

CPNT Model Analysis on New Media and “Gangnam Style”

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Abstract

New Media and Global Communication: A case study on PSY's “GangNam Style”

PSY's “GangNam Style” got the most views on various search engines for music around the world in 2012. The world has tremendously caught on the “GangNam Style” across borders regardless of race, nation and culture. “Oppa¹ GangNam Style”, this lyric of the song by a funny Korean singer who looks fat with sunglasses has been hummed everywhere over the world. Main interest of people also has focused on this song recently. The song, “GangNam Style”, enraptured the world in a few months. A music video of “GangNam Style” was a huge hit on a great variety of video websites as well. Take “YouTube”, the most famous websites in the world, for an example. On this websites, PSY's music video got about 1.8 billion views. It was listed as the largest number of “like” clicks on YouTube in the Guinness Book of World Record. Therefore, this article analyzes this case on the spread of PSY's “GangNam Style” through the new mass media in order to determine reasons to hit the world as well as backgrounds to be popular. Due to this research, we can expect to predict a future trend of international spread through the new media.

Keywords: GangNam Style, PSY, new media, global communication

1. Background of “Gangnam Style”

In 2012, if there is a modern young man who does not know what “Gangnam style” is, he would inevitably be belittled by the people around him. The famous "Gangnam style" was truly a stunning phenomenon. Many people find it interesting that such relatively ‘vulgar’ lyrics and arrange like "Gangnam style" can actually be accepted by the public. Since the 1960s, South Korea had created "the miracle of Han river" after decades of development, and ‘Gangnam’ has become the symbol of rich and expensive district of the country.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of New Media Communication behind “Gangnam Style”

The success of the "Gangnam style" is multifaceted, not only because of its own style of composition and characteristics, but also the way in which the new media of today is spread. It can be said that the success of "Gangnam style" is microcosm of the trend of the current popular new media. It is also related to ICT's (Information Communication Technology) ecological model CNPT (Contents, Platform, Network, Terminal). Therefore, the author will analyze the success of "Gangnam style" through ICT's CNPT model.

2.1 Contents - Localization and Globalization

2.1.1 The Most Korean, the Most World-Wide

Although in 21st century, electronic devices have united the world in the name of “globalization”, it has ubiquitously embodied and highlighted characteristics of "localization." From the 1990s onwards in Greater China, Japan, and places in Southeast Asia the so-called "Korean Wave" had emerged. And it has further spread to other Asian countries such as India, the Middle East, Central Asia and other countries in the Americas and Latin America afterwards, which show that it had a great influence over the world. The singer of "Gangnam style", Psy, has a typical Korean look, and the catchy lyrics along with the innovative and popular Korean dance have seized the people's taste. These components look simple and straightforward, but behind this, there are unique ethnic characteristics of South Korea's culture.

¹ 오빠(Oppa) translation does not necessarily mean "brother." Korean Oppa means elder brother in general. Many Chinese media translated as "Even bar", "Ouba", "bird uncle", "Europe man" and so on.

2.1.2 Globalization

Sound and body language are common languages throughout the globe, therefore music and dance are the universal human heritage. First, in terms of music. James Kellaris, a professor of marketing at the University of Cincinnati, points out that the "Gangnam style" has swept the world in connection with a brain movement of earworm. Since PSY's music is particularly similar to heart movements, some scientists analyze that rapid and constant repetitive melodic addiction causes many listeners to produce "earworm phenomena"². Second, dancing – the “Mal Chum” or “Horse Riding”. The "Horse Riding" is simple and easy to learn that people around the world compete to dance over others. Third, the humor. PSY is comparing Gangnam-gu, Seoul to Beverly Hills, California and Manhattan, New York, while in "Gangnam Style" music video, PSY is wearing a pair of black sunglasses with shorts on, sitting on the chair backing the beach. Additionally, there are many other scenes that are beyond people’s imagination and reversal of the situations, which make the audience laugh.

2.2 Platform (Platform) – The Era of Internet Uniting the World

Whether it is the hottest "national hymn" or the "Gangnam style" that is sweeping the world, it shows that the era of E (Electronic) is an era that make people all over the world dance. International communication is transnational communication based on ethnic groups and countries³. Since self-media like Youtube and Twitter have emerged, the spread of information no longer need to use television, radio, newspapers and other commercial media channels to carry out⁴. YouTube is now the largest video sharing site in the world, and "Gangnam style" has spread throughout Youtube. According to a South Korean report, “From July 15th to December 21st of 2012, “Gangnam style” views have skyrocketed by people from 226 countries (or regions) and exceeded the population of 193 member countries of the United Nations. Among them, one of the world's most closed countries, North Korea was also on the list⁵.

2.3 Network - New Media Boosts Popular Culture

Needless to say, the success of "Gangnam style" is greatly linked to YouTube, we cannot neglect the influence of TGIF⁶. Compared with the traditional medias such as newspapers and magazines, the emergence of new media has greatly promoted the development of popular culture. Various social networks have become places where people “like” other’s post and recommend them, thus greatly expanding the influence of "Gangnam style" on various websites. From July 15, 2012 till the Youtube views have reach 1.7 billion⁷, the relationship between the number of views and how new media has responded has changed is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Relationship between Number of Youtube views and TGIF

NO	No. of views	Time	Date of upload to new record date (Date of last record to new record)	Key Events
NO.1	Below 100 Million	2012.07.15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 07.15 (520 thousand views) Date of publish on Youtube ○ 08.02 (11 million views) American music broker Scooter Braun and rapper Pen Pan both praise 《Gangnam style》 on Twitter⁸ ○ 08.21 (43 million views) Singer Katy Perry praises on Twitter⁹ ○ 08.30 (79 million views) Britney Spears¹⁰, Tom Cruise¹¹ praise and leave

² “Popularity of ‘Gangnam Style’, scientists explained as the ear worms nerve movement”, China Youth Daily, December 12, 2012

³ Zizhong Zhao: "Influence of New Media and International Communication," New Essays, 2011, No. 5.

⁴ Wenbo Kuang: "Conceptual Analysis of New Media" [J], International News Press, 2008, No. 06.

⁵ "PSY Music Video has 250,000 views per Hour", Sports Beijing Township, December 22, 2012.

⁶ TGIF means: "Thank God It's Friday (or Thank God, finally to Friday)". But now also includes: TGIF: Twitter, Google, Iphone, Facebook's first acronym, representing the situation in today's online society, especially after the emergence of the Iphone, so that the utilization rate of the network greatly enhanced. Thus the social environment based on SNS theory can develop rapidly.

⁷ Although the largest population country, China, cannot access on Youtube, the estimated Chinese viewers is around 200 million. "Gangnam style" Music Video Hits 1 Billion + Chinese 200 Million", ONBAO, December 26, 2012.

⁸ Commented as “How did I not sign this guy?”

⁹ Commented as “Help, I'm in a Gangnam style k hole”

¹⁰ Commented as “I am LOVING this video so fun! Thinking that I should possibly learn the choreography. Anybody wanna teach me?! Haha.”

¹¹ After August 30, PSY also paid close attention to Tom Cruise’s Twitter and sent him a message “Would make a good future co-star

				comments on Twitter.
				○ 09.01 (89 million views)
				Most viewed K-Pop videos in YouTube history.
				○ 09.11 Perform at NBC television, "The Ellen DeGeneres Show"
NO.2	100 Million	2012.09.04	55 Days	○ 09.12 Perform at ABC News, "Good Morning America"
				○ 09.14 Live Performance at NBC television, "The Today Show"
NO.3	200 Million	2012.09.28	66 Days (14 Days)	○ 09.18 Meet with Google Chairman Schmidt
NO.4	300 Million	2012.09.28	76 Days (10 Days)	○ 10.04 Seoul Square concert (live on YouTube, more than 100,000 simultaneous access)
NO.5	400 Million	2012.10.08	86 Days (10 Days)	○ 10.16 Meet and comment on Twitter after meeting with Australian actor, Hugh Jackman from the movie "Wolverine" ¹²
				○ 10.20 The third most watched video in YouTube history
NO.6	500 Million	2012.10.20	98 Days (12 Days)	○ 10.23 Meets with UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon
				○ 10.28 Meets with Steven Spielberg and praises on Twitter ¹³
				○ 11.02 The second most watched video in YouTube history
NO.7	600 Million	2012.10.31	109 Days (11 Days)	○ 11.08 Lectures at the University of Oxford, UK ¹⁴
				○ 11.19 Perform with MC Hammer at American Musician Awards.
NO.8	700 Million	2012.11.11	120 Days (11 Days)	○ Awarded the American Musician Awards and New Media Award.
NO.9	800 Million	2012.11.24	132 Days (12 Days)	○ 11.24 The most watched video in YouTube history ¹⁵ .
NO.10	900 Million	2012.12.07	146 Days (14 Days)	○ 12.08 Perform finale at the Christmas event in Washington DC and meet up the President Obama
NO.11	1 Billion	2012.12.22	159 Days (13 Days)	○ 12.31 Participate in the ABC New Year program, "Dick Clark's Rocking New Year's Eve"
NO.12	1.1 Billion	2013.01.01	171 Days (10 Days)	○ Participate in the UN New Year event
NO.13	1.2 Billion	2013.01.23	193 Days (22 Days)	○ Appear on "Super Bowl" commercials
NO.14	1.3 Billion	2013.02.10	211 Days (18 Days)	○ 02.25 Participation in President Park Geun-hye's Presidential Inauguration Ceremony in Seoul Square
NO.15	1.4 Billion	2013.03.10	239 Days (28 Days)	○ 03.24 For the thirty one consecutive weeks, listed on the top 40 song of the UK singles charts
NO.16	1.5 Billion	2013.04.06	266 Days (27 Days)	○ 04.13 Hold personal concert "HAPPENING" at the World Cup Arena in Seoul
NO.17	1.6 Billion	2013.05.16	306 Days (40 Days)	○ 05.16 Leading the "Most Viewed Video" title.
NO.18	1.7 Billion	2013.07.05	356 Days (50 Days)	○ 07.05 A year after the release of the song, popularity continues to rise, ranks top on most views in YouTube

Gangnam Style?"Then Tom Cruise responded "Think", aroused the attention among fans.

¹² Commented as"slicing Gangnam style!! Greate to meet!

¹³ Commented as"Thank you for your energy。 How can I forget today for my life? T_T"

¹⁴ Speeches by the Oxford Union Club invited famous individuals from all around the world including the Queen of England, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Myanmar's democratization hero Aung San Suu Kyi, Former US President Reagan, Nixon, African American human rights activist Malcolm Aix, singer Michael Jackson and others. PSY became the first Asian star to make a speech at the University of Oxford.

¹⁵ Former champion Justin Bieber's "Baby" had about 800 million views and took 33 months, but "Gangnam style" took only 4 months to surpass Justin Bieber.

The chart above shows the change of reputation from the date of upload on Youtube to the number of views reached 1.7 billion. From this chart, one interesting fact we can find out is that while under 100 million views many celebrities have left comments on "Gangnam style". When the "Gangnam style" music video was published on YouTube on July 15, 2012, the initial number of views was similar to any other K-pop songs. There was no big difference to other Korean pop stars. However, after American celebrities start praising about "Gangnam Style" on their Twitter, the music video has jumped on the bandwagon. The number of views has skyrocketed after when the American music broker Sigourney Braun and rapper Pan Pan, as well as Britney Spears, Katie Perry and other celebrities start praising "Gangnam Style" on their Twitter. We live in the era of electronic devices, people post Twitter, update FACEBOOK, and change Renren status anytime, anywhere. Whether it is to work or school, as long as they are online. It shows that we are inseparable from the lifestyle of social networking¹⁶.

2.4 Terminal - New Trends in Audience Psychology

Since entering the era of new media, people became both "media consumers and producers." Especially since the launch of smartphones by Apple Inc., people started to enjoy a great variety of applications on their phone. Some people even developed applications by themselves to upload on the platform service, and as the smartphone population has constantly increased, in 2012 it has reached more than 2 billion users¹⁷. The appears of this new media has produced feedback phenomenon. Meanwhile, the most prominent feature of the spread of "Gangnam style" is the emergence of "reaction videos" and "parody videos". For example, during transition of YouTube from "video content" to "the world of channels,"¹⁸ once a video become popular on YouTube, "Reaction video" operator would film his/her own reaction while watching the original video, and upload the "Reaction video" on Youtube, with the original video included in the corner of the screen. Another channel that "Gangnam style" got popular is through the "Parody Video" filmed by various celebrities. The speculation and humorous imitation of various media and the spread of various communication technologies made people pay more attention to the "Snowball Effect" that is appearing after the release of the original video.

3. Conclusion – Thoughts and Inspirations Behind the Success of "Gangnam Style"

Starting from July 15, 2012, the major medias in Korea had constantly played PSY's "Gangnam style" on the show, and the song had Youtube views more than 1.8 billion by December 31, 2013. Through the success of "Gangnam style", the global new media has taken a new direction of development. However, whether the way of success of "Gangnam style" can be applied on other contents is another story. According to the summary above, the success requires the right time, location, people and other conditions¹⁹. Simply reproducing similar videos might not be able to create the brilliant outcome as this time. Judging from the current situation, the new media and the trend in international communications have following characteristics:

First, the new media still have to continue to create works that are both deep and popular.

The psychology of the audience is considered as the huge market for the new media, however, current audience's "Slacker mentality" is the attitude most required by the new media. Second, the channel of new media should be more diversified. New media should analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the current communication channels and make improvements. At the same time, provide with more convenient, faster and secured channel that audience can enjoy.

The song "Gangnam style" is just an ordinary Korean song that appears to have no big differences, but the fact that it swept the world left many people with thoughts and inspirations. However, the great popularity of "Gangnam style" is not a surprise, because this song is an integrated outcome of new media and international communication after the network has been developed for a certain period of time. At the same time, the right timing, location, and people made this possible. On one hand, South Korea has a relatively relaxed social and political environment that singers have freedom to express their dissatisfaction of society and nation. On the other hand, "Gangnam style" have very bold and exaggerated lyrics which give its audience a very fresh experience. However, the original flavor will be gone once the original style is reproduced in different form. For Chinese pop culture, China's cultural industry is still in its infancy and needs continuous reformation and

¹⁶ Ling Shao: "How 'Gangnam Style' became popular?" Wen Wei Po, October 9, 2012, Issue 03.

¹⁷ "Deloitte: Global smart phone shipments to reach 1 billion units in 2013" People's Daily, January 8, 2013.

¹⁸ YouTube is now creating many professional channels, such as British video blogger and musician, Charlie McDonnell, and Vietnamese-American amateur make-up artist, Michelle Phan, to upload their works on YouTube to share, cumulative views have reached about billions. They became one of the popular YouTuber.

¹⁹ Changgeng Yuan: "An Alternative Reflection on 'Gangnam Style'", China Nationalities Press, October 26, 2012, p. 005.

innovation. From the success of "Gangnam style", we can see that the current new media is matured and has been able to bring a lot of spiritual and cultural life to the public. However, we should also understand that if new media tries to compete with traditional media, it must ensure that its mode of operation should be opposite to international communication and should have the vision of exploring the global market. Compared with the traditional media, the new media obviously has its own superiority, but its inherent shortcoming cannot be avoided. Therefore, the new media should learn from the traditional media, and improve its own means of communication. When new media makes full use of the power of the public to achieve its own mode of operation of the promotion and evolution, then it will successfully create the new era of communication.

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