be forever happy□❤ happy 4th anniversarry"
	7. "sweet dreams, thanks for the hard work today jeyiii♡♡"
	8. "Good morning, have a nice day jeyiiiiii□fighting□"
	9. "Happy early birthday btw!!! □"
	10. "Congratulations on your achievements!" (Jay)
5. Sadness/Regret	1. "I miss you so much wonie □." (Jungwon)
	2. "Jay why do I feel so sad, because I think it's so hard to get close to you hahaha."
	3. "sunghoon i'm feeling sad rn□."
	4. "Why are you getting thinner sunoo?...."
	5. "I cut my hair to get bangs sadly, it's gone wrong I ruin my hair□□□ cry so baddd"
	6. "jay why do i feel so sad, because i think it's so hard to get close to you hahaha that's impossible you have a lot of fans, I....sad"
	7. "things have been really hectic for you with all the tours, comebacks and schedule so i genuinely pray for a break." (Sunghoon)
	8. "I miss your lives" (Jake)
	9. "I always let other people down. I'm too childish. I'm sorry."(Jake)
	10. "I wish I could meet you someday □□." (Jay)

Detailed Findings by Member

Jungwon's Post

Dominant Types of Expression : Affection dominates, followed by gratitude and compliments.

Lexical Choices : Words like "love," "cute," "adorable," and "perfect" are frequently used.

Syntactic Structures : Most comments use direct speech acts, but some incorporate indirect structures for deeper emotions.

Stylistic Elements : Fans use emojis (e.g., □, □, ❤), elongated words, and repetition to intensify emotions.

Example:

"Jungwon, you are my sunshine □□."

"Why are you so perfect? □□."

Ni-ki's Post

Dominant Types of Expression : Affection and compliments dominate, with fans emphasizing both Ni-ki and his dog, Bisco.

Lexical Choices : Words like "cute," "adorable," "love," and phrases expressing gratitude or humor are common.

Syntactic Structures : Simple sentences dominate, but some comments include indirect speech acts for humor or deeper expressions.

Stylistic Elements : Emojis (e.g., □, □, □) and playful language (e.g., "how to be a dog???!") add variety.

Example :

> "Bisco is so cute."
>
> "Ni-ki, you make my darkest day brighter. Your existence gives me hope and strength!□ love u both babies."

Sunoo's Post

Dominant Types of Expression : Affection and compliments dominate, with occasional requests and expressions of concern.

Lexical Choices : Positive words like "cute," "love," "perfect," "angel," and "pretty" are frequent.

Syntactic Structures : Direct speech acts dominate, with some complex sentences for deeper emotions.

Stylistic Elements : Emojis (e.g., □, □, □) and informal spellings (e.g., "plss") add emotional depth.

Example :

> "My handsome sunshine□."
>
> "Why are you getting thinner sunoo?...."

Jake's Post

Dominant Types of Expression : Compliments, affection, and gratitude dominate, with occasional humorous or reflective comments.

Lexical Choices : Words like "handsome," "good job," "love," and "miss" are common.

Syntactic Structures : Direct and straightforward sentences dominate, with some indirect speech acts for questions or well-wishing.

Stylistic Elements : Emojis (e.g., □, □, □) and playful capitalization add individuality.

Example :

> "SO HANDSOME JAKE."
>
> "I always let other people down. I'm too childish. I'm sorry."

Jay's Post

Dominant Types of Expression : Gratitude, affection, and well-wishing dominate, with occasional humor or sadness.

Lexical Choices : Words like "love," "miss," "thank you," and "good night" are frequent.

Syntactic Structures : Direct speech acts dominate, with some reflective or rhetorical statements.

Stylistic Elements : Emojis (e.g., □, □, ❤) and repetition (e.g., "youuuu") enhance emotional expression.

Example :

> "Jay said the world is small, but why is it difficult for me to meet you?"
>
> "Jay, you are truly more than the word handsome □□□□."

Sunghoon's Post

Dominant Types of Expression : Compliments, affection, and well-wishing dominate, with occasional expressions of sadness.

Lexical Choices : Words like "handsome," "beautiful," "amazing," and "happy anniversary" are common.

Syntactic Structures : Direct speech acts dominate, with some complex sentences for deeper emotions.

Stylistic Elements : Emojis (e.g., ❤, □, □) and playful nicknames (e.g., "hoonie") add personalization.

Example :

> "OMG! So handsome ❤."
>
> "Sunghoon, I'm feeling sad rn□."

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Heeseung's Post

Dominant Types of Expression : Affection and compliments dominate, with occasional gratitude or sadness.

Lexical Choices : Words like "sweet," "handsome," "love," and "precious" are frequent.

Syntactic Structures : Direct speech acts dominate, with some complex sentences for deeper emotions.

Stylistic Elements : Emojis (e.g., □, □, □) and repetition (e.g., "yayy~") enhance emotional intensity.

Example :

"Heeseung sweet yuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu□□."

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY HEE□□."

Interpretation

The findings indicate that Engene's digital discourse is heavily driven by emotional expression, with admiration being the most dominant form of expressive speech act. This is followed by expressions of gratitude, encouragement, celebration, and sadness/regret, each of which serves a unique function in shaping parasocial interactions and reinforcing the emotional attachment between fans and idols. The analysis of Weverse comments reveals that fans engage in highly expressive communication through specific lexical choices, syntactic structures, and stylistic elements, as outlined below.

Dominant Types of Expression

Among the expressive speech acts identified, admiration is the most prevalent, as fans frequently express affection, appreciation, and excitement towards ENHYPEN members. This is followed by gratitude and encouragement, where fans convey appreciation for the idols' hard work and offer words of support. Celebration speech acts are observed in relation to milestones such as birthdays, anniversaries, and album releases, while sadness/regret expressions emerge when fans share their longing, protective sentiments, or personal emotional struggles.

Lexical Choices

Fans often utilize emotionally charged vocabulary to express their admiration, support, and concern for ENHYPEN. Commonly used words include: 1) Affection and admiration: *love, cute, amazing, handsome, perfect. 2)* Encouragement and support: *stay strong, hwaiting, take care.* 3) Gratitude and appreciation: *thank you, grateful, you inspire me.* 4) Celebration and excitement: *congrats, happy birthday, anniversary. 5)* Sadness and regret: *miss you, feel sad, I wish* Additionally, intensifiers such as *"sooo cute", "really amazing",* and *"the most perfect person"* frequently appear, emphasizing the depth of fan emotions. Statements expressing concern, such as *"worry about your health"* or *"don't overwork yourself"*, further illustrate the emotional investment of fans in their idols' well-being.

Syntactic Structures

The syntactic structures used in Engene's comments primarily consist of **direct speech acts**, where fans explicitly express their emotions (Searle, 1979). Examples include:

"Jungwon with glasses is sooo adorable!!!" (Admiration)

"Take care of yourself, my prince ❅□□." (Encouragement)

"Thank you for always being kind and inspiring." (Gratitude)

However, indirect speech acts are also present, particularly in expressions of sadness or encouragement. These are often framed as rhetorical questions or reflective statements:

"Why are you getting thinner, Sunoo?" (Concern)

"I genuinely pray for a break for you." (Encouragement with an implied wish)

Such syntactic variations allow fans to express deeper emotions while maintaining social politeness and emotional subtlety (Austin, 1962).

Stylistic Elements

Stylistic markers play a significant role in amplifying emotional expression in digital communication. Crystal (2011) highlights that in online discourse, elements such as emojis, capital letters, and elongated words serve as non-verbal cues to convey tone and intensity. Engene's comments exhibit:

> Emojis: Used to enhance emotional expression (e.g., ❤️□, □, □, □).
> Capitalization: Words in ALL CAPS are used to emphasize excitement or strong emotions (*"HAPPY BIRTHDAY HEESEUNG!!!"*).
> Letter elongation: Expresses heightened enthusiasm (*"sooo handsome"* or *"I miss youuuu"*).
> Repetitive punctuation: Conveys excitement (*"OMG!!!!!!"*).

Herring (2004) explains that these stylistic features compensate for the absence of non-verbal communication cues in digital interactions, making them essential in shaping expressive discourse.

The findings indicate that admiration is the most dominant expressive speech act, reflecting the intense emotional connection between fans and idols. Encouragement, gratitude, and celebration contribute to a sense of community and mutual support, reinforcing fan engagement and collective identity. Meanwhile, expressions of sadness/regret reveal the emotional depth and personal investment that fans bring into their digital interactions, often manifesting in protective or longing sentiments toward their idols.

From a linguistic perspective, the study demonstrates that positive lexical choices, syntactic structures, and stylistic markers such as emojis, capitalized words, and elongated letters significantly enhance the emotional intensity of fan comments (Herring, 2004). These elements function as non-verbal cues in computer-mediated discourse, compensating for the lack of physical presence and vocal expression in online communication. The prevalence of these expressive speech acts aligns with Searle's (1979) theory of speech acts, which emphasizes how language not only conveys information but also performs social actions.

These findings support existing research on parasocial relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956), which suggests that fans develop strong emotional ties with their idols through mediated communication, often perceiving them as close acquaintances despite the one-sided nature of their interactions. Additionally, this study contributes to Jenkins' (2013) theory of participatory culture, demonstrating how platforms like Weverse provide a space for fans to engage in shared linguistic and emotional practices, reinforcing their sense of belonging within the fandom.

Furthermore, Baym's (2015) work on virtual community dynamics highlights how digital fandoms function as interactive communities rather than passive audiences, actively shaping discourse through their expressions of support and admiration. This research confirms that Weverse is not merely a social media platform but a designed digital space that fosters fan-idol connections, facilitating both structured communication and spontaneous emotional exchanges.

In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of language in shaping digital fan interactions, revealing how expressive speech acts serve as tools for emotional bonding, social identity formation, and fandom participation. The findings provide insights into the evolving nature of online communication and contribute to broader discussions on digital linguistics, sociopragmatics, and fan studies.

CONCLUSION

This research examines the expressive speech acts used by Engene in their interactions with ENHYPEN on Weverse, focusing on how these speech acts shape digital fan communication, parasocial relationships, and participatory culture. By analyzing admiration, encouragement, gratitude, celebration, and sadness/regret expressions, this study highlights

how fan discourse extends beyond simple interactions, creating a structured linguistic space where emotions, identity, and social bonds are negotiated.

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