

<Analysis of a medium of communication : Kakao Talk>

1. Introduction

'Kakao Talk' is a comprehensive messenger system commonly used in Korea. As most people in Singapore use WhatsApp, typical communication medium in Korea is Kakao Talk. The main functions of Kakao Talk are also similar to WhatsApp. Users use Kakao Talk to communicate conveniently. Kakao Talk's classic functions are text message(chat), voice call and video call. However, there are many other functions, and because of this, Kakao Talk has unique characteristics and can be a subject of analysis.

Top Apps By Number of Sessions

Rank	App	Sessions
①	KakaoTalk	55
②	WhatsApp	37
③	WeChat	29
④	VK	29
⑤	LINE	26
⑥	Viber	20
⑦	Facebook	20
⑧	Clash of Clans	16
⑨	Instagram	12
⑩	Messenger	

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Figure1 : Top apps by number of sessions

Figure2 : Kakao main service & Which Kakao app has many users?

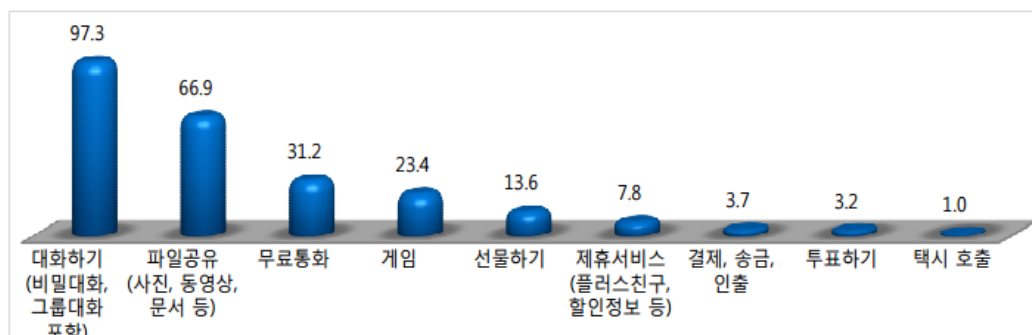
Mobile messenger Kakao Talk topped the list of the most-running apps in the world. The average number of Kakao Talk runs was 55 times, the most frequently used among applications around the world, according to an Internet Trend Report released by Mary Meeker, a partner of the U.S. KPCB. Kakao Talk is used by more than 38 million users every month in Korea and 97% of smartphone users, according to the article (Newsis YoungJu Park, 2015). According to app analysis

company Wise App, a survey of 24,906 Android smartphone users nationwide over the past month showed 98.2% of respondents installed Kakao Talk, 91% of whom are using it (Wowtv SeongPil Mun, 2016).

Kakao Talk has become a stable and popular medium in Korea today. Few Korean people who use smartphones will not use Kakao Talk. It is because of the useful features of Kakao Talk, and because many people are already using it, there are some who use it to communicate with others. Regardless of reasons, if you do not use Kakao Talk in Korea, it is safe to say that one communication method has disappeared.

2. Summary of relevant literature on the medium

Kakao Talk has been aiming for a "messenger acting as a platform." (Bloter, 2020) Therefore, Kakao has other applications such as Kakao 'Taxi', Kakao 'Story', Kakao 'Pay', Kakao 'Map' and so on. Applications exist separately, but they are linked by a Kakao account and can be used comfortably when using Kakao Talk.



[그림 1] 모바일 인스턴트 메신저의 이용 기능(%)

Graph1 : Utilization function of mobile instant messenger

I quoted the graph1 and table1 in <Comparison of Expressive Aspect and Perception in Smartphone Messenger -Focused on Questionnaires-> written by Park Eunha. According to the graph above, conversation accounted for 97.3%, followed by file sharing with 66.9% and free calls with 31.2%. Other features, such as playing games, giving gifts, partnership services, payments/remittances/withdrawals, voting, and taxi calls, are used, though not much else.

[표 3] 메신저에서의 종결 형태

단위 : 명(%)

	문장형	이모티콘	명사형/ 명사	자음, 모음형	미완성 문장	부사형	기타
전체	94(35.9)	32(12.1)	68(26.0)	28(10.7)	25(9.5)	10(3.8)	1(0.4)
20대	17(24.3)	17(24.3)	16(22.9)	10(14.3)	8(11.4)	2(2.9)	0(0)
30대	25(43.1)	3(5.2)	18(31.0)	9(15.5)	3(5.2)	0(0)	0(0)
40대	20(37.0)	7(13.0)	7(13.0)	6(11.1)	9(16.7)	4(7.4)	1(1.9)
50대	24(44.4)	3(5.6)	20(37.0)	1(1.9)	3(5.6)	2(3.7)	0(0)
60대	8(30.8)	2(7.7)	7(26.9)	2(7.7)	2(7.7)	2(7.7)	0(0)

Table 1 : Termination form in messenger

And in the same paper, termination form in messenger by age through interview is as above. Those in their 30s to 60s had the highest rate of using sentence form, but those in their 20s answered the same number of sentence form and emoticon form. This shows that 20s use emoticons as frequently as sentences. (Park Eunha, 2018) In addition, a variety of ending expressions such as noun form, consonant/vowel form, incomplete sentence form, and adverb form are used in Kakao Talk. It can also be seen as a language form revealed on Kakao Talk or a change brought on by Kakao Talk.

3. Properties of Kakao Talk and its effect on the language used to communicate

Using the seven features introduced by Crystal, I will organize how the properties of Kakao Talk affect the language used to communicate. Kakao Talk has text message(chat), call, and other functions, so it is necessary to weigh both speech like and text like. First of all, Kakao Talk has a 'call' that is time bound and a 'chat' that is space bound. For time bound, there are 'voice call (voice talk in Korean)' and 'video call (face talk in Korean)' corresponding to 'call'. Voice call and video call, like the telephone, are dynamic and transient in time bound.

On the other hand, for space bound, 'chat' remains as a record of messages texting with someone. Information such as photos, videos, and documents also remains the same. They can also be backed up or restored in case of social problems. It is static and permanent. Therefore, in this case, Kakao Talk has the characteristics of both speech and text.

Next, Kakao Talk is mostly spontaneous, but sometimes contrived. Both general chats and calls occur spontaneously to communicate with each other. However, as Kakao Talk has become a

popular messenger, there are times when official communication is passed over to Kakao Talk rather than email. Or, as a freshman, you may be invited to the group chat of your department, or you may have a group chat when you join a club activity. At this time, even though it is not voluntary, people are still part of the chat in a contrived state to get useful information. For group presentation, you can create an awkward but purposeful chat room for convenient communication. At this moment, etiquette is clear to keep, and free conversation is restricted.

Next, Kakao Talk is face-to-face and visually detailed. Video call can be face-to-face because they look at each other's faces and talk, and has the characteristics of speech. Voice call and chat are visually decontextualized. Therefore, Kakao Talk itself has both characteristics of speech and text.

Usually, Kakao Talk chat and call are loosely structured. However, there are some cases when chat is elaborately structured. Not all chats are free and comfortable, because Kakao Talk is currently replacing text message and e-mail, in other words, uncomfortable chats can exist, there are some etiquettes that must be mutually adhere to, in this case. By following these etiquettes and sending a Kakao Talk message, it is not as much as an email, but it can convey the feeling of being polite and is elaborately structured. For example, do not use unnecessary emoticons unless you are close. Do not cut a sentence into pieces and send multiple messages. It is because the alarm sounds too much. Conversely, in some cases, refrain from writing one sentence too long or sending too lengthy content to one Kakao Talk message. Do not contact too late or too early.

Kakao Talk is both socially interactive and factually communicative. Basically, it is socially interactive through chat or call with one or more people. In addition, you can manage your own profile photo, status message, profile music, and stickers. And because this can be saved (of course it can be deleted), you can also reveal yourself through a profile. Others may infer a person's current situation or mood through a profile. Moreover, the act of giving gifts and leaving short letters to the other person through Kakao 'gift shop' is close to social interactivity.

However, fact-based communication is also made. In particular, people can discuss official stories using 'poll' function (especially anonymous poll) within Kakao Talk. You can also use Kakao's other applications such as Kakao 'Map' to navigate and Kakao 'Taxi' to call a taxi which is similar to 'Grab'. Of course, it is socially interactive to use those app and leave a review of it within the application. This is also the case for sending money to a person using Kakao 'Pay' in Kakao Talk. Of course, sending a message using a money transfer envelope is more like a social interaction.



Figure3 : Short messages on Kakao money transfer envelopes

'I hope you become rich(부자 되세요); 'Let's calculate(정산해요); 'Thank you(고마워요); 'Congratulations! (축하해요); 'Do not throw money away (아껴 써라); 'My heart (내 마음); 'Here your allowance is! (엿다 용돈)' and so on.

Kakao Talk is immediately revisable like speech. You can fix yourself, especially if you get an error before sending a message. And you can make a belated correction even after you have already sent the message. And the '# search' function allows the other person to correct the error. '# search' is a way to connect directly to the internet portal site and use the internet within a Kakao Talk chat room. It can be used to correct wrong information by finding dictionaries, articles, etc. You can delete a message within five minutes after sending it when you realize that you sent it as a mistake. The message itself cannot be modified, but immediate realization of mistakes is revisable through deletion. It is difficult to say that it is repeatedly revisable. This is because the content of message itself cannot be modified. To explain this, you might think of it as repeatedly revisable when you keep deleting the wrong messages repeatedly and creating new ones, but in fact it is hard to say it is appropriate.

Kakao Talk 'call' may be viewed as prosodically rich. However, it is appropriate to view 'chat' as graphically rich. Besides the text messages exchanged, emoticons, photos, videos, documents, and the results of the poll make it graphically rich.

4. New kinds of communication Kakao Talk has enabled and its general effects on language and society

The sociolinguistic function of Kakao Talk is as follows. Conversation in Kakao Talk can maintain the psychological distance between the speaker and the listener. It makes participants develop conversation with abbreviations, initial consonants expression, and coinage while encouraging interest. The speaker can express own feelings in detail by using emoticons and so on. People can shape the image that they want to build through emoticons and they use it as a means of communication to gain satisfaction. (Gang Yeon-im, 2017)

There are positive and negative effects of communication by Kakao Talk. User can communicate efficiently, free from various constraints, and visualize information to convey meaning. Positive interpersonal relationships are also formed through smooth communication. On the other hand, there are negative effects, too. It can be one-sided communication without considering the

listener, meaningless dialogue can continue, and there is a possibility of excessive expression that deviates language standard. (Gang Yeon-im, 2017)

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