



Korean Cultural Centre

# 26, Your Korean Words

Hosted by the Korean Cultural Centre UK

**Dates:** 29<sup>th</sup> April – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2024, Mon-Fri 10:00-17:30 / Sat 11:00-16:00

**Special Event:** 'Celebrate the Korean Language' 9<sup>th</sup> May 18:30-20:00

**Admission Free**

@kccuk\_exhibition / #26YourKoreanWords

kccuk.org.uk



© One (left) of the images depicting the '26 Korean Words added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2021', One (right) of the images depicting 'Newly revised Korean entries in 2021', Created by Bobby H.(Artist) in collaboration with Kangin.P (KCCUK Curator).

The Korean Cultural Centre UK hosts '26, Your Korean Words' from April 29 to June 22. The exhibition is a participatory exhibition that explores the twenty-six Korean words listed collectively in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in September 2021. Ten days after the opening, from 6:30 pm to 8 pm on May 9, a special event will be held to celebrate the Korean language and to commemorate the exhibition.

The OED contains more than 500,000 words, but when one considers that there were only a couple of dozen Korean words listed in the OED prior to 2021, twenty-six supplementary Korean words being added in a single update clearly indicated that something extremely unusual had just occurred.

On 12 December 2023, Google announced that the most searched recipe for the year was 'Bibimbap' and Netflix reported that more than 60% of its subscribers had watched a Korean title that year – making Korean the most consumed language on Netflix, after English.

Following the success of 'Squid Game' and 'Kingdom', K-dramas such as 'Crash Landing on You' and 'The Glory' saw a dramatic rise in global popularity. Since then, the use of Korean food-related words such as 'Dalgona' and 'Tteokbokki' have increased rapidly all over the world. Additionally, the use of words such as 'Hyeong' (meaning one's older brother) and 'Maknae' (meaning the youngest member of a family or group) has spread rapidly too. This suggests that the modern English lexicon has been influenced by the increase in K-pop-related consumption because these age-related words are often used by fans to describe members of K-pop idol groups.

With plans to incorporate additional Korean-derived words into the Oxford English Dictionary to reflect the growing presence of Korean culture in the UK, in the future the unique event of 2021 will no longer be considered an exception, but rather a well-deserved occurrence.

The exhibition features twenty-six special Korean origin words that are frequently used worldwide. Twenty-six words are visualised and displayed as images produced using Artificial Intelligence (A.I., Midjourney V.6). Moreover, the exhibition illustrates the background to the creation of the language through *Hunminjeongeum* (the first name of the Korean alphabet 'Hangeul') and *Malmoe Manuscript* (the draft of the first Korean dictionary). Also, the exhibition invites the audience to participate in the display by writing their own sentences using one of the twenty-six Korean words on specially crafted manuscript paper. These manuscript papers will be collected and join the display – this act of collection will make the exhibition complete, as if compiling a dictionary.

The special event '**Celebrate the Korean Language**' has been organised to mark the exhibition, and to celebrate the continued participation of the audience since the exhibition opened. The event includes various immersive activities such as 'My 26', an activity in which the audience write a sentence by selecting one of the twenty-six words introduced in the exhibition on a custom-crafted manuscript paper, 'Charades', a game in which the audience explain and guess specific Korean words through gestures, 'Manhwa', in which the audience find Korean comics with specific titles placed in the library of the Korean Cultural Centre and answer a quiz about related contents, and 'Bingo' using the 26 words.

**Dr. Seunghye Sun, Director of Korean Cultural Centre UK said:** *"The inclusion of 26 Korean words in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2021 reveals how the global consumption of Korean culture through digital platforms during the pandemic has led to an increased global influence of the Korean language. This can be considered an important phenomenon in 21st-century digital culture, revealing the future of new digital culture."*

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**For further PRESS information and a selection of press images about the exhibition '26, Your Korean Words' at KCCUK, please contact Kangin Park on [k.park@kccuk.org.uk](mailto:k.park@kccuk.org.uk) / +44 (0020 7004 2602.**

### **About Korean Cultural Centre UK (KCCUK)**

The Korean Cultural Centre UK (KCCUK) was opened by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in January 2008 under the aegis of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea. The role of the KCCUK is to further enhance friendship, amity, and understanding between Korea and the UK through cultural and educational activities. From the KCCUK's central London location, near Trafalgar Square, its dedicated cultural team work to further develop cultural projects, introduce new opportunities to expand their Korean events programme in the UK, and encourage cultural exchange.