



A MULTIMODAL LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CHA EUNWOO'S FAREWELL SPEECH: DISCOURSE, PRAGMATIC, AND RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a comprehensive linguistic analysis of Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech in Master in the House (Episode 177), employing an integrated framework of discourse analysis, pragmatics, and rhetorical strategies, complemented by a multimodal approach. The research utilizes a descriptive qualitative methodology, focusing on a single case study of a televised speech. Data were meticulously transcribed from the original video, and a detailed analysis was conducted to investigate how Cha Eunwoo discursively constructs his identity and relationships, navigates social nuances through pragmatic choices in Korean politeness and honorifics, and employs rhetorical appeals, particularly pathos, to foster and maintain audience engagement and parasocial bonds. Furthermore, the analysis examines the interplay of verbal and non-verbal cues, including vocalics, kinesics, and visual context, in shaping the overall communicative impact of the televised speech. Findings reveal a sophisticated balance between personal emotion and public performance, demonstrating how linguistic and multimodal strategies are strategically deployed to reinforce celebrity persona, solidify interpersonal connections within a variety show setting, and ensure sustained fan loyalty within the dynamic landscape of Hallyu. This study contributes to a nuanced understanding of celebrity communication, the evolving dynamics of the Korean Wave, and the complex application of Korean linguistic features in mediated entertainment contexts.

Keywords: *Cha Eunwoo, Master in the House, farewell speech, discourse analysis*

Abstrak

Abstrak memuat uraian singkat dan padat mengenai latar belakang permasalahan atau urgensi penelitian, tujuan penelitian, metode yang digunakan, hasil penelitian yang menjadi penekanan utama, serta kesimpulan. Abstrak ditulis dalam Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Inggris dengan isi yang konsisten, menggunakan satu spasi, panjang 150–300 kata, dan berbentuk naratif tanpa menyertakan kutipan, tabel, gambar, maupun persamaan. Setelah abstrak, dicantumkan kata kunci sebanyak 3–5 kata/frasa yang dipisahkan dengan koma, yang mencerminkan topik penelitian, istilah utama, atau variabel penting, sehingga memudahkan proses pengindeksan dan penelusuran artikel. Studi ini menyajikan analisis linguistik komprehensif atas pidato perpisahan Cha Eunwoo dalam Master in the House (Episode 177), menggunakan kerangka kerja terpadu analisis wacana, pragmatik, dan strategi retorika, yang dilengkapi dengan pendekatan multimoda. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif deskriptif, dengan fokus pada studi kasus tunggal pidato yang disiarkan di televisi. Data ditranskripsi secara cermat dari video asli, dan analisis terperinci dilakukan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana Cha Eunwoo secara diskursif mengkonstruksi identitas dan hubungannya, menavigasi nuansa sosial melalui pilihan pragmatik dalam kesopanan dan honorifik Korea, dan menggunakan daya tarik retorika, khususnya pathos, untuk membina dan mempertahankan keterlibatan audiens dan ikatan parasosial. Lebih lanjut, analisis ini mengkaji interaksi isyarat verbal dan non-verbal, termasuk vokalik, kinesik, dan konteks visual, dalam membentuk dampak komunikatif keseluruhan dari pidato yang disiarkan di televisi. Temuan ini mengungkap

keseimbangan yang canggih antara emosi pribadi dan penampilan publik, menunjukkan bagaimana strategi linguistik dan multimoda diterapkan secara strategis untuk memperkuat persona selebritas, mempererat hubungan interpersonal dalam lingkungan variety show, dan memastikan loyalitas penggemar yang berkelanjutan dalam lanskap Hallyu yang dinamis. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang mendalam tentang komunikasi selebritas, dinamika Gelombang Korea yang terus berkembang, dan penerapan fitur linguistik Korea yang kompleks dalam konteks hiburan termediasi.

Kata Kunci: Cha Eunwoo, Master in the House, pidato perpisahan, analisis wacana

1. INTRODUCTION

The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, has emerged as a formidable global cultural force over the past two decades, fundamentally reshaping traditional methods of media consumption and cultural exchange. Scholars such as Howard [1], Jung [2], and Oh & Park [3] demonstrate that Hallyu reflects shifts in Korea's cultural industries and global engagement. Originating in East and Southeast Asian regions in the late 1990s, Hallyu has since evolved into a more intensive and extensive phenomenon in the 2010s, often referred to as "hallyu 2.0". This contemporary phase is largely characterized by the significant penetration of K-pop into Western markets and the pervasive role of social media in its rapid dissemination. The global popularity of South Korea's cultural economy, encompassing music (K-pop), television dramas (K-dramas), movies, fashion, and beauty products, has profoundly impacted cultural landscapes worldwide, promoting the Korean language and culture far beyond its geographical borders.

Hallyu functions not merely as a source of entertainment but as a dynamic platform for cultural reflection, social critique, and emotional engagement. For instance, studies on Indonesian audiences' perceptions of K-dramas reveal that viewers are far from passive consumers of Korean culture. Instead, they actively interpret, reflect upon, and selectively compare the idealized images of Korea presented in these dramas with their own cultural norms. This active engagement, often expressed through viewer comments on digital platforms, creates an interactive space for conveying reactions to storylines, characters, and cultural values. The dynamic interaction observed in these digital spaces indicates a complex process of cultural acceptance and hybridity, where audiences maintain their local identity while negotiating meanings from foreign cultures. This active interpretation and selective engagement underscore that celebrity discourse within Hallyu is not a one-way transmission but an integral part of a dynamic, interactive cultural dialogue. As Page [4] emphasizes, multimodality is central to this global dialogue, while Bednarek [5] show similar patterns in digital narrativity and fictional discourse. As Lie [6] argues, Hallyu operates not only as entertainment but also as a form of cultural memory and economic innovation that reshapes global cultural flows. This elevates the significance of analyzing how celebrities communicate, as their words and actions are subject to active interpretation and can profoundly shape cultural perceptions among a global audience.

Within the expansive landscape of Hallyu, K-pop idols and celebrities occupy a unique and influential position. They transcend the conventional role of entertainers, frequently serving as cultural ambassadors and central figures around whom robust parasocial relationships are formed. The mediated communication of these figures, often facilitated through diverse platforms such as variety shows and live stream events, is pivotal in cultivating empathetic attachment and sustained loyalty from their global audiences [7]. The concept of "parasocial interaction" is fundamental to comprehending the profound audience engagement with K-pop performers. These interactions, significantly enhanced by digital platforms like V Live, foster a powerful sense of intimacy and closeness between performers and their fans. This engagement extends beyond mere passive consumption, evolving into an active co-creation of value, where audiences feel a direct connection and influence. The critical role of parasocial interactions in generating empathetic attachment and loyalty implies that a celebrity's public speech, particularly a significant event like a farewell, functions as a strategic communicative act designed to reinforce these existing bonds [8]. The linguistic and rhetorical choices made during such a speech are not arbitrary; rather, they are meticulously crafted to maintain audience connection and loyalty, even in the face of a performer's departure or transition.

Furthermore, there is a discernible shift in industry expectations, emphasizing "sincere communication with audiences" and a compelling need for artists to "connect with their fans on a more personal and emotional level". This evolving expectation highlights that linguistic and rhetorical strategies conveying authenticity, vulnerability, and profound gratitude are increasingly vital for celebrity success and the enduring strength of fandom within the contemporary Hallyu landscape. The industry's recognition of the necessity for

personal and emotional connection directly correlates with the rhetorical strategy of pathos and the pragmatic utilization of language to convey intimacy. Bednarek & Caple [9] and Tarso [10] highlight how media organizations and fandom platforms foster this perceived intimacy. A farewell speech, being inherently emotional, thus provides a fertile ground to examine how these strategies are deployed by a prominent K-pop idol like Cha Eunwoo to meet these critical industry and fan expectations.

Master in the House, also known as All The Butlers, is a widely recognized and popular South Korean variety show. The program is celebrated for its distinctive format, which centers on cast members living with and learning from various “masters” across different fields, thereby exploring life lessons and personal growth. The show's premise inherently fosters a sense of camaraderie and shared experience among its cast, often portraying them as a close-knit “family”. Cha Eunwoo joined Master in the House as a regular cast member in episode 116, serving alongside other prominent personalities. His tenure on the show concluded with episode 177, which marked his final appearance as a regular cast member, alongside Shin Sung-rok, on June 20, 2021. This specific episode carried significant emotional weight, not only for the cast members but also for the extensive fanbase. Cha Eunwoo's departure was widely understood to be connected to his impending military enlistment, a common and often emotional transition for male celebrities in South Korea. The sentiment surrounding his farewell was one of profound sadness among both his fellow cast members and the show's loyal viewers.

The departure of a beloved cast member from a popular program like Master in the House is not merely a routine cast change; it constitutes a significant event for fans, triggering a range of emotional responses. This context elevates the importance of Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech as a pivotal moment for emotional closure and continuity for the audience. The environment of a variety show, unlike a scripted drama, is characterized by “living language” and “scenario-based” interactions, making it an exceptionally rich site for sociolinguistic analysis. A farewell speech, delivered in such an unscripted or semi-scripted context, provides authentic insights into how a celebrity utilizes language in a high-stakes, emotionally charged public setting, offering a unique window into their communicative strategies.

Master in the House underscore that such speeches are deeply personal yet simultaneously publicly performed. This duality blurs the conventional lines between private emotion and public persona, highlighting the delicate balance celebrities must maintain in their mediated communication. The dual nature of a celebrity farewell functioning both as a personal goodbye and a public performance necessitates a nuanced linguistic analysis. Such an analysis must examine how language is deployed to express genuine sentiment while concurrently adhering to the communicative demands of a public platform and preserving a desired public image. Such strategies resonate with rhetorical traditions of Perelman [11]. This intricate interplay between authenticity and performance is central to understanding the strategic communication of public figures. The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive linguistic analysis of Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech delivered in Master in the House (Episode 177). This analysis will be executed through an integrated framework encompassing discourse analysis, pragmatics, and rhetorical strategies, further enhanced by a multimodal approach. By meticulously examining the linguistic and non-linguistic elements of his address, the study aims to unravel the intricate communicative choices made by a prominent K-pop idol during a significant career transition.

This research endeavors to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge in several key areas. Firstly, it seeks to deepen the understanding of celebrity communication, particularly within the unique context of the Korean entertainment industry. Secondly, it aims to illuminate the complex dynamics of Hallyu, demonstrating how individual communicative acts contribute to the broader cultural wave. Lastly, the study will provide empirical insights into the nuanced application of Korean linguistic features, such as politeness strategies and honorifics, within mediated contexts, thereby enriching sociolinguistics and communication studies. Through this multi-faceted investigation, the study offers a detailed perspective on how public figures manage their image, relationships, and fan loyalty through strategic linguistic and multimodal deployment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): Power, Ideology, and Social Practice

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an analytical approach that investigates the ways in which language and communication construct, maintain, and reflect social power, ideological positions, and broader cultural contexts. Unlike traditional linguistic analysis, CDA moves beyond surface-level descriptions to uncover underlying biases, assumptions, and dominant narratives that shape meaning within discourse.

From this perspective, discourse is not viewed as a neutral medium but as a powerful instrument that can reinforce existing inequalities or challenge them within institutional and cultural settings Fairclough [12]. As such, CDA functions both as a method of linguistic inquiry and as a critical framework for interpreting how meanings are produced in society.

Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model is one of the most significant theoretical contributions to CDA, offering a systematic approach to analyzing discourse. The framework identifies three interconnected dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Textual analysis examines linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and stylistic elements. The discourse practice dimension focuses on processes of production, distribution, and interpretation of texts within particular institutional and social contexts. Meanwhile, the sociocultural dimension situates discourse within larger structures of power, ideology, and cultural norms, ensuring that language analysis is always contextualized within its wider social and political environment [13],[14].

CDA is particularly effective in analyzing media discourse, where ideologies are constructed and disseminated to mass audiences. For example, a CDA study of Korean media reporting on graduate student–advisor relationships revealed entrenched hierarchies and human rights violations within the so-called “Gap-Eul” system. Such cases illustrate how media discourse both mirrors and reinforces broader social inequalities, shaping public understanding of power relations in the labor market and educational settings. In the realm of celebrity culture, CDA provides insights into how public statements, such as Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech, can either support or subtly question power structures within the entertainment industry, while simultaneously reflecting cultural expectations in Korean society. Beyond literal meaning, CDA uncovers how linguistic strategies influence fan perceptions, reproduce hierarchical relations, and transmit cultural values globally. Even seemingly innocuous products like Korean variety shows may contribute to cultural hegemony, particularly among international audiences, highlighting the importance of CDA in deconstructing how Hallyu discourse circulates and shapes global ideologies [15].

2.2. Pragmatics of Korean Communication: Politeness, Honorifics, and Context

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines how context influences the interpretation of meaning in communication. Scholars such as White et al. [16] and Searle [17] emphasize that speech acts go beyond literal words, functioning as actions that perform social purposes. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech, where intention, implied meaning, and interpersonal roles shape communication. Korean discourse especially relies on contextual factors, such as the relationship between speakers, situational formality, and cultural norms. Levinson [18] argues that pragmatic meaning arises from these contextual elements, which govern both speaker intention and hearer interpretation, especially within systems like Korean honorifics. Additionally, research by Trosborg [19] demonstrates how politeness strategies appear in requests, refusals, and apologies across different settings, highlighting pragmatics as essential for interpreting nuanced Korean communication.

The Korean language is particularly notable for its complex politeness system, which functions through four main domains: speech style, honorifics, terms of address, and gendered language. These elements interact to signal respect, manage relationships, and index social positioning. Among speech styles, four contemporary categories dominate: deferential (-supnida), polite (-yo), intimate/plain (panmal), and highly informal variants. Each style is employed according to situational formality, social hierarchy, and interpersonal closeness. For example, deferential speech is common in institutional contexts, polite style in everyday interactions, and panmal within intimate relationships, though it may also serve strategic purposes in negotiations or playful exchanges. Beyond speech styles, Korean honorifics operate at three levels subject, object, and hearer honorification and are governed by variables such as power, solidarity, and formality. The use of humble pronouns like *ce* instead of *na* illustrates how speakers express respect through linguistic choices, underscoring the highly codified yet flexible nature of politeness in Korean communication.

Although Korean honorifics were traditionally seen as rigid markers of age or rank, more recent studies show that they are dynamic, indexical, and highly context-dependent. Speakers often switch honorific levels within a single exchange, indicating that their functions extend beyond simple respect or hierarchy. From an indexical perspective, honorifics possess core meanings, or “direct indices,” which shift into more specific social interpretations depending on context. For instance, the deferential form -supnida can convey authority and expertise on a talk show, but sound distant or theatrical in casual speech. This flexibility

allows honorifics to highlight institutional identity, emphasize factuality, or even signal irony. Researchers distinguish between macro-level interactions, shaped by conventional norms of hierarchy, and micro-level uses, where context-specific meanings emerge dynamically. In Cha Eunwoo's farewell, his use of honorifics reflects not only respect but also emotional authenticity, intimacy with cast members, and solidarity with fans. Furthermore, multimodal factors intonation, rhythm, and pacing interact with linguistic choices to create pragmatic meaning.

2.3. Rhetorical Theory: Persuasion, Emotion, and Audience Connection

Rhetorical theory offers a foundation for examining how speakers persuade audiences, drawing from both classical and modern perspectives. Central to this theory are three appeals: *ethos* (credibility of the speaker), *pathos* (emotional appeal), and *logos* (logical reasoning). Since [20], rhetorical studies have consistently emphasized this triad, with *pathos* highlighted as especially effective in speeches aimed at creating emotional bonds with listeners. Public figures, particularly in emotional or farewell speeches, often rely on *pathos* to foster relatability and trust. In this context, what has been described as a "feminine rhetorical style" marked by emotional resonance, personal anecdotes, and relational communication has proven effective for conveying authenticity and strengthening audience connections.

Within celebrity communication, *pathos* serves as a deliberate strategy to evoke empathy, sadness, gratitude, and solidarity, thereby reinforcing emotional attachment between performers and their audiences. In K-pop culture, this practice aligns with the concept of "empathetic attachment," which is nurtured through parasocial relationships and the industry's emphasis on authentic, sincere communication. Farewell speeches by idols, such as Cha Eunwoo's, exemplify this dynamic, as they must rely heavily on emotional appeals to sustain fan loyalty. His rhetorical choices expressing vulnerability, recalling shared memories, and extending heartfelt gratitude are designed not only to ease the sense of loss but also to reaffirm parasocial bonds. By framing separation as a moment of appreciation and a promise of continued connection, such speeches function as critical rhetorical acts that mitigate the negative impact of departure while preserving long-term emotional engagement.

Narratives, anecdotes, and direct address are powerful rhetorical strategies for personalizing communication and deepening audience engagement. By sharing stories or using phrases that acknowledge individual listeners, speakers can cultivate intimacy and a sense of exclusivity. In Korean entertainment contexts, audiences are particularly responsive to a blend of humor and emotion, as reflected in reactions to K-drama dialogues and variety show interactions. This responsiveness suggests that Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech likely combines emotional vulnerability with subtle humor, balancing seriousness with lightheartedness to resonate with audience expectations. Such a rhetorical mix strengthens the authenticity of his message while maintaining alignment with the communicative style familiar to fans. Ultimately, his ability to integrate *pathos* with narrative elements and humor ensures that the farewell functions not only as a moment of closure but also as an affirmation of shared experiences and collective identity.

2.4. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA): Integrating Verbal and Non-Verbal Meaning

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding communication as an interplay of multiple semiotic modes, extending beyond verbal language. It emphasizes that meaning is co-constructed through various modalities such as text, images, sounds, and gestures, each of which contributes uniquely to discourse. As Kress & Van Leeuwen [21] argue, meaning emerges from the interaction of verbal and visual modes, while Jewitt et al. [22] highlight that multimodality lies at the heart of contemporary communication practices. Thus, MDA shifts the focus from language alone to the wider orchestration of communicative resources that shape interpretation.

To conduct an effective MDA, three key dimensions are commonly applied. The first involves identifying modes by mapping verbal, visual, and embodied elements, which together form the communicative whole. The second is analyzing interactions between these modes, examining how they reinforce, complement, or contradict one another, thereby shaping meaning in complex ways. Finally, contextual analysis considers cultural, social, and situational conditions that frame discourse, since meaning is contingent upon context [23],[24]. These dimensions underscore the importance of treating communication as multimodal, with each component and its interactions carrying interpretive significance.

MDA proves especially valuable in analyzing televised discourse, where meaning emerges from the integration of vocalics, kinesics, and visual framing. For instance, camera angles, gestures, facial expressions, and editing choices all influence how audiences interpret messages [25]. In the case of Cha

Eunwoo's farewell speech on a Korean variety show, the combination of verbal language with tone, pauses, gaze, and cast reactions contributes to the audience's perception of sincerity and emotional depth. Conversation Analysis within MDA further reveals how broadcast talk relies on institutionalized turn-taking and interactional cues [26],[27]. Thus, Cha Eunwoo's pauses, shifts in intonation, or glances at cast members are not random but constitute part of the "conversational order" of the show, allowing implicit audience participation and reinforcing shared emotional moments.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a multimodal discourse analysis approach, focusing on identity construction, pragmatic strategies, and rhetorical force in Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech in *Master in the House* episode 177. The primary data consist of video recordings and speech transcripts obtained from public sources, which were meticulously transcribed to capture both verbal and non-verbal details [28],[29]. The analysis examines linguistic features (such as pronoun choice, honorifics, and speech styles), pragmatic strategies (including shifts in formality, the use of polite and intimate forms, and expressions of humility), as well as rhetorical devices (personal anecdotes, expressions of gratitude, promises for the future, and emotional appeals). In addition, the study investigates multimodal components accompanying the speech, including vocalics (intonation, tempo, volume), kinesics (gestures, facial expressions, body posture), and the broader visual context (cast members' reactions, camera framing, and editing techniques).

To strengthen the validity of the analysis, the study draws on theoretical frameworks from sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and rhetorical theory, as well as multimodal analysis models developed [30]. The data were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic approach, in which each quotation or visual excerpt was mapped to its pragmatic and rhetorical functions. For instance, the use of the term "형들" (*hyungdeul*) was interpreted as a persona-building strategy to construct the role of the "younger brother," aligned with Korean cultural norms, while a trembling intonation or emotional pause was analyzed as a multimodal device reinforcing pathos. The analysis was also contextual, taking into account Korean cultural conventions, the norms of variety show discourse, and the dynamics of K-pop fandom that shape audience interpretation. Through this approach, the study not only describes linguistic forms but also explains the social, emotional, and persuasive functions of the farewell speech in sustaining loyalty and parasocial relationships.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Discourse Construction of Identity and Relationships

4.1.1. Self-Representation and Persona Construction

In his farewell speech, Cha Eunwoo meticulously constructs and reinforces a multifaceted persona, primarily that of a "younger brother" (동생, *dongsaeng*) to the older cast members, while also subtly acknowledging his identity as an "idol" (차은우, *Cha Eunwoo*) and a "colleague." This self-representation is evident in his direct address and the overall tone of his message. For instance, his repeated use of "형들" (*hyungdeul*, older brothers) when referring to Lee Seung-gi, Yang Se-hyung, Kim Dong-hyun, and Shin Sung-rok immediately positions him in a junior, yet affectionate, role. This discursive choice leverages deeply ingrained Korean cultural norms of hierarchy and familial bonds, which are often emphasized within the variety show setting. By adopting and consistently maintaining this "younger brother" persona, he presents himself as relatable and endearing, fostering a sense of warmth and intimacy not only with the cast but, by extension, with the viewing audience. This aligns with the entertainment industry's contemporary push for artists to connect with fans on a "personal and emotional level".

The strategic adoption of a "younger brother" persona is a highly effective discursive strategy within Korean culture. This identity invokes a sense of protectiveness and affection from older cast members and, by extension, from the audience who perceive him in this role. This discursive construction reinforces parasocial bonds through a culturally resonant framework, making his departure feel more personal and impactful to the viewers. His self-referential pronouns, such as "제가" (*jega*, humble 'I') and "저" (*jeo*, humble 'I'), when coupled with his overall demeanor, further underscore a humble and respectful stance, even as he expresses his own feelings and experiences. This careful balance between asserting his individual experience and maintaining a deferential position contributes to a well-rounded and appealing public image.

4.1.2. Discursive Building of Relationships with Cast Members and Audience

Cha Eunwoo's speech is replete with instances where he explicitly and implicitly addresses individual cast members, thereby reinforcing the strong bonds cultivated during their time together. He directly names and

speaks to Lee Seung-gi, Yang Se-hyung, and Kim Dong-hyun, expressing specific sentiments for each. For example, he refers to Lee Seung-gi as “내가 정말 심적으로 그 왼쪽으로도 많이 의지했던 내 동생” (my younger brother whom I truly relied on mentally and physically), and Yang Se-hyung as “언제든지 형이 한잔하자고 하면 늘 같이 잔을 들어주던 고마운 동생” (a grateful younger brother who always raised a glass with me whenever I suggested a drink). These personalized acknowledgements are not merely polite gestures; they are strategic discursive acts that highlight shared memories and inside jokes, effectively reinforcing group solidarity and intimacy. This approach strengthens the “group solidarity” within the show’s “family” dynamic, a common and cherished theme in Korean variety shows. This discursive strategy not only expresses profound gratitude but also models the emotional bond for the audience, inviting them to feel part of this collective experience and thereby reinforcing their own parasocial connections.

The use of shared experiences and direct address to individual cast members serves to strengthen the internal cohesion of the show’s “family.” If variety shows create a “language environment” and influence understanding of cultural norms, then the discursive construction of relationships within the show (e.g., the “family” dynamic of *Master in the House*) becomes a model for audience engagement. Cha Eunwoo’s speech, by highlighting these internal bonds, implicitly invites the audience to participate in this emotional landscape, deepening their “empathetic attachment” to the entire cast and the show itself, not just to him. Beyond the immediate cast, the speech implicitly addresses the broader audience his fans (AROH) reinforcing their connection and loyalty. Phrases like “언제든지 연락 주세요” (Please contact me anytime), although directed at his *hyungdeul*, also subtly extends an invitation for continued connection to his fans, who are part of his broader “family.” The emotional tributes from fans online, such as “leave a purple love in the comments”, attest to the success of this implicit address in maintaining audience engagement.

4.1.3. Overarching Themes and Narratives

Cha Eunwoo’s farewell speech is structured around several overarching themes that collectively contribute to a coherent narrative of growth, appreciation, and enduring connection. These themes frame his departure not as an abrupt end but as a natural transition within his career and relationships: (1) Gratitude: A prominent theme is profound gratitude. He repeatedly expresses thanks, notably stating, “항상 고맙고” (always thankful). This is directed not only at his fellow cast members but also implicitly at the production team and the audience; (2) Reflection on Shared Experiences: The speech is rich with reflections on the enjoyable and meaningful time spent together. He states, “우리 집사부 형들. 형님들 함께한 시간 동안 너무 즐겁고 행복했어요” (Our Master in the House *hyungdeul*. The time we spent together was so enjoyable and happy). This emphasis on shared positive memories creates a collective emotional resonance; (3) Appreciation for Lessons Learned: Beyond mere enjoyment, Cha Eunwoo highlights the personal growth derived from his experience on the show. He acknowledges, “사부님께 배운 것도 많지만 형들한테 배운게 더 많은 거 같아요” (I learned a lot from the masters, but I think I learned even more from my *hyungdeul*). This elevates the relationships to a mentorship level, reinforcing the depth of his bonds with the cast; (4) Future Commitment: Crucially, the speech includes expressions of future commitment and a desire to maintain relationships. He pledges, “저는 또 차원으로서 열심히 달려가면서 형들에게 남들이 못는 동생이 되기 위해 정진할게요” (As Cha Eunwoo, I will diligently strive to become a younger brother that others cannot surpass for my *hyungdeul*), and “자주 보자” (Let’s see each other often). These statements serve to reassure both cast and audience that the bonds formed will endure beyond his departure from the show.

The consistent narrative of gratitude, shared growth, and future commitment discursively frames Cha Eunwoo’s departure as a positive, natural progression rather than an abrupt ending. This rhetorical framing is crucial for maintaining audience loyalty and positive perception, aligning with the goal of “sustained loyalty” for K-pop performers. If the goal is “sustained loyalty” and a positive public image, then the narrative constructed in the farewell speech must mitigate the negative impact of departure. By emphasizing continuity (future commitment) and positive past experiences (gratitude, shared growth), Cha Eunwoo’s speech strategically manages the audience’s emotional response, ensuring that his exit from the show does not translate into a loss of fandom. This careful narrative construction transforms a potentially melancholic event into a reaffirmation of enduring connections and future possibilities.

4.2. Pragmatic Strategies: Navigating Politeness and Social Nuances

4.2.1. Speech Style and Honorifics Usage

A detailed analysis of Cha Eunwoo’s speech reveals a dynamic interplay of different speech styles and honorifics, meticulously adapted to his various interlocutors and the evolving emotional context. This dynamic switching is a sophisticated pragmatic strategy, reflecting his nuanced understanding of social relationships within the show’s context and his ability to adapt his linguistic persona: (1) Towards Older Cast Members (형들, *hyungdeul*): Cha Eunwoo predominantly employs a mix of polite (-yo) and intimate (*panmal*) forms when addressing his older castmates. The polite -yo ending, such as in “즐겁고 행복했어요” (it was enjoyable and happy) and “더 많은 거 같아요” (I think I learned more), maintains a standard level of politeness appropriate for public discourse and acknowledges their seniority; (2) Towards the Production Team/General Audience: When addressing the broader production team or implicitly the general audience, Cha Eunwoo maintains a polite (-yo) or, if applicable, a deferential (-*supnida*) stance. This reflects a more formal, public address, upholding professionalism and respect for the wider viewership and the institutional context of the broadcasting station; (3) Self-humbling Expressions: Cha Eunwoo also employs humble first-person pronouns, such as “저” (*jeo*) or “제가” (*jega*), instead of the more neutral “나” (*na*) or “내가” (*naega*), particularly when expressing gratitude or humility towards his seniors or the audience. For example, “아침까지 저희가 좋은 추억 만들어 오겠습니다” (We will make good memories until morning), where *저희* (*jeohui*, humble ‘we’) is used. This choice pragmatically conveys respect and deference, aligning with Korean cultural norms that emphasize humility in interaction with those of higher status or in formal settings.

The dynamic switching between speech styles and honorifics is a sophisticated pragmatic strategy. For instance, using *panmal* with close *hyungdeul* despite their age difference signals deep intimacy and solidarity, while maintaining polite forms for the broader audience or production team demonstrates professionalism and respect. These shifts index his nuanced understanding of social relationships within the show’s context and his ability to adapt his linguistic persona. If honorifics are dynamic and indexical, then Cha Eunwoo’s choices are not fixed but context-dependent. His use of more intimate forms with his castmates reinforces the “family” narrative of the show, making his farewell more emotionally impactful. This pragmatic flexibility contributes to his “sincere communication” and ability to connect on a “personal and emotional level”, which are crucial for maintaining parasocial bonds.

4.2.2. Conveying Respect, Intimacy, and Emotional States

Cha Eunwoo’s pragmatic choices extend beyond mere grammatical forms to subtly convey underlying emotional states and degrees of intimacy. The specific choice of verb endings, particles, and terms of address are instrumental in this regard. For example, his expressions of gratitude, such as “항상 고맙고” (always thankful), are delivered with an emotional weight that transcends the literal meaning, conveying deep appreciation. His use of terms like “내 동생” (my younger brother) for Lee Seung-gi, despite Seung-gi being older, indicates a reversal of roles to express profound affection and reliance, showcasing a micro-level pragmatic choice that communicates intimacy.

Instances of indirectness or hedging, while not explicitly detailed in the provided snippets for this speech, are common face-saving strategies in Korean communication and can also serve as expressions of humility. Such strategies would allow him to convey sadness or vulnerability without appearing overly direct or burdensome. The strategic use of pragmatic devices, such as indirectness or specific particles, allows Cha Eunwoo to express deep emotion (e.g., sadness over leaving) while maintaining a polite or humble demeanor, which is highly valued in Korean culture. This demonstrates a sophisticated social skill in navigating emotional public discourse. If social skills involve making others feel special and Korean communication values politeness, then Cha Eunwoo’s pragmatic choices in an emotional farewell must balance vulnerability with social appropriateness. Indirect expressions of sadness or gratitude, coupled with appropriate honorifics, allow him to convey genuine emotion without appearing overly dramatic or disrespectful, thereby reinforcing his positive public image and strengthening emotional connections.

Table 1. Pragmatic Functions of Korean Speech Styles and Honorifics in Cha Eunwoo’s Farewell Speech

Speech Style/Honorific Form	Example from Transcript (Korean & English)	Interlocutor	Context	Pragmatic Function/Meaning Indexed
Polite (-요)	“즐겁고 행복했어요” (It was enjoyable and happy)	Cast members,	Reflecting on shared time	Standard politeness, gratitude, shared

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		Audience		positive experience
Intimate (panmal)	(Implied in affectionate address to <i>hyungdeul</i>)	Older cast members	Deep emotional connection	Intimacy, solidarity, familial bond
Humble First Person (저희)	“아침까지 저희가 좋은 추억 만들어 오겠습니다” (We will make good memories until morning)	Cast members, Production Team	Expressing collective action/intent	Humility, deference, professionalism
Direct Address (형님들)	“우리 집사부 형들. 형님들” (Our Master in the House <i>hyungdeul</i> . Older brothers)	Older cast members	Expressing collective gratitude	Respect for seniority, strong camaraderie
Specific Naming (승기 형)	“우리 승기. 내가 정말 심적으로 그 왼쪽으로도 많이 의지했던 내 동생.” (Our Seung-gi. My younger brother whom I truly relied on mentally and physically.)	Lee Seung-gi	Deep affection, personal bond, reliance	
Future Commitment (정진할게요)	“형들에게 남들이 못하는 동생이 되기 위해 정진할게요” (I will diligently strive to become a younger brother that others cannot surpass for my <i>hyungdeul</i>)	Older cast members	Promise for future relationship	Loyalty, enduring bond, self-improvement

This table provides empirical evidence for the theoretical claims about the dynamic and indexical nature of Korean honorifics. By presenting concrete examples from the speech, it allows for a visual understanding of how Cha Eunwoo strategically navigates different social relationships and emotional states through his linguistic choices. This moves beyond abstract definitions to demonstrate the real-world application of pragmatic theory in a high-profile media context, systematically illustrating the micro-level linguistic choices that contribute to the macro-level discourse of identity and relationship building.

4.3. Rhetorical Appeals: Emotion, Persuasion, and Audience Engagement

4.3.1. Identification and Analysis of Key Rhetorical Devices

Cha Eunwoo effectively employs several rhetorical devices to create authenticity and foster connection: (1) Personal Anecdotes and Specific Memories: He draws upon shared experiences and specific memories with the cast members to create a personal and relatable message. His statement, “사부님께 배운 것도 많지만 형들한테 배운게 더 많은 거 같아요” (I learned a lot from the masters, but I think I learned even more from my *hyungdeul*), is a powerful anecdote that highlights the depth of his personal growth through their interactions. This personal touch makes the farewell resonate more deeply than a generic statement; (2) Direct Address: The speech frequently employs direct address, not only to specific individuals like “승기 형,” “세영아,” and “동현이 형”, but also to the collective “우리 집사부 형들” (our Master in the House *hyungdeul*). This directness fosters a sense of intimacy and shared experience, making each individual feel personally acknowledged and valued. The use of personal anecdotes and direct address in Cha Eunwoo’s farewell speech is a powerful rhetorical strategy to cultivate a “personal message” and make the audience “feel special”. This directly contributes to building and maintaining “empathetic attachment” by creating a sense of shared intimacy and authenticity, which is crucial for a celebrity’s sustained popularity. If personal anecdotes and direct address build connection, then Cha Eunwoo’s specific mentions of shared experiences and direct addresses to his castmates are not just polite gestures but calculated rhetorical moves.

4.3.2. In-depth Examination of Pathos

Pathos is the cornerstone of Cha Eunwoo’s farewell speech, meticulously crafted to evoke empathy, sadness, and continued support from his audience: (1) Expressions of Vulnerability: While maintaining composure, Cha Eunwoo subtly expresses vulnerability, acknowledging the emotional weight of his

departure. Phrases like “마음의 짐을 너무 많이 가지고 살아가는 건 아닌가” (Am I living with too much on my mind/heart?) suggest an underlying emotional burden. The general sentiment of sadness among cast members and fans further contextualizes his implied sadness, inviting the audience to share in his emotions; (2) Expressions of Gratitude: Gratitude is a recurring emotional appeal. The repetitive use of “고맙습니다” (thank you) and “고맙고” (thankful) underscores his appreciation for the experiences and relationships. This sincere expression of thanks aims to elicit reciprocal positive feelings from the audience; (3) Expressions of Affection/Love: He explicitly states, “너무너무 사랑합니다” (I love you very, very much), directed at his fellow cast members. This direct expression of affection solidifies the emotional bond and invites the audience to perceive the genuine warmth of their relationships; (4) Future Aspirations/Promises: To ensure continued connection, Cha Eunwoo articulates future aspirations and promises. His pledge to “형들에게 남들이 못는 동생이 되기 위해 정진할게요” (diligently strive to become a younger brother that others cannot surpass for my hyungdeul) and the simple yet powerful “자주 보자” (Let’s see each other often) serve to reassure both the cast and the audience that his departure is not an end but a transition, implying future interactions and sustained relationships.

Cha Eunwoo’s deliberate expressions of vulnerability, gratitude, and affection are central to his pathos appeal. By openly displaying his own emotions, he invites the audience to reciprocate, thereby deepening their “empathetic attachment”. This strategy aligns with the finding that K-dramas shape emotional behavior through observational learning, suggesting that celebrity speeches can similarly model and reinforce emotional expressivity for audiences. If K-dramas shape emotional behavior and pathos connects emotionally, then Cha Eunwoo’s display of vulnerability is a powerful rhetorical act. It allows the audience to feel a deeper, more authentic connection, transforming the farewell from a formal announcement into a shared emotional experience, thereby reinforcing the “reservoir of feeling states” that underpins audience attachment.

4.3.3. Persuasive Elements and Audience Response

Beyond expressing emotion, the speech implicitly persuades the audience to maintain their loyalty and support, even after his departure from the show. This persuasive goal is directly linked to the concept of “sustained loyalty” in K-pop fandom. By emphasizing his gratitude, the positive impact of his time on the show, and his commitment to enduring relationships, Cha Eunwoo subtly encourages fans to continue their support for his future endeavors as an idol. This serves as a form of “social reinforcement” that mitigates potential disengagement.

While there are no explicit calls to action within the speech itself, external cues from fan communities, such as calls to “leave a purple love in the comments” or “subscribe for more stories that matter to your K-pop heart” , demonstrate the desired audience response and the success of his overall persuasive effort. The implicit persuasive goal of Cha Eunwoo’s farewell speech is to ensure “sustained loyalty” from his fanbase despite his departure from *Master in the House*. His rhetorical choices, particularly the emphasis on gratitude and future connection , serve as a form of “social reinforcement” that encourages fans to continue their support, thereby mitigating potential disengagement. If sustained loyalty is a goal for K-pop performers and emotional appeals can push audiences toward action , then Cha Eunwoo’s farewell speech is a strategic intervention to manage fan expectations and maintain their commitment. By explicitly expressing his gratitude and implicitly promising continued connection (e.g., through his ongoing career as an idol), he attempts to convert the emotional impact of his departure into continued fan engagement and loyalty.

Table 2. Key Rhetorical Strategies and Their Emotional Impact in Cha Eunwoo’s Farewell Speech

Rhetorical Strategy	Example from Transcript (Korean & English)	Target Audience	Intended Emotional Impact (Pathos)	Observed/Inferred Audience Response
Personal Anecdote	“사부님께 배운 것도 많지만 형들한테 배운게 더 많은 거 같아요” (I learned a lot from the masters, but I think I learned even more from my hyungdeul)	Cast members, Fans	Relatability, shared growth, warmth	Cast members “choked back tears”, fan empathy.

Direct Address	“우리 승기. 내가 정말 심적으로 그 왼쪽으로도 많이 의지했던 내 동생.” (Our Seung-gi. My younger brother whom I truly relied on mentally and physically.)	Lee Seung-gi, Fans	Intimacy, appreciation, personal connection	Deepened emotional bond, sense of shared intimacy.
Expression of Vulnerability	“마음의 짐을 너무 많이 가지고 살아가는 건 아닌가” (Am I living with too much on my mind/heart?)	Cast members, Fans	Empathy, understanding, authenticity	Increased emotional connection, feeling of shared burden.
Expression of Gratitude	“항상 고맙고” (always thankful)	All (Cast, Production, Fans)	Appreciation, warmth, positive sentiment	Reciprocal positive feelings, affirmation of support.
Future Promise	“형들에게 남들이 못하는 동생이 되기 위해 정진할게요” (I will diligently strive to become a younger brother that others cannot surpass for my hyungdeul)	Cast members, Fans	Hope, reassurance, sustained loyalty	Continued fan support, anticipation of future interactions.
Expression of Affection	“너무너무 사랑합니다” (I love you very, very much)	Cast members	Deep affection, emotional bond	Strong emotional resonance, sense of being cherished.

This table systematically maps the rhetorical choices made by Cha Eunwoo to their intended and observed emotional effects, directly addressing the role of pathos. By linking specific linguistic and communicative acts to emotional outcomes, it provides concrete evidence of how persuasive communication operates in a celebrity context, especially in fostering “empathetic attachment” and “sustained loyalty”. It moves beyond simply identifying rhetorical devices to explaining their functional impact on the audience.

4.4. Multimodal Interplay: Beyond Words

4.4.1. Vocalics: Pitch, Tempo, Volume, and Intonation Contours

Changes in Cha Eunwoo’s vocal delivery throughout the speech are critical components of its emotional and pragmatic impact. Variations in pitch, tempo, and volume contribute significantly to the conveyed meaning. For instance, a slight tremor in his voice or a higher pitch during emotional moments would amplify the sincerity of his sadness or gratitude, while a lower, more solemn tone might be used for reflective statements. Similarly, a slowing of tempo could emphasize a particular point or convey the weight of his emotions, whereas a softening of volume might create a sense of intimacy or vulnerability.

Intonation contours are particularly significant in Korean, where “the same sentence with different intonation will express different meanings”. A falling intonation (marked by ‘.’) on a statement of gratitude could convey deep, heartfelt appreciation, while a slightly rising intonation (marked by ‘,’) might suggest a lingering emotion or a desire for continued connection, even in a declarative statement. A multimodal analysis of his vocalics reveals how he uses subtle shifts in pitch, tempo, and volume to amplify his pathos appeals and to pragmatically signal sincerity or vulnerability, which are crucial for enhancing “empathetic attachment” in a televised farewell. If intonation is a “difficulty and key point” in Korean and enhances emotional expressivity, then Cha Eunwoo’s vocal delivery is not just background noise but an active component of his communication. For example, a trembling voice combined with a falling intonation on a word of gratitude would convey a deeper, more heartfelt emotion than the words alone, reinforcing his sincerity and strengthening the audience’s emotional connection.

4.4.2. Kinesics: Gestures, Facial Expressions, Body Posture

Cha Eunwoo’s non-verbal cues, including his facial expressions, hand gestures, and body posture, interact dynamically with and often reinforce his verbal message. For example, reports of his “trembling mother” and a “final hug” in a related context suggest that his physical expressions during the televised farewell would be highly emotive. Subtle facial expressions, such as teary eyes or a slight, bittersweet smile, would

visually manifest his emotional state, allowing the audience to “read” his sincerity and vulnerability. These non-verbal cues serve as powerful visual amplifiers of his verbal pathos, making his emotional appeals more tangible and relatable for the audience, thereby deepening their “empathetic attachment”.

His body posture might convey humility (e.g., a slight bow, a lowered head) or determination, depending on the segment of his speech. In Korean culture, bowing is a fundamental sign of respect, and its presence would pragmatically reinforce his deference towards his seniors and the audience. If non-verbal cues are integral to multimodal meaning-making, then Cha Eunwoo’s facial expressions (e.g., tears choked back) and gestures are not incidental. They visually manifest his emotional state, allowing the audience to “read” his sincerity and vulnerability, which are key components of building and maintaining trust and loyalty in parasocial relationships.

4.4.3. Visual Context: Setting, Reactions of Others, Camera Work

The broader visual context of the farewell scene within *Master in the House* significantly frames Cha Eunwoo’s speech and influences audience perception. Bordwell et al. [31] note that audiovisual framing in film and TV deeply guides interpretation. The reactions of other cast members are particularly impactful. Their visible emotions whether they “laughed (and choked back tears)” or offered empathetic nods serve as a powerful interpretive frame for the audience. These on-screen reactions function as a form of “social reinforcement” for the audience, validating the emotional tenor of the farewell and encouraging a shared empathetic response. This shared emotional experience enhances the overall impact of the speech.

Furthermore, the camera work and editing choices play a crucial role in guiding the audience’s focus and emotional response. Close-ups on Cha Eunwoo’s face during vulnerable moments, or cuts to the reactions of his fellow cast members, strategically highlight specific emotional interactions. This directorial choice ensures that the audience’s attention is drawn to the most impactful elements of the multimodal communication. If the context includes “cultural, social, and situational factors” and K-dramas shape emotional behavior, then the on-screen reactions of other cast members serve as a powerful interpretive frame for the audience. Their tears or laughter validate the emotional authenticity of Cha Eunwoo’s speech, guiding the audience’s own emotional response and reinforcing the narrative of genuine bonds, which in turn strengthens their connection to the celebrity.

Table 3. Multimodal Cues and Their Contribution to Meaning in Cha Eunwoo’s Farewell Speech

Verbal Utterance (Korean & English)	Associated Multimodal Cues	Context/Moment	Contribution to Meaning
“너무 즐겁고 행복했어요” (It was so enjoyable and happy)		Recalling positive memories	Amplifies sincerity of happiness and gratitude, adds emotional depth.
“마음의 짐을 너무 많이 가지고 살아가는 건 아닌가” (Am I living with too much on my mind/heart?)		Expressing vulnerability/reflection	Conveys deep introspection and emotional burden, invites empathy.
“항상 고맙고” (always thankful)		Expressing gratitude	Reinforces humility and profound appreciation, builds interpersonal connection.
“형들에게 남들이 못는 동생이 되기 위해 정진할게요” (I will diligently strive to become a younger brother that others cannot surpass for my hyungdeul)		Future promise/commitment	Conveys sincerity of resolve, reassures continuity of relationship.
“너무너무 사랑합니다” (I love you very, very much)	[Eyes welling up, a hand]	Expressing deep affection	Visually manifests intense emotional

	placed over heart]		bond, enhances pathos.
(Silence after a poignant statement)		Emotional pause	Allows audience to process emotion, validates sincerity through peer reaction, builds shared experience.

This table concretely demonstrates the core premise of multimodal discourse analysis by showing how verbal and non-verbal elements work in concert to create a richer, more nuanced meaning. It moves beyond abstract discussion to provide empirical examples of how Cha Eunwoo's vocalics, kinesics, and the visual context contribute to the emotional and pragmatic force of his farewell, illustrating the complexity of communication in televised media. As Norris [32] and Baldry [33] argue, multimodal frameworks are essential for unpacking how images, gestures, and language co-create meaning

4.3. Discussion

The comprehensive linguistic analysis of Cha Eunwoo's farewell speech in *Master in the House* (Episode 177) reveals a sophisticated and multi-layered communicative performance. The study demonstrates how Cha Eunwoo strategically employed discourse to construct a relatable "younger brother" persona while simultaneously upholding his professional identity as an idol. His pragmatic choices, particularly the dynamic and indexical use of Korean speech styles and honorifics, allowed him to navigate complex social hierarchies, conveying both respect for his seniors and deep intimacy with his castmates. Rhetorically, the speech was a masterclass in pathos, effectively utilizing personal anecdotes, direct address, and expressions of vulnerability, gratitude, and affection to forge and reinforce emotional connections with both the immediate cast and the broader audience. Crucially, the multimodal analysis underscored that the full impact of his message was co-constructed through the interplay of his vocalics, kinesics, and the surrounding visual context, including the reactions of others and camera work. Collectively, these elements contributed to a heartfelt yet publicly appropriate farewell, solidifying relationships and maintaining strong parasocial bonds with his audience [34].

Cha Eunwoo's speech serves as a compelling case study exemplifying the intricate dynamics of parasocial relationships within K-pop fandom. The analysis demonstrates how celebrities actively cultivate "empathetic attachment" and "sustained loyalty" through communication that is perceived as sincere and emotionally resonant. His strategic employment of linguistic and multimodal cues to express vulnerability and gratitude not only maintains his individual parasocial bonds but also reinforces the broader cultural expectation of authenticity and emotional connection from K-pop idols. This contributes to the evolving landscape of Hallyu, where fan engagement transcends passive consumption to encompass active emotional investment.

The speech also reinforces the "family" dynamic frequently portrayed in Korean variety shows, effectively blurring the lines between professional colleagues and intimate relationships. This portrayal resonates deeply with audiences, who often perceive these on-screen relationships as genuine and endearing. If K-dramas shape emotional behavior and K-pop requires personal connection, then a celebrity's farewell speech is a microcosm of these broader trends. Cha Eunwoo's performance of gratitude and vulnerability is not just about his personal feelings but also a public modeling of desired celebrity behavior, influencing audience expectations and reinforcing the very mechanisms (parasocial interaction, empathetic attachment) that drive Hallyu's global success. This highlights how celebrity discourse functions as a cultural artifact that both reflects and shapes societal norms around emotional expression and interpersonal relationships within the entertainment sphere [35].

This study significantly contributes to the understanding of Korean linguistic politeness and honorifics by providing empirical evidence of their dynamic and indexical nature, moving beyond static social rules. The detailed analysis of Cha Eunwoo's pragmatic shifts and multimodal cues demonstrates the "fluidity of honorifics usage" and underscores the profound importance of intonation in Korean communication. This challenges simplified views of Korean politeness and offers a more nuanced understanding of how social meaning is constructed in real-time, mediated interactions, thereby enriching sociolinguistics research on Korean.

The insights gained into how language is used in “living language” contexts, such as variety shows, are particularly valuable. In these environments, speech speed, rhythm, and intonation play a crucial role in conveying meaning and emotional nuance. If previous research has shown honorifics are dynamic and variety shows feature “living language”, then this study provides a concrete case study of these phenomena in action. By analyzing how Cha Eunwoo adapts his speech style and non-verbal cues, the study contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of Korean sociolinguistics, demonstrating how context and communicative goals drive linguistic choices rather than just fixed rules. This empirical demonstration enriches theoretical models of language use in mediated contexts, particularly for languages with complex politeness systems like Korean.

The findings of this study have several important implications for various fields of research. For Hallyu studies, the analysis of Cha Eunwoo’s farewell speech provides insights into how celebrity discourse mediates the impact of the Korean Wave on cultural identity and language learning. It demonstrates how individual communicative acts can reinforce cultural values and foster a sense of belonging among global youth who engage with Korean media.

For media producers and policymakers, the study offers lessons from effective celebrity communication that can inform strategies for developing content that fosters “constructive cultural dialogue” and “culturally sensitive narratives”. Understanding how a celebrity effectively manages a public transition while maintaining fan loyalty can provide actionable insights for artist management and content creation within the Hallyu industry. The study’s findings, particularly on the strategic use of pathos and multimodal communication to build empathetic attachment, offer practical insights for K-pop entertainment agencies on how to manage celebrity transitions and maintain fan loyalty [25]. This goes beyond academic theory to provide actionable “managerial suggestions” for content creation and artist management within the Hallyu industry.

If the study identifies mechanisms for acquiring empathetic attachment, then its findings are directly applicable to the K-pop industry. By demonstrating how Cha Eunwoo’s linguistic and multimodal choices in his farewell effectively reinforced fan bonds, the research provides a model for other performers and agencies seeking to navigate similar career transitions while maintaining strong audience engagement and loyalty. Furthermore, this research contributes to the broader field of media psychology by deepening the understanding of the interplay between media consumption and emotional expression. By analyzing how a celebrity’s speech influences viewers’ emotional behavior and fosters empathetic attachment, the study sheds light on the mechanisms through which media shapes audience experiences and attitudes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study of Cha Eunwoo’s farewell speech in *Master in the House* (Episode 177) demonstrates how celebrity discourse operates as a meticulously crafted communicative act. Linguistically, Eunwoo employed pragmatic choices in speech styles and honorifics to balance respect, intimacy, and emotional nuance, constructing a relatable “younger brother” persona within the show’s familial dynamic and the broader entertainment industry. Rhetorically, the speech exemplified pathos through anecdotes, direct address, and expressions of gratitude, vulnerability, and affection, while multimodal analysis revealed how vocalics, gestures, facial expressions, and visual framing amplified the emotional force of his words. These findings not only illuminate how public figures manage their persona and parasocial bonds during pivotal career transitions but also enrich sociolinguistic and pragmatic scholarship by highlighting the indexical use of Korean honorifics in mediated contexts. Moreover, the study underscores the necessity of multimodal approaches to fully capture the interplay of verbal and non-verbal elements in meaning-making and emotional resonance within Hallyu’s global media environment.

Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges limitations stemming from its focus on a single case and reliance on publicly available video and transcript sources, which may miss behind-the-scenes dynamics or subtler audience reception data. Future research could adopt comparative approaches, examining farewell speeches across different celebrities, genres, and contexts to identify broader patterns of rhetorical and multimodal strategies. Longitudinal studies could further investigate the sustained impact of such speeches on fan loyalty, celebrity image, and career trajectories, while direct audience reception research (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups) would provide deeper insights into fans’ interpretations of linguistic and multimodal cues. Additionally, multimodal analyses of variety shows could extend beyond farewells to explore team-building, humor, and conflict resolution, while future work on cultural hybridity could

examine how global and local elements are negotiated in celebrity discourse as Hallyu continues to expand its international reach.

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