



CONGLOMERATES AND THE HYBRIDIZATION OF THE K-POP MOVEMENT

A socio-linguistic analysis of K-Pop lyrics 1992-2015

Abstract

The main questions this study sets out to answer is to what extent large South Korean media conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment are involved in shaping the K-Pop movement and how big their influence on the American/Korean hybridization process of the Korean cultural market is, and how this information can be used to analyze the contemporary American cultural transfer debate.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Academic Discussion, Methodology

South Korean culture has been taking the global community by storm in the last decade, particularly after 2012. In the Western world this seemed to come out of nowhere, since little was known about the nation except that there had once been a war there; one that, perhaps fittingly, was named the forgotten war¹. The shock was great when Psy's round happy face danced onto the scene riding an imaginary horse, shouting "Oppa Gangnam style," "Ehh, sexy lady," and a slew of foreign lyrics in between. The song was an enormous hit not only in the Korean market and their primary international markets in Asia, but also on the global stage by becoming a true internet sensation. YouTube records were broken in the Fall of 2012 when "Gangnam Style" was the first online video to hit a billion views on the website (Allocca). Since this initial venture into the Western cultural markets, the Korean cultural wave known as the *Hallyu*² has been steadily enjoying success. Psy's 2012 megahit "Gangnam Style" changed the entire dynamic *Hallyu*, and K-Pop with it. The *Hallyu* represents a wave of South Korean cultural exports which started to gain popularity since the K-Drama *Winter Sonata* broke through in the Japanese market in 2002, a moment that is widely regarded as the launch of the Korean Wave. However, while *Winter Sonata* did wonders helping the Korean Wave reach markets abroad across Asia, the release of Psy's 2012 hit changed the entire global cultural landscape. Korean cultural exports include three main categories of entertainment:

1 The war in Korea was called the forgotten war as early as October 1951 in *U.S. News & World Report*. This seems exceptionally early, as the war was not concluded until 1953. But as Melinda Pash (author of *In the Shadow of the Greatest Generation: The Americans Who Fought the Korean War*) explains, the United States of America was worried that the "same type of rationing and full mobilization that had characterized the Second World War" would occur, so the war was not only forgotten afterwards, but hushed up and ignored during its existence (Ernsberger).

2 The literal translation is "flow of Korea" but is translated as the Korean Wave, and is the commonly used neologism for the global spread of Korean culture.

film, television drama series, and pop music. The television dramas and films have had some marginal success in Western markets and are popular in Asia, however, K-Pop has become a true global success³.

K-Pop and the *Hallyu* have become two of the most visible and global non-American (and non-Western) social movements of the 21st Century. In an age where the American cultural hegemony of the world is a hot debate and seen as the strong arm of the American Empire, the *Hallyu* has drawn increasing amount of attention as a counter-hegemonic movement, and is appreciated in South Korea itself as well as throughout Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. As a non-American movement, the *Hallyu* is important as a means to break up an American hegemony, but the question remains how counter-cultural it actually is. For instance, South Korea has seen a strong American presence since the Korean War, and America has had a strong influence in the reconstruction of the nation. With this in mind, it is feasible to imagine that American culture has seeped into the *Hallyu* as well.

The paper “Riding the *Hallyu*: Americanization in the K-Pop Music Videos of 2015,” demonstrates that American cultural artifacts (ranging from US dollar bills, to Native American head dresses, to Hummers), as well as the English language, have indeed made their way into the music and music videos of the 2015 K-Pop scene (Dubbeldam). Also, linguists such as Jamie Shinhee Lee demonstrated how English has been appropriated by the K-Pop scene. However, agency also seems to play an important role in the American cultural transfer to the K-Pop music industry. Producers and artists seem to use American cultural artifacts and language sparingly and strategically in the videos and songs of 2015.

Accessibility is the key phrase, and the English language, as well as Western references, are used to make the art form as accessible to Western audiences as possible in order to attract more consumers. However, “[w]hile agency goes a long way to explain the American cultural

³ Two films, namely “Oldboy” and “My Sassy Girl”, had American remakes, but neither were critically acclaimed, and were financial flops.

transfer as demonstrated in the K-Pop movement, it does not properly account for why the K-Pop movement necessarily bends towards Americanization,” (Dubbeldam 19) and the market share theory demonstrates how the *Hallyu* is bending towards Americanization in order to be successful. The usage of English and Americanisms in the music could very well be a marketing ploy to sell cultural products to the West. This, in a more roundabout way, is still considered imperial cultural influence, since the producers and artists of the *Hallyu* feel the need to adjust its art to the hegemonic cultural power in order to be successful.

A proper analysis of how American influence has affected the Korean music scene is therefore appropriate for a deeper understanding of this particular phenomenon, but the spreading of K-Pop’s influence raises another interesting question: If the *Hallyu* carries in it a pro-America sentiment in addition to cultural artifacts and the English language, is it then a vehicle for spreading American cultural power across the world? While American elements and English language snippets have made it more accessible for the Western world to devour, it has also become exceptionally popular throughout Asia, rising to the top of the charts repeatedly in China, Japan, and South East Asia. With this in mind, if the *Hallyu* movement, and K-Pop in particular, is indeed Americanized, is it then actively, if indirectly, spreading American cultural influence, and what role does it play in the spread of American Empire?

When discussing culture war and/or the use of American culture as a tool to spread the influence of the United States and its empire, American cultural transfer is one of the major driving concepts. One of the best starting points for a modern discussion of American cultural transfer is Jessica Gienow-Hechts’s historiographical article “Shame on US? Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War – A Critical Review,” where she chronicles the historical scholarly waves in the modern debate. In her article, she describes three historical movements regarding the cultural transfer discussion. While the first wave, the “cold warriors,” (465) is no longer relevant, the following schools of thought “the critics of cultural imperialism” (466)

and subsequent “counter-critics” (466) set up the binary within which most of the current discussion takes place. To this day, there seems to be a rather binary discussion in the debate of American cultural transfer between America as forcing a global cultural hegemony and the concept that cultural receivers have full agency of what they consume and implement in their daily lives. As one might expect with concepts that move between a binary, reality is never that simple and the discussion becomes more complicated. However, these two points are important to include in a discussion of this issue.

Richard Kuisel and Richard Pells are both proponents of the counter-critical wave, one that is best described as ‘pro-agency’. They believe that receivers of cultural information and cultural artifacts are not overwhelmed or controlled by them, but rather have the ability to creatively pick and choose which aspects to keep and which to discard. Individual responses by the two scholars reveal the different attitudes existing within the academic community regarding the discussion at hand. Pells actively tries to reduce argumentation of any type by the critics of cultural imperialism and states that they “accuse the executives of the movie studios, the television networks, the record companies, and the publishing houses of being engaged in a cabal to disseminate a single and peculiarly ‘American’ set of values to their customers abroad” (Pells 500). What Pells attacks here is the idea that American cultural producers are purposely infusing American elements to help spread the American empire across the globe. This is a rather shallow interpretation, because a producer may not be cognitively aware of the cultural product taking part in the process. The current power and position of the United States in the world as a cultural powerhouse could be enough to channel American works through its prism. Kuisel, on the other hand, has a more nuanced view, and one that is more relevant to the modern discussion. He warns against scholars (such as Pells) taking too much distance from the “the critics of cultural imperialism” in their own work. The warning means to avoid defining their own area of study by denying the work of

others. He claims that “Americanization has, to some degree, depended on market control, on advertising, and even on political leverage” (Kuisel 510). Kuisel states here that the actors of the empire, whether they are politicians or cultural producers, need not to be actively imperial, but that the cultural market itself may act as such a force.

The economic market has also been a powerful force in spreading American culture around the world. American consumer culture mixed with the influx of American mass production has led researchers from W.T. Stead to Bob Rydell to see the Americanization of the world as intrinsically attached to the economic expansion of the country. W.T. Stead’s 1901 classic *The Americanization of the World* was one of the first publications to warn that economic organization in the United States was so advanced that the world would be consumed by American products and the culture attached to it. Whether this has been successful is a much broader question, however, it is a fact that the mass production that was starting up in the United States at the time would do much to instigate a growing influence abroad and help define what is now known as the “American Century⁴.” The idea of a burgeoning American Empire resides in the beginning of the American Century, based on the concept that the rise in political, economic, and cultural power and influence helped Americanize large swaths of the planet. Modern scholars such as Rydell who follow this tradition of thinking see the Americanized hybridization of cultures as an influx spurred on solely by the agency of American Empire and the concept that the United States, through its political and economic power, are forcing the adaptation of local cultures.

The hybridization of non-American cultures through American culture is at the forefront of this discourse surrounding American imperialism. An important term prevalent in contemporary post-colonial studies is cultural hybridity, since it is intrinsically tied to the concept of empire, and to the imperial past of many Western nations. Marwan M. Kraidy

4 A term describing a period of time between the early 20th Century and the Cold War. Defined by American mass production and increasing political, economic, and cultural global influence.

defines cultural hybridity as “the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities . . . which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries” (Kraidy 5). Homi Bhabha defines this area between cultural interactions as a third space, wherein the two cultures can combine and interact. Bhabha argues that “[the] interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha 5). As a result of this natural process of cultural interaction, no culture can ever be considered pure, and since all cultures interact, they are all considered hybridized. American culture has definitely found its place on a global stage from the “American Century” and onto the present, but the question about the nature of contact between American culture and the different cultures around the world remains. Rydell, Stead, and the “critics of the cultural imperialism” would argue that America has forced hybridization in the interest of American international corporate culture, which is a lesson that could also be applied to the corporate culture of the large Korean cultural conglomerates.

Frédéric Martel, French author of *Mainstream, Enquête sur la guerre globale de la culture et des médias* (translation: *On the Global War on Culture*), reintroduces the geopolitical struggle regarding global mass culture. Martel argues that the dominance of American cultural influence over global mass culture comes at the cost of national identities in counter-cultural formations such as K-Pop. He argues that counter-cultural movements such as K-Pop sacrifice much of their own national identities in order to become successful in the international market, which, according to him, is dominated by American national culture. Specifically on the *Hallyu*, Martel states that

[t]he Americans wanted to spread identical mainstream content all over the world in English, but the American leaders did not have the same intuition that the South Koreans had [...], who are willing to give up their national distinctiveness and their

language to turn their cultural production into mainstream, even if they (lost in translation) lose their identity” (Martel 299)⁵.

What Martel explains here is the next step that South Korean media conglomerates, producers and artists were prepared to make in a bid to be successful in the international market, namely, to dilute their own culture and infuse the culture of a specific target audience they are trying to reach. This study will demonstrate how this is true when K-Pop infused American hip-hop culture specifically into their cultural products at the beginning of the movement and the first two decades of its existence. During its third and most recent decade, K-Pop producers have started to rebrand, remarket, and rewrite their products into Mandarin, Japanese, and English in order to sell them to their primary international markets of China, Japan, and the United States respectively.

The hybridization of the Korean popular culture market and scene is often manufactured and driven by large conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment, as well as the South Korean government, who profit from it and steer and shape the *Hallyu*. Since the early 1990's, the South Korean government has given financial support and subsidies to corporations for the creation of cultural products. Michael Fuhr, a scholar of the *Hallyu*, states that “[...] K-Pop is a result of strategic planning and a fostering of the domestic entertainment sector by state-national bodies; on the other hand, it is utilized by the government to increase the nation's cultural capital in ways variously described as nation branding, soft power, or cultural diplomacy” (Fuhr 10). Through the dissemination of the Korean Wave, South Korea has not only bought itself political and social soft power, but also a positive growth of the economy.

Economically, the big conglomerates outside of the cultural market also have a lot to thank the *Hallyu* for. For instance, Seo Min-Soo argues that “K-pop creates direct economic

⁵ This quote was translated from French to English by Michael Fuhr in his book *Globalization and Popular Music in South Korea: Sounding out K-pop*.

value and branding effects for Korea. K-pop's songs, singers and fans provide opportunities for companies to develop new products and marketing strategies, as well as new ways to broaden their markets" (Min-Soo). The power and benefits of the Korean Wave has changed the manner not only of music production, but also the way the music industry is seen in South Korea. However, the money is not in album and singles sales, but rather as a marketing machine for a cavalcade of Korean products. In an article on marketing and branding in South Korea, Melissa Leong demonstrates that the *Hallyu* often has a direct influence on consumer purchases, especially on luxury products ranging from make-up to smart phones (Leong). She states that "[i]n the early 2000s, Korean cultural content exports hovered around US\$ 500 million. By 2011, that has mushroomed to more than \$ 4 billion, according to Korea's Cultural and Information Service – and that was before 'Gangnam Style' exploded on the scene" (Leong). This illustrates not only the financial, but also the marketing power that the *Hallyu* has for South Korea as a nation, and especially for the big conglomerates. K-Pop is seen as an important tool for international success by many Korean conglomerates and they have had a role in shaping K-pop since the early 1990's, as well as a heavy hand in the manufacturing and controlling of the hybridization of Korean pop culture.

The use of English in the lyrics, band names, and song titles of the K-Pop movement from 1992-2015 is a good way to analyze and track the cultural American/Korean hybridization process. In their article "Critical Interpretation of Hybrid K-Pop: The Global-Local Paradigm of English Mixing in Lyrics," Day Yong Jin and Woongjae Ryoo state that "[t]he influence of American culture is all-pervasive in audio-visual media, and the effect of American culture, manifest through the English-ization of languages in popular music, has been prevalent in K-Pop on many occasions" (Jin 127-128). This influence is clearly seen in Korean popular culture after the breakthrough of Seo Taiji and the Boys with their hit "Nan

Arayo (I Know)". The song brings hip-hop into K-Pop and marks the beginning of the modern K-Pop era, which is why it is important to use them as a starting point for this paper.

The English language already had a very high status in South Korean culture and is still strongly tied to economic and social success before the *Hallyu* movement took off. Hagen Koo states that "[t]he most obvious way globalization affects the Korean educational process is through the increasing emphasis on the English language... English is especially important for obtaining sought-after jobs in Korean conglomerate firms like Samsung, Hyundai, and LG, as well as high-paying jobs in transnational companies" (Koo 13). The modernization of the nation has brought the use of English to the forefront as a hot commodity, intrinsically tying it to success and what Wonho Jang and Youngsun Kim call "cosmopolitan striving". Jang and Kim explain that cosmopolitan striving is a metaphor for collective striving in a transitional period from developing country to modern and cosmopolitan nation. They state that "[i]n Korea, it is widely thought that learning English, for example, is a quick way to become rich and powerful, as English is thought to provide one with new cosmopolitan opportunities, such as studying in the United States and the United Kingdom" (Jang 95). The English language, therefore, holds a high status within the country. The infusion of English and the role of English in the K-Pop movement are important to analyze because of their significance within Korean culture.

In South Korea, the English language is closely tied to the American culture where it originated. Seong Won Park, for instance, argues that "those seeking personal economic advancement, therefore, tend to internalize American values by learning English, and Korean students generally prefer the United States as a place to learn the skill. But acquiring proficiency in any foreign language constitutes much more than speaking and writing ability. It internalizes the cultural values that the language shapes, and, in this sense, many Korean

students are internalizing US cultural values" (Park 53). The spreading of American culture is tied closely to the English language.

The spread of American culture to South Korea through music has acted as a prominent vehicle not only for American culture, but also for the English language (which adds to the distribution of even more American culture). The dominance of the United States as a cultural powerhouse as explained by Frédéric Martel, as well the manner in which American culture is integrated into the English language, could be considered evidence of a homogenization of the global culture by the American Empire. The fact that the South Korean government, as well as media conglomerates, are steering cultural production to reflect American culture in order to be successful in the global market, would be evidence of the power of an American cultural empire. American culture has definitely found its place on the global stage from the "American Century" to the present, but the question about the nature of contact between the American culture and different cultures around the world remains. Rydell, Stead, and the "critics of the cultural imperialism" would argue that America has forced the hybridization in the interest of American international corporate culture, which is a lesson that could also be applied to the corporate culture of large Korean cultural conglomerates.

Scholars such as Rob Kroes, however, are skeptical of this point of view. Kroes argues that receivers of disseminated American cultural have many intricate and creative ways to integrate it into their own culture. He states that it is a common fallacy to blame the United States alone for the spread of Americanization. He states that "American culture washes across the globe. But does so in mostly disentangled bits and pieces, for others to recognize and pick up, and to re-arrange into a setting expressive of their own individual identities, or identities they share with peer groups" (Kroes *Buffalo Bill*, 174). Kroes's argument is that American culture is not modeled to be ingested and appropriated whole by non-American cultures, but that cultures around the world take in snippets of the culture from hundreds of

different sources and use them in their own way to fuse with their local and communal identity. Kroes also states that “the critique of Americanization is too broad, exaggerating America’s role in areas where in fact it was caught up in historic transformations much like other countries were” (Kroes *American Empire*, 2). Here Kroes claims that cultures around the world modernize and have their own specific historic transformations that might lead to similar cultural and economic results. Even though events might happen simultaneously with the global reach of the “American century”, it does not mean they are causally connected.

Contextualizing K-Pop and the *Hallyu* in general in this academic discussion is trickier than one might think. Among sociolinguists, the concept that the appropriation of Americanization in the culture is based on Korean agency and power of choice (and not American empirical domination), is widely accepted. Keith Howard states in his paper on Korean pop music that “the appropriated styles of the nineties K-Pop were foreign in origin but the process of acculturation turned the foreign into a vernacular expression” (Howard, 90). Linguists such as Andrew Moody argue that the use of English in non-Western pop (in his case Japanese J-Pop) was relegated to the functional roles of either musical filler, or single words and phrases that did not interrupt the native grammar and were only used as an additive. Jamie Shinhee Lee, in her paper on K-Pop language mixing, found that South Korean youth culture “utilizes K-Pop as discourse of self-assertion and identity negotiation to deal with the tension between global and local dialogues, and that English provides a linguistic mechanism for it” (Shinhee Lee, 430). Lee’s research covers the beginning of the modern K-Pop movement, and is useful in analyzing the years that follow. Similar findings were discovered by linguists studying English language mixing in European pop, including Finland (Westinen 2007), France and Germany (Androutsopoulos and Scholz, 2003).

Studies like those by Lee, Westinen, and Androutsopoulos and Scholz all arrive at a similar conclusion: that English code-mixing in popular music today has to do with a youth

culture using English as a tool to differentiate themselves from the established waves within the culture they reside in. Lee's study of K-Pop is extra pertinent to this particular essay. What is telling is how neatly it fits with Kroes's definition of the agency of the receivers of American culture. According to Lee, Korean youth culture chose which parts to consume and reuse in order to create their own cultural products. They are, therefore, a Korean sub-culture using American aspects, not a Korean culture that has been taken over by American forces. However, this was at the beginning of the *Hallyu* in the mid to late 90's, when the Korean Wave was still a storm in a South Korea-sized teacup.

This study investigates the nature of the K-Pop movement at the moment of, and the years following the Psy popularity spike. This spike is explored through a diachronic sociolinguistic reading of the lyrics, band names, and song titles as well as an analysis of marketing strategies for the cultural products of the top 10 songs each year. It may be widely accepted that the beginning of the K-Pop movement in South Korea and American/Anglo influence is due to the creators' agency, but how has the Korean music industry reacted to their sudden appearance on the global stage? How has arrival at the highest echelons of global interest affected independent usage of English and American symbols and language? Are the global market and promises of cultural and monetary success driving the K-Pop scene to embrace more American and Anglo symbols and language? What does the influx of Americanization in interaction with the global cultural market mean for the discussion surrounding American and global cultural transfer?

The main question this study sets out to answer is to what extent large media conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment have been involved in shaping the K-Pop movement and how big their influence on the American/Korean hybridization process of the Korean cultural market is. Also, how can this information be used to analyze the American cultural transfer debate and shine a light on how

the receiving cultures' agency interacts with the spread of culture from the United States of America?

In order to come to a conclusion, this study explores a diachronic sociolinguistic analysis of K-Pop music and the international marketing strategies of the big media conglomerates. The goal is to find out how the usage of English has changed, as well as the frequency of English use. Song lyrics, titles and band names have been determined and will be compared and contrasted to discover ongoing trends in K-Pop, and the extent to which the 2012 popularity spike surrounding Psy's "Gangnam Style" changed the frequency and the overall use of English. The international marketing strategies of Korean cultural conglomerates have also been analyzed to see if they can shed a light on Americanization of the K-Pop industry. One of the weaknesses of this paper is the author's lack of Korean language skills. This, however, is compensated by the vast amounts of translations available on the internet. Song lyrics are available in Hangul, Romanized Hangul script, as well as full English translations. Lack of knowledge of the Korean language should not hinder the analysis of the English aspects of these song lyrics; however, it is possible that some nuances may be missed.

This analysis is key to understanding concrete changes in the usage of the English language in the K-Pop scene. Many other aspects of the scene could be analyzed, including music videos, choreography, clothing, and make-up, but these lie beyond the scope of this particular paper. Of the three branches of the *Hallyu*, K-Pop was chosen because it is the most popular and visible global product. It also claims the biggest peak in popularity with Psy's hit. That said, analyses of the other two branches (K-Drama and Korean film) could also be useful in explaining the influx of Americanization in the Korean cultural industry in general, and even for K-Pop specifically. However, this, too, lies outside of the scope of this paper.

This paper consists of three main chapters. Chapter 2 presents a collection of primary data of song titles, lyrics, and band names, and the different ways in which English is used during the first two decades of modern K-Pop (1992-2009). Chapter 3 offers an analysis of primary data collected for the third decade of modern K-Pop (2010-2015). General trends, anomalies, and changes are analyzed, and the third decade is compared to the first and second. The goal of this chapter is to analyze changes and trends in the K-Pop industry following Psy's 2012 hit "Gangnam Style". Chapter 4 analyzes marketing strategies used by large K-Pop conglomerates in the third decade of modern K-Pop. This analysis helps shed light on the effects of the global cultural market, and the power it has over the agency of Korean cultural producers. A conclusion and suggestions for further research are discussed in the fifth chapter.

Chapter 2: Data Analysis 1992-2009

Hallyu scholar Michael Fuhr describes K-Pop as “the soundtrack (and K-Pop idols are the faces) of Korea’s globalization process in the new millennium. Its most popular representatives are boy and girl groups and dance pop acts that show many similarities with their counterparts in mainstream Western pop music in terms of aural and visual representation, performance, habitus, and mediation” (Fuhr 8). The music of the movement itself has had varying styles throughout 1992-2015, however, this paper divides all of popular Korean music since 1992 into two main and two subcategories. These macro categories are uptempo and downtempo, hip-hop and non-hip-hop. The music is categorized with one term from each set (i.e. hip-hop downtempo, or hip-hop uptempo). The reason for this is to condense the data and make it easier to analyze, but also because there is no working definition of what exactly K-Pop is. There are two generally accepted ways to categorize the entire K-Pop movement. The broader one defines it as being all of popular Korean music (usually by people new to the concept of K-Pop), the second classification identifies musical styles that grew solely out of the Seo Taiji and Boys-movement. This is a good place to start, because they are widely attributed as the starting point of the modern K-Pop movement. That starting point is 1992. A mix of Euro Dance and North American hip-hop flows through them and infuses most “pop” music in the top 10 hit charts across the last two decades.

That said, many other Western styles have been sampled and used in a large number of Korean hits, not just hip-hop. For instance, Disco (T-ara’s “Roly Poly”), Reggae (2NE1’s “Falling in Love”), Rap (Epik High’s “Born Hater”), Folk (Busker Busker’s “Cherry Blossom Ending”), Dubstep (Younique Unit’s “Maxstep”), and even Trap/Crunk (G-Dragon’s “Coup D’etat”) (Kpopalypse). This smorgasbord of musical styles makes categorization of K-Pop

difficult on a larger scale. Looking at the last few decades, however, it is very clear that many of the pop groups/solo artists make use of a hip-hop/rap style. Although this is generally a tamer version of its American counterpart, rapping has become an important part of the K-Pop scene. Many boy and girl groups have a designated rapper or two, including bands that actively try to portray a “street” identity, from Big Bang and 2NE1 to bubblegum groups such as T-ara and Apink. K-Pop is also known as a more modest pop version than its Western counterpart. In the first two decades in particular, there is little or no profanity either in Korean or English, and very little sexual referencing in both songs and music videos. While there is an increase in both profanity and sexual referencing as the years go by, this was definitely not prevalent in the 1990’s when K-Pop started its rise to prominence in the South Korean music scene.

The approach in this paper is to break down larger genre currents into four basic subgroups: Hip-hop/up tempo, hip-hop/down tempo, non-hip-hop/up tempo, and non-hip-hop/down tempo. A quick analysis of the Top 10 annual hit charts as posted by *Bugs!* reaching back to 1992, and the Seo Taiji breakthrough, shows that all songs on the Korean Pop charts can be comfortably categorized with these definitions. These subdivisions also allow for comparisons between hip-hop infused and non-hip-hop infused pop, which is important for the argument relating to American cultural transfer. By separating hip-hop from pop, an analysis can be made of the type of music that has the main influence and is a vehicle for the English language in K-Pop.

Seo Taiji and the Boys’ breakout hit “Nan Arayo (I Know)” which burst onto the 1992 annual Top 10 charts (they ended the year at number one), is widely considered the starting point of the modern era of Korean pop music and archetypical for what is considered modern K-Pop. According to analyses by Day Yong Jin and Woongjae Ryoo, Seo Taiji and the Boys’ music “touched on several social and political issues, which were previously not seen

frequently in Korean pop music. [...] What [they] represented was a discourse of resistance, in particular rejecting the norms of the older generation” (Jin 118). Seo Taiji and the Boys used hip-hop as a discourse for resistance much like it is used by rap and hip-hop groups in European countries such as France, Germany, and Finland (Androutsopoulos, Westinen). Another feature that sets the group apart from its contemporaries is that Seo Taiji penned the songs himself, a practice that is not popular in the Korean pop music scene. Increasingly, much of the music produced in these early decades after Seo Taiji’s breakthrough hit are written, produced, and created by large music conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment.

The following section examines data from the decade following Seo Taiji and Boys’ breakthrough, from 1992 to 1999. English also plays a growing role during this time period because even though Western musical influences were prevalent before 1992, not many English language elements had been integrated into it. The introduction of hip-hop brought with it extensive usage of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), which features increasingly in hip-hop based tunes. Table 1 demonstrates the increase of English throughout the decade. The blue line demonstrates the increase in songs using any English at all. There is a steady increase in both the use of English and the use of hip-hop throughout this first decade. In the first year, 1992, the only group that used both the English language and hip-hop was Seo Taiji and the Boys with their song “Nan Arayo (I Know)”. The use of hip-hop in the music of the Top 10 charts steadily increases as well, but makes more of an impact in the next decade.

Linguistically, the use of English in the first decade is relatively simple and falls into the category of single word use or repeated use of single word switches. If we take the example of Seo Taiji and the Boys’ uptempo hip-hop single “Nan Arayo (I Know)” (1992), the use of English is limited to a few hip-hop genre-specific word switches. The only English

word used in the main text here is “yo,” functioning solely as an attention-getter. Interestingly, in the music video, the song uses a phrase made famous by American rapper Flava Flav “yeah boi” as an introduction of the song before it starts. Both usages of English within “Nan Arayo (I Know)” are genre-specific attention getters that do not add any substance to the song. The following is an excerpt from the song (“Seo Taiji”):

Original Text:

*Nan arayo
Ee bami heureumyeon **YO**
Keudae ddeonaneun moseup dweero hago
Majimak kiseu ae seurpeun maum*

English Translation:

I know
If this night passes, yo!
At the image of your back, leaving me, and
The last kiss, a sad heart

The non-hip-hop downtempo ballad “Mystery Woman” by Kang Ji-Hoon (1993), uses more semantically significant multiple word switches. The song includes a single phrase in the entire song but it is a culmination of the chorus that precedes it. The three lines before “mystery woman” is spoken are descriptors of said woman. Even more relevant in this particular case, is that the English title of the song in combination with the single use of it in the lyrics seem to justify the Anglicization of the title. This is a common strategy to add the flavor of English without having to integrate it semantically or structurally into the song. It is also a key technique for international marketing. The following is the chorus of the song which demonstrates this type of structure (“강지훈”):

Original Text:

*Eoduun bulbitsoke
Hwalyeohan geu nunbiteun
Naemaeum salojabneun
Mystery woman*

English Translation:

Those gorgeous eyes
In the dark lights
Captivates my mind
Mystery woman

One of the most complex uses of English language mixing can be seen in the hip-hop uptempo dance track *Wolf and Sheep* by H.O.T. (1997), where the following rap is entirely in English. The rap is semantically correct within the context of the lyrics, and demonstrates a growing trend of the use of English in rap portions of songs. The following excerpt is the rap breakdown of the song (H.O.T.):

Original Text:

*War and hate is over now
Everybody want it (want it)
If you wanna violence or something (something)
I'd say you gonna die
Get along we are all unite*

During the second decade, the use of English in hip-hop songs increases in complexity, especially in uptempo songs. Downtempo songs and ballads still tend to use much less English semantically, and only for added flavor as an attention getter, like the use of “oh baby” in TVXQ’s “Hug” (2004) or the insertion of the title word in Lee Soo Young’s “Goodbye” (2003). In uptempo songs however, the use of English starts to become more prevalent in the songs, though generally in specific areas. The trend of usage in specific raps continues, but its use in the chorus of songs starts to become prevalent. The hip-hop song “Hit Song” by NRG is a prime example. Most of the lyrics in the song are in Korean but once the chorus starts, the group sings in English.

Table 1			English in: Band Names		English in: Song Titles	
Year	English	Hip-Hop	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
1992	1	1	0	0	0	2
1993	2	0	0	2	3	0
1994	1	0	0	2	1	1
1995	3	2	1	4	4	0
1996	5	3	1	5	8	0
1997	5	4	2	4	8	0
1998	6	0	2	2	9	0
1999	8	3	0	6	10	0

One of the most visible developments throughout this first decade of K-Pop is the marked increase of the Anglicization of titles of songs in the Top 10 charts, as seen in Table 1. Following the Top 10 releases posted by *Bugs!*⁶, the increase throughout the decade is dramatic. However, it can be seen that the use of English in band names does not keep up with this trend. The language seems to be divided into a primary and secondary position of the names and titles, demonstrated by a simple X(Y) correlation. Here X represents the official title of the track, and (Y) is the translation. For clarity, examine the following song by the singer BoA. Her 2002 number one hit “No.1,” is officially titled: “No. 1” and her name is accredited as “보아 (BoA)” on *Bugs!*. The song title is completely in English and no translation is made, with English therefore in the primary position and no translation in the secondary position. Her name accreditation, however, does make use of both primary and secondary positions. Her name is stated twice, with the Korean Hangul name “보아” in the primary position, and the English translation “BoA” in the secondary position. While this might seem innocuous at first glance, it actually reveals some very important trends. It is important for music producers and artists to provide translated track lists when releasing music in foreign markets. However, Korean charts are applying translations for the home market, signifying the official attachment of the English language to the songs released.

Four combinations are possible in this composition with primary and secondary positions:

⁶ *Bugs!* is a website that collects sales data and releases annual data charts.

- Korean title only.
- Korean title with English translation in parentheses.
- English title only
- English title with Korean translation in parentheses.

Table 1 reveals an adverse trend in the uses of these combinations in the Top 10s of the first decade. Where band names publishing in the first decade did demonstrate a steady rise of partial to full English names in the primary position, the trend did not persist for long.

Between 1995-1998, a few bands made use of the English language in their names, including DJ DOC in 1996, H.O.T. in 1997, and S.E.S. in 1998. These names share a short and simple nature, and early names are often acronyms. For example, H.O.T. stands for the English phrase High-five Of Teenagers (and phonetically sounds out the English word “Hot”), and S.E.S contains the first letters of the Romanization of the singers’ first names (Sea, Eugene, and Shoo). On the other hand, the use of the English translation in the secondary position seems to increase steadily throughout the decade, from zero to six out of 10 during the 1992-1999 timespan.

English in song titles has become much more commonplace in the course of this decade. Increasing from zero to 10 between 1992-1999, which is the primary position on *Bugs!*. This suggests that singles are marketed and released with an internationally marketable title and identity in mind. The use of English in song titles, however, does not necessarily correspond with the use of English in the lyrics of the track. When comparing the data between the English used in song titles and within the lyrics, the upward trajectories seem to be similar. However, English used in song titles still outpaces the use of English in the songs themselves. Examples of this are Seo Taiji and the Boys’ ballad “Goodbye” (1996), which was published on the hit chart with no Hangul at all, and also contains no English in the lyrics, and Jo Sung Mo’s ballad “For Your Soul (슬픈 영혼식)” (1999), which has English in

the primary position with a Hangul translation in the secondary, but also contains zero English in the lyrics.

The second decade continues trends from the end of the first decade with similar results relating to English in the lyrics, band names, and song titles. As can be seen in Table 2, the style influence of hip-hop remains muted compared to overall use of English in the Top 10 lists of K-Pop charts. While it is true that most hip-hop tracks bring along the English language as well as AAVE vernacular, the fact that just as many non-hip-hop songs use English foregoes the initial conclusion that the hip-hopification of the musical culture is the main cause for an influx of English language use. That said, the use of English does seem to be more sophisticated in hip-hop tunes than in non-hip-hop ones.

As far as the use of English in band names and song titles is concerned, trends have also leveled out quite a lot. Where Table 1 demonstrates a steady increase, Table 2 demonstrates a fairly consistent over 50% usage of English in the secondary position, as a translation of the original name. The use of English in the primary position remains very low, with often zero out of 10 artists using it, with a maximum of two out of 10. However, disparity between song titles has also increased. Between 2000-2009, over 80% of songs in the years' Top 10 lists on *Bugs!* sported English as part of or the complete song title in the primary position.

Table 2			English in:	Band Names	English in:	Song Titles
Year	English	Hip-Hop	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2000	7	1	0	4	9	0
2001	7	1	0	5	10	0
2002	6	2	0	5	8	1
2003	9	5	0	6	10	0
2004	8	2	0	5	8	0
2005	7	3	1	6	8	1
2006	8	2	1	4	8	0
2007	9	5	2	6	9	1
2008	10	3	2	2	7	1
2009	9	1	1	6	9	0

The increase of English usage during the two decades does seem to follow a gradual upward curve, and still seems to be more actively deployed by up-tempo hip-hop inspired music. What is more interesting is the surge of English used in song titles. The use of English in titles does not necessarily discriminate between hip-hop or non-hip-hop or up tempo or down tempo. It seems to be unilaterally increasing, which is an interesting development in the argument pertaining to the agency of artists and the Korean pop culture using English of their own accord. Examining the use of English in these early stages of the K-pop movement, it might appear at first glance that Korean musical culture was taken over by the American cultural art form hip-hop, and an Americanized K-pop scene resulted. However, the proof for this is not overwhelming, particularly in the first decade. If anything, the first decade shows a relatively low ratio of English in each song, even in cases of AAVE and hip-hop specific jargon; although the first two decades do show encroachment of the language in smaller ways.

The rapidly increasing use of English in both song titles in the primary and band names in the secondary positions does require additional investigation. It seems odd that songs which have little or no English in their lyrics still tend to have an English title available. A reason could be that it is used for advertising and marketing purposes, rather than artistic purposes. The title of a song can be seen, in essence, as an advertisement for the content of the song, and is one of the initial contact points for the audience. Even though K-Pop was not yet anywhere near its global popularity that would ensue post-“Gangnam Style”, it was starting to become increasingly popular in neighboring Asian nations such as Japan and China.

The question remains whether or not the increase of English in both lyrics, band names, and song titles is due to creative decisions, because of international cultural pressures, or corporate pressures relating to sales. It is an odd phenomenon to have so much English used in song titles specifically, since they are not only used for release in foreign markets, but are also the official titles of these songs, even on Korean music charts. Much of this can be

traced back to the immense success of Seo Taiji and the Boys' "Nan Arayo (I Know)". Seo Taiji was not part of any conglomerate and wrote and produced all his own music, therefore it is apparent that even though the conglomerates pushed a lot of the bands to mimic Seo Taiji and introduce hip-hop and increased use of English, they did not initiate it. It is ironic that the start of the K-Pop movement and the introduction of hip-hop as a genre, was meant as a counter-cultural force, but was taken over and adopted by the mainstream and conglomerates. Following the success of Seo Taiji, their success with young audiences caused many conglomerates and producers to train and nurture their own young musicians, such as H.O.T., Fin.K.L. and Shinwha, and take over the popularized style (Cho). According to Korean pop music critic Seo Jung Min-gaph, "[a]fter Seo Taiji & Boys' success, the country's music market turned to younger listeners, like teenagers. Agencies also started to produce idol groups targeting teenage fans as Seo and boys themselves were young back then" (Cho). In other words, not only does the national success of "Nan Arayo (I Know)" mark the beginning of the use of English and hip-hop in modern K-Pop, but it also marks the beginning of idol training programs by the conglomerates where they start shaping their future stars very intensely.

In these first two decades of K-Pop, the increase of English and Americanisms has become prominent in the music culture of Korea. There is a steady increase over the two decades, showing that the language increasingly present. Throughout the first decade, the increase is marked, as illustrated in Table 1. There is a sharp increase from one out of 10 to eight out of 10 songs that use English. Table 2 also shows the continuation of this trend, with the number of songs in Top 10 lists that use English ranging between seven to 10 out of 10. However, as shown in the examples, this is limited often to single word switches, usually to attention getters. When moving into the second decade, more sophisticated English use does seem to develop, but is generally limited to the rap parts of hip-hop-styled songs.

The question remains: what does this mean for the debate between agency and empire when speaking of American cultural transfer? As Rob Kroes stated in his book *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World*: “American culture washes across the globe. But does so in mostly disentangled bits and pieces, for others to recognize and pick up, and to re-arrange into a setting expressive of their own individual identities, or identities they share with peer groups” (Kroes *Buffalo Bill* 174). This particular case of American culture spreading to South Korea seems to be an example of exactly this type of phenomenon. The American music industry is a global phenomenon, and even if it is not consumed actively by people around the world, it is definitely visible to people around the world. This is important with respect to how American culture is infused into the K-Pop scene, which is directly tied to this phenomenon. Because American culture is visible throughout the world, people are likely to come into contact with it and interact with it. This leaves us with what is especially interesting about hip-hop culture and the possible reasons for its influence and prominence in K-Pop.

An important concept to keep in mind when regarding hip-hop culture, is that it is predominantly associated with youth culture all over the world. In Korea, K-Pop has much the same status. Jamie Shinhee Lee argues that “K-Pop provides discursive space for South Korean youth, either artists or audiences, to assert their self-identity, to create new meanings, to challenge dominant representations of authority, to resist mainstream norms and values, and to reject older generations’ conservatism” (Lee 447). Hip-hop, however, seems to be the indicative variable in this equation, as this is the art form which brought English language and culture with it. Hip-hop is the global youth culture of today, which makes it the vehicle for Americanization of Korean music culture.

This takes us back to the discussion of agency versus empire. The spread of American culture and English language to Korea seems to very much an act of agency, because the

artists and producers of K-Pop in the first decades use hip-hop and the English language as a means of self-expression and to separate themselves from the previous generations. However, this self-expression is increasingly being taken over by large media conglomerates who control more and more aspects of the creation of cultural products. At this point, the youth culture in Korea is actively fusing American hip-hop culture with their own youth culture, and using it to create a unique culture all of their own. This is also seen in the studies of hip-hop in Europe by Jannis Androutsopoulos and Arno Scholz in their article “On the Recontextualization of Hip-hop in European Speech Communities: a Contrastive Analysis of Rap Lyrics”. What Androutsopoulos and Scholz found was that hip-hop and associated English code switching was generally used by minority subcultures within nations, whether it be France, Germany, or Italy. In K-Pop, this is not the case, as most, if not all, Korean artists are of Korean descent. Although, interestingly, the group EXO specifically included Chinese artists to perform the Mandarin versions of their song for Chinese audiences, but this is very much a recent and unique development. The point is that both the creators and consumers in the Korean market, specifically, are all of Korean descent, which helps underline the use of American hip-hop and English language as a generational barrier. This is also seen in the data collected in Table 1. Use of English in Korean pop music clearly correlates with the popularity of the hip-hop culture. In the first five years, hip-hop and English use correlate on an almost one to one ratio.

On the other hand, the discussion surrounding the agency of artists becomes more convoluted as more big media conglomerations get involved with the creation and shaping of artists and music in the K-Pop wave. As Day Yong Jin and Woongjae Ryoo analyzed, Seo Taiji was in control of his own agency as an artist, as he created and wrote his own music. However, as is seen throughout the decade, the agency and leading hand in the creation of

music shifted significantly into the hands of media conglomerates and producers in a bid to copy and profit from Seo Taiji's success.

Frédéric Martel, French author of *Mainstream, Enquête sur la guerre globale de la culture et des médias* (translation: *On the Global War on Culture*), writes about the geopolitical struggle for global mass culture, and the dominance of American cultural influence over global mass culture, and how it is costing counter-cultural formations such as K-Pop their national identity. This can be seen in the increasing control of corporations and the shaping of their cultural products to mimic American youth culture in order to propagate national and international success. Day Yong Jin and Woongjae Ryoo argue that “[t]he contemporary form of hybridization in K-Pop proves that cultural globalization has been a primary, enduring and inevitable process that offers the promise of widespread and powerful global impact performed by the transnational culture industry” (Jin 127). Jin and Ryoo are convinced (although the word empire is never used) that American cultural production and presence in the global youth culture has overwritten what Homi Bhabha called the creation of a third space. Jin and Ryoo state that “[b]y carefully examining the nature of and extent to which English is employed in K-Pop and how this hybridity is utilized as a discursive means of cultural hybridization, we could contend that cultural hybridity in the music realm has undertaken global forms and styles in many cases rather than establishing a new creative culture or a third space, one which is free from American influence” (Jin 127). While the act of bringing American hip-hop and integrating it and the English language into the K-Pop movement was an act of agency on the behalf of Seo Taiji and the Boys, the organized mass production by media conglomerates that took off in the wake of Seo Taiji's success shows the influence of an Americanized global culture.

This chapter has shown that the use of English language in Korean pop music is definitely tied to the arrival of American hip-hop, though not limited to use in hip-hop songs.

However, this did not happen as a result of pressures of an American Empire, but rather through the deliberate choice and agency of the Korean youth culture. Hip-hop plays a large role in global youth culture, and the young Korean generation used it to help forge an identity separate from the generations that came before them. This Americanization of Korean pop culture was, then, not an act of the American cultural empire, but of the agency of Korean artists and producers in making their own music. However, as big music conglomerates started to take over the production of this counter-cultural movement, artists lost that claim to autonomy and agency. The big conglomerates were not inciting rebellion against the older generations, but rather they were out to make as much profit as possible, as is common among big businesses. However, in order to do so, they were drawn to and influenced by the global market to add American youth culture and English language elements to the music, thus forcing increased American/Korean hybridization. It is telling that the use of English in both band names and song titles, with the use of English in song titles outranking the use of it in the song lyrics. The actual use of English is still very basic throughout these two decades, however, and generally varies from the occasional use of English attention-grabbers, to some more intricate usage in the raps of some hip-hop songs. The question remains, however, how this changes in the third decade of K-Pop, and especially after the important global popularity spike created by Psy's "Gangnam Style". What, if any, ongoing role will media conglomerates have in the creation, distribution, and content of Korean popular culture?

Chapter 3: Data Analysis 2010-2015

After looking at the unfolding of the first two decades of K-Pop, it is now time to look at the crucial time period of the third decade which includes the years 2010-2015. As mentioned, the reason for the importance of this particular period of time, is the benchmark year 2012 when the song “Gangnam Style” was released by the artist Psy. The song became an enormous hit not only in its primary market of South Korea, but also in the secondary markets of Japan and China. More surprisingly, it became a huge hit in Western markets as well. The song caught the eye of the international community mostly through YouTube, where it became the first video to receive one billion views (Allocca). The music video was an internet sensation and put not only Psy and K-Pop on the map, but also South Korean culture in general. Even though the *Hallyu* had been picking up steam during the previous decades and was influencing and reaching markets in Japan, China, and Southeast Asia, this spike in popularity was unheard of and opened up lucrative new business possibilities in the West. Studying English code switching in this particular decade of music achieves an opportunity to analyze the music scene in a post-“Gangnam Style” world, and its effect on artists and producers of the K-Pop scene. Has the use of English in lyrics taken on a new role? Has it increased in frequency and/or methods of deployment? How has the use of English in band names and song titles changed after the spike? And the most important question that remains to be answered is: how can this be used to address the discussion of agency and empire, and what can be said of the increasing role of media conglomerates?

This Chapter demonstrates the uses of English throughout this decade. The reference point is still the annual Top 10 lists in the Korean pop world, but for this decade, the website *Gaon* is used. *Gaon* has become the official website of the Korean music industry and was set

up in conjunction with the Korean tourism board, and is the most official authority for this decade. Arguably it is a better source than *Bugs!*, but one that was only set up in 2010, and before its existence *Bugs!* is the best website available. This signals an important change in professionalism and organization of the national music scene in South Korea. Not only is *Gaon* a sign of the centralization of the organization of K-Pop, but its connection to the Korean tourism board demonstrates the proactive role that the Korean government plays in the cultural sector. At this point in time, in the late 2000's, Korea started to become one of the largest exporters of culture in Asia. This trend was noted by Jessica Kam, vice president of MTV Asia during that time. Kam claimed that Korea was likely to continue to grow as a cultural exporter and "become the next epicenter of pop culture in Asia" (MacIntyre). The presence of K-Pop in the Asian cultural market continued to grow and by the time Psy's "Gangnam Style" exploded onto the global scene, it had cemented its position as the epicenter of Asian pop culture and was starting to spread its influence beyond Asia.

The first section of this Chapter discusses how English is used in the different lyrics of the decade, what kind of code-switching is used, and which kind of songs it is used in, and compared with use in the previous decades. Specific attention is paid to the years 2013-2015, to see what impact the popularity spike had. After this, an analysis of the data on the frequency of use of English in lyrics, song titles, and band names is presented and analyzed. It will once again be compared to the previous decades, with an extra scrutinizing eye once again focused on the popularity spike. Extra focus is also placed on specific differences in styles of music and the uses of English therein. The four basic music categories used are still uptempo and downtempo hip-hop styled music and uptempo and downtempo non-hip-hop styled music. This is in part to show whether the hip-hop genre continues to play a significant role in the transfer of the English language. The end of the Chapter features a discussion of the American cultural transfer debate and analyzes how the data collected for this third decade

illustrates how we see cultural transfer within the K-Pop music community, and what role the large media conglomerates play in this.

The first big hit in the third decade of K-Pop is Miss A's 2010 *Gaon* chart topper "Bad Girl, Good Girl". "Bad Girl, Good Girl" is an uptempo hip-hop style song which includes a completely English title and English band name. This song makes use of single word use or repeated use of single word switches, which echo the title of the song. In addition, this particular song's opening and closing stanzas are identical and completely in English. The following excerpt contains the first four stanzas from the text ("Miss A"):

Original Text:

***You don't know me, you don't know me**
You don't know me, you don't know me
So shut up boy, so shut up boy
So shut up boy, so shut up, shut up*

*Apeseon han madido motadeoni
 Dwiye seon nae yaegil anjoke hae eoyiga eobseo
Hello, hello, hello, na gateun yeojan cheo eum euro-euro-euro
 Bon geogateun dewae nareul pandanani naega hokshi duryeo un geoni*

*Geoteuron **bad girl**, sogeuron **good girl**, nareul jaraljido motamyeon seo
 Nae geo moseupman bomyeonseo hanshiman yeojaro boneun neoye shiseoni nan neomuna ugyeo*

*Chum chul ttaen **bad girl**, sarangeun **good girl**,
 Chum chuneun nae moseubeul bolttae neun
 Nokseul noko bogoseo neun kkeunani songarak jil haneun geu wiseoni nan neomuna ugyeo*

English Translation:

You don't know me, you don't know me
You don't know me, you don't know me
So shut up boy, so shut up boy
So shut up boy, so shut up, shut up

You couldn't say a thing in front of me,
 but you could talk badly about me behind my back. I'm dumbfounded.
Hello, Hello, Hello. It seems like the first time, time, time you've seen a girl like me.
 Why do you judge me? Are you afraid of me, perhaps?

On the outside, I'm a **Bad Girl**. On the inside, I'm a **Good Girl**.
 You don't even know me well, you only look at me from the outside.
 I find your gaze to be funny because you see me as a pitiful girl.

When I dance, I'm a **Bad Girl**. When I love, I'm a **Good Girl**.
 When you watch me dance, you become mesmerized, but are you done after you watch?
 I find your hypocrisy to be funny because you point at me.

The artists and/or producers of the song use a more refined version of the English language in this particular lyric. The repeated usage of “hello” in the second stanza is reminiscent of similar attention grabbing usages in songs of the previous decades. Although it is semantically viable because the artist is trying to catch the attention of the boy in question, it is not crucial. Use of the title in stanzas three and four seems to have a similar objective of justifying the use of English in title. However, it has a more intricate application for the identity of the artist, or at least, for the persona in the song. The introductory stanza makes the repetitive claim that the listener does now know her, and the fact that this claim is stated in English could underscore the alienation between speaker and audience. In the chorus (stanzas three and four) the main persona identifies herself by English language terms “bad girl” and “good girl”, which further supports this claim.

English language is used in this song as a way to create, explain, and defend the identity of the persona from whose point of view the lyrics are written. The intricate and subtle use of English in this particular song also supports initial findings in the previous Chapter regarding the agency of artists. It seems that hip-hop influenced artists such as Miss A make use of the English language to support self-identification, and set themselves apart from the community around them. If the use of English and hip-hop at the start of the K-Pop movement is to be taken as an act of agency to help separate the youth culture of South Korea from established culture, then the type of English usage as seen in “Bad Girl, Good Girl” helps explain how artists are continuing to do so in a more intricate and personal level.

Downtempo songs seem to have a consistently less intricate usage of English in their lyrics. Not only are downtempo songs less likely to make use of English, they are also far less likely to be integrated into an overall semantic meaning in complex ways. The non-hip-hop style ballad “Don’t Cry” by Park Bom was fifth on the *Gaon* yearly chart in 2011. The title is

entirely in English, but the name of the artist is officially cited only in Hangul as 박봄. The following excerpt includes the first three stanzas from the text (“Park Bom”):

Original Text:

[CHORUS] *It's okay baby please don't cry*
Ginagin yeohaengi kkeutnatjiman
Tto eonjengan majuchigetji
Daeum sesangeseo kkok dasi manna

Haruga meolge urin maeil datwotjyo
Geuttaen mwoga geuri bunhaetdeonji
Maeil bameul ureotjyo
Baby I cried

Neo raneun saram cham naegen musimhaetjyo
Gilgo ginagin bameul jisaeneun nal
Hollo dueotjyo
Baby I cried

English Translation:

[CHORUS] *It's okay baby please don't cry,*
This long journey is about to end.
But someday, we will meet again,
In the next life, we will see each other again

Everyday, we are blinded by our anger,
What we were fighting about every minute,
I cried every night,
Baby I cried

All the long nights
I stayed up late crying,
I spent them all alone
Baby I cried

The use of English in this particular song is straightforward and reminiscent of usage in previous decades. The three instances presented here all repeat the title of the song “Don’t Cry,” as do the instances that do not take place in these particular stanzas. This represents use of English which is not necessarily intricate as a way to make a point with the text, but is rather a way in which to justify the use of English language in the song title. This is pertinent because in this example, the title is in English only, and it seems that English here is used purely as an identifier. This raises the important notion that was touched upon in the previous

Chapter but not yet thoroughly discussed, namely, the fact that English is used in this instance purely as an act of improving marketability.

The previous Chapter mentioned that there was an increase of English in song titles unrelated to either the use of English in band names or use of English in the lyrics of the song. The use of English in song titles is found to be the most increasing facet in the first two decades of the K-Pop scene, related to the rise of media conglomerates' involvement in the creation of cultural products. Marketability is one of the possible answers to describe this increase. It also explains the use of English in songs such as Park Bom's "Don't Cry". English in the song does not add anything significant to the text and its main purpose is to justify the use of English in the title and strengthen its connection to it. The phenomenon of English as a vehicle for marketability will be discussed in more detail in the following Chapter.

The third decade of K-Pop brings us to the peak of its popularity with Psy's non-hip-hop uptempo track "Gangnam Style". Remarkably, on the *Gaon* charts (where it hit number 1 for the year) the song title is listed only in its Hangul form "강남스타일" and the artist name is represented as 싸이 (Psy), with Hangul in the primary position. The song makes use of very little English throughout. The following excerpt marks the chorus of the song and the only part wherein English is used ("Psy"):

Original Text:

Oppa Gangnam **Style**
Gangnam **Style**

Op, op, op, op
Oppa Gangnam **Style**
Gangnam **Style**

Op, op, op, op
Oppa Gangnam **Style**

Eh, **sexy lady**
Op, op, op, op
Oppa Gangnam **Style**

Eh, **sexy lady**
 Op, op, op, op
 Eh-eh-eh, eh-eh-eh

An English translation of the text is not really needed, the only translation that is needed at this point is the term *oppa*, which is a respectful form of “this guy,” in the feminine form. The two main uses of English in this text are the attention-getters “sexy lady” and the use of “style” after Gangnam. In this case, it seems the song is using English in a fairly innocuous manner, but that is a deception when examining the social context and meaning of the song. It is meant as a satirical take on South Korean ostentatious society by making fun of the materialistic and hollow lifestyles of upper class residents of the fashionable Gangnam district in Seoul. With this in mind, the short and repetitive use of English in the chorus can be viewed from a different perspective, as the curt and non-complex utterances of the people who the artist is satirizing.

What also makes Psy unique as an artist in the K-Pop scene is the fact that he studied music extensively in the United States of America. In an analysis of the music video, Max Fisher states that “[h]is exposure to American music's penchant for social commentary, and the time spent abroad that may have given him a new perspective on his home country, could inform his apparently somewhat critical take on South Korean society” (Fisher). This song continues the trend of using English as a tool for rebellion against the status quo. Where artists used it before in support of rebellion by the youth culture, Psy seems to use it as rebellion against all mainstream culture, including the shallow nature of K-Pop itself. Much like Seo Taiji and the Boys at the beginning of the K-Pop movement, Psy writes his own music and is not a product of the conglomerates’ idol system. His music also has social commentary and is counter-cultural. Ironically, however, much like Seo Taiji and the Boys’ success, Psy’s success is consequently also built on and used by large conglomerates and the mainstream culture he is speaking against with his music. Where artists like Seo Taiji and Psy

are more independent and original, the idol style conglomerate bands that follow capitalize on the success of the movement.

Another remarkable song was released in 2012, one that is perhaps equally rebellious in its own understated nature, is Busker Busker's "Cherry Blossom Ending". The song is an acoustic indie-rock ballad featuring no English lyrics whatsoever and is stylistically unlike anything in the K-Pop Top 10 lists from 1992-2015. The group is interesting because they are the only band with a big hit that did not come from the pop idol training grounds of large music production companies, much like Psy and Seo Taiji and the Boys. These large music conglomerates are known to train their idols-to-be in singing, dancing, and public relations from a young age and produce all the music the artists perform. Busker Busker, much like Psy and Seo Taiji, wrote their song themselves. The name of the band is very telling in this respect as well. A busker is a musician who plays music on the street for cash, free and independent of the music industry. "Cherry Blossom Ending" is a song that Busker Busker performed at music audition television program *Superstar K3* on Mnet. Because the group created the song free of any influence from the big music conglomerates, it was able to create an entirely different song and sound, and used no English lyrics at all. The rarity of success by a group such as Busker Busker signals how difficult it is for non-idol trained groups to break into the Top 10s and the mainstream K-Pop movement. This song serves as a reminder of the power of music conglomerates in influencing and creating the songs their artists perform, and the power of the global market and conglomerates' desire to market their artists effectively for financial gain.

After examining the increased complexity of use of the English language in the K-Pop scene, it is time to look at general trends in this third decade of K-Pop. Table 3 demonstrates the number of songs in Top 10 lists of 2010-2015 that used English, and how many of them can be described as a hip-hop style. When compared to the earlier Tables 1 and 2, the previous

Chapter which describe similar trends in 1992-1999 and 2000-2009 respectively, there does not seem to be a marked departure from those trends. The popularity spike of 2012 does mark a high point of English in lyrics for the decade, but does not correspond with an increased amount of hip-hop styled music. If anything, hip-hop influenced songs are not as frequently found among the Top 10 lists of the third decade. The prevalence of hip-hop styled music seems to remain steady at about one third of the songs.

Table 3			English in:	Band Names	English in:	Song Titles
Year	English	Hip-Hop	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2010	6	4	2	4	4	1
2011	6	5	4	3	4	1
2012	9	1	1	6	7	1
2013	7	3	0	3	2	1
2014	4	1	2	8	1	0
2015	8	5	4	1	3	3

The frequency of English in the band names and song titles of 2010-2015 marks a surprising trend in comparison to the first two decades of K-Pop, especially in comparison to pre- and post-“Gangnam Style”. The use of English in band names in the first two decades is relatively stable. After a sharp increase between the start of 1992 and 1999, where it went from zero in the primary and secondary positions to an average of about one in the primary, and four-five in the secondary positions, it leveled out between 2000-2009 and stayed close to that number for both positions. Between 2010 and 2015, however, there seems to be higher variance. After 2012, the use of English in band names in the primary position seems to increase from one to four. In the secondary position, however, the use of English varies quite wildly from three in 2013, to eight in 2014, and then one in 2015. What is definitely not seen, however, is a significant increase in English post-“Gangnam Style”. Although arguably the use of English in band names in the combined positions was always quite high.

The frequency of the use of English in song titles was even more predictable and stable during the first two decades of the K-Pop movement. In Table 1, a sharp increase in English song titles in the primary position is seen between 1992 and 1996, from zero-eight. The amount of English in song titles remained stable from then on through the second decade, and Table 2 illustrates that, with the exception of 2008 when there were only seven of 10 with English in the primary position, the rest of the years all sported between eight and 10. In the third decade, however, there is enormous variance following the 2012 popularity spike. After a low first two years with only four of the 10 with English in the primary (and one in the secondary), the decade reaches its pinnacle in 2012 with seven out of 10 songs with English in the primary title (and one in the secondary). One might have expected an increase in the use of English in song titles post popularity spike to help with marketability, but it actually seems to decrease quite drastically. It drops to just two in the primary and one in the secondary in 2013, to only one in the primary and zero in the secondary in 2014, after which there is a rise again to three in the primary and three in the secondary in 2015.

An explanation for the decrease of English usage in song titles is the increase in downtempo songs in these decades. In previous decades downtempo songs would use English titles which would then be used in the text to justify the title, a clear decrease of this particular practice occurs. While some songs like Park Bom's "Don't Cry" in 2011 still reflect this practice, it declines as the decade goes on. Ballads such as "A Midsummer Night's Sweetness" (2014) by San E and Raina uses some English like "so sweet" and "you have a nice dream", but does not go by an English title (officially on *Gaon* as 산이 (San E), 레이나라 "한여름밤의 꿀"). Not only ballads, but also uptempo songs followed this trend. Parkmyeong Su and IU's 2015 dance track "Leon" makes ample usage of single code switching in English by repeated usage of "call me", "look at me", and "what you need". However the song title as well as artists' names are not primarily in English (officially on *Gaon* as 이유 갓

지(GOD G)않은이유(박명수, 아이유) “레옹”). It is important to note, however, that hip-hop style tracks still used English more often and in more aspects throughout the decade. Out of 19 Top 10 tracks in this third decade, 17 of the songs used English in the lyrics, 11 used English in song titles (in any position), and 12 used English in the band name (in any position).

Even though the 2012 “Gangnam Style” popularity spike occurred just a few years ago, it has already had quite an impact on the K-Pop scene. While it is intuitive to think that use of English in lyrics, band names, and song titles might have increased unilaterally, data collected and presented in this Chapter shows that the situation is more complicated than that. One of the more important points that follows from the data is the disparity between use of English in hip-hop styled songs and non-hip-hop styled ones (especially downtempo ones). The fact that hip-hop has retained its strong connection to the English language means that the identity of the music is still very much tied to the original American imported variant. The use of AAVE is still prevalent in hip-hop styled music, as is the use of English attention-getters. There has been an increase in the complexity of English used in hip-hop tracks in the K-Pop scene, with songs like Miss A’s “Bad Girl, Good Girl” (2010), as well as tracks such as Big Bang’s “Loser” (2015). Psy’s “Gangnam Style” (2012), while it does not use a lot of English, finds creative and intricate ways to integrate the language into the music and gives it a creative function as social commentary.

An interesting disparity in the data collected for this decade is the decline of use of English in downtempo songs. Not only are the number of downtempo songs that use English in their title down, but ballads that use any English outside of attention-getters are also down. At first glance it seems the style of love songs has evolved, much like all other styles of music have in the last 23 years, and it is likely that love songs were not expected to be edgy or rebellious and artists and producers of the music were not required to insert as much English

language to make them cool. Because of this, conglomerates and producers did not feel a need to push the use of English in these particular songs.

One trend empirically shown to be on the downturn is the placement of an English language title for songs that do not have any English language in the lyrics. This was quite striking in the earlier decades when producers felt the need to put an English label on as many songs as possible, as they were party to the sharp incline of English in music during the first decade. It is quite possible that use of English on the label simply became cool and a passing fad which helped sell to the general public. The fact that there is a measurable decline of the practice in the third decade indicates that this might have been nothing more than a popular style of packaging. Here the disparity between non-hip-hop songs and hip-hop songs can be seen. Non-hip-hop songs do not seem to have English as an integral function of their music identity.

What does this mean for the discussion of American cultural transfer? It seems indicative that American culture, deeply ingrained in the hip-hop genre, has bloomed in South Korea. While the style of the music is definitely hybridized with Korean culture, it is definitely originally American and a vehicle for the transfer of English language. The data collected here for the last three decades demonstrates how this influence has affected the rest of music culture. Not only do hip-hop tunes use English language and AAVE slang, but non-hip-hop songs, whether uptempo or downtempo, include use of English as well. Here we can see the spread of influence throughout the K-Pop scene. However, throughout this previous decade we can also see the diminishing influence of English language on the non-hip-hop side of music culture, which marks an important moment in the cultural transfer debate for South Korea. Hip-hop and English were definitely a huge hit, but the transfer and influence of the culture over large swaths of Korean music culture seems to have been temporary and is

currently on the decline. This is in part because of a switch in international marketing strategy by the large conglomerates, which is highlighted in Chapter 4.

This brings us back to the discussion surrounding agency that was started in the previous Chapter. The rise and decline of English, especially in non-hip-hop songs in South Korea, seems to indicate that the Korean market is indeed in control of its own agency. There is one area of this discussion, however, that has not yet been debated, namely, the power and agency of the big music conglomerates. As was stated earlier in discussing Busker Busker's surprise hit: almost all artists and records are produced by one of these large corporations. As with any corporation, profit margins are a huge part of their success, and it is important for these music companies to follow all the popular music and cultural trends and try to capitalize on them. A huge aspect of potential success is marketing, and the study of marketing strategies for the songs and albums comes into play. The following Chapter analyzes modern international marketing strategies and uses them to analyze data presented in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4: Marketing and K-Globalization

Popular music culture in South Korea is increasingly determined by three large music conglomerates YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment. Any discussion of the creative and marketing choices made in K-Pop would be incomplete without a careful consideration of the marketing machine behind the phenomenon. The marketing set-up was initiated by SM Entertainment in the early 1990's, and the conglomerates invest huge amounts of time and money into developing the artists and crafting their brand. Moreover, on a broader scale, the South Korean government promoted a lot of cultural development and after 1994 they "earmark[ed] 1% of the national budget [for] spending on subsidies and low-interest loans to cultural industries, launching agencies to promote and expand K-pop exports, and setting up more cultural departments at universities" (Leong). The South Korean government uses Korea's cultural developments to gain soft power and break into the global stage. K-Pop is definitely the jewel in the crown of this global cultural expansion. Target markets at the beginning of the cultural expansion were China and Japan, and these seem to still be the primary markets when looking at artists such as EXO, Big Bang, and Girls Generation. An analysis of international marketing strategies of big media conglomerates can answer the question how aggressive marketing of K-Pop can be used to contextualize the Americanization and Anglicization of the K-Pop music scene, and also how influences of the global market can be integrated into the agency versus cultural empire debate.

The K-Pop marketing system has been lauded internationally for its transnational reach. According to Seo Min-Soo on the website Korea Marketing, the K-Pop international marketing strategy is so successful because of the amount of time, money, and effort put into the preparatory stages of the conception of a new band, album, or song. Min-Soo notes that in

the preparation stage, “K-pop’s major production companies lay the groundwork for moving product overseas. The process is systematically designed, starting with selecting prospective stars, putting them through a rigorous training regime, producing shows and promoting globally” (Min-Soo). Language training has also become a part of this training regime, with trainees taught the languages of their target audiences, whether that is English, Japanese, or Mandarin. Day Yong Jin and Woongjae Ryoo found that “[t]he entertainment powerhouses have contributed to the growth of K-Pop in a couple of different ways. On the one hand, they are expanding the market to the rest of Asia; therefore, they need to use English, which means that some K-Pop singers trained in major agencies have to use English in order to penetrate the Asian market, and eventually the Western market” (Jin 120). Large cultural and media conglomerates have therefore started to drive the form and function of the music, as well as language use by their artists.

The impact is that the Korean music conglomerates are hyper-aware of international marketing and are constantly looking for ways in which their products can be sold and promoted internationally, which is actually changing the function of the music as a product itself. In an interview with *Monocle on Bloomberg*, MTV Asia Vice President Ben Richardson stated that “[m]usic is no longer the business. If anything, it’s become a business part. If it becomes popular, it leads to other opportunities – that is where they make money” (Monocle on Bloomberg). Melissa Leong, a reporter for the *Financial Post* found that:

[i]n the early 2000s, Korean cultural content exports hovered around US\$500-million. By 2011, that has mushroomed to more than \$4-billion, according to Korea’s Cultural and Information Service – and that was before “Gangnam Style” exploded on the scene. By 2012, Korea’s ministry of culture, sport and tourism estimated *Hallyu*’s economic asset value at US\$83.2-billion, of which US\$5.26-billion was thought to be attributable to its music industry (Leong)

Much of this profit is not attributed to the direct sales of albums and singles but rather the consumer products marketing directly by these groups, and most of the profit is made from sales in China and Japan. The success of the sales of these consumer products is thus

intrinsically tied to the cultural spread spearheaded by K-Pop and K-Dramas. K-Pop has been shaped into an effective marketing strategy and in the course of the decades, more and more of the agency over the musical products lies in the hands of the conglomerates.

One of the most cutting edge strategies in the third decade of K-Pop is the manner in which the group EXO is marketed. EXO is contracted to (and created by) SM Entertainment, the largest of the South Korean music conglomerates. SM Entertainment's founder and producer Lee Soo-man discussed and revealed at a *Hallyu* business seminar that they were actively promoting a strategy of debuting a group that would be subdivided into a Korean and Chinese group in order to become more successful in the Chinese music market. EXO is a prime case study through which to analyze the modern adaptation of international K-Pop marketing and how the Korean music industry is entering the global stage. Along with EXO's foray into conquering China, Big Bang's strategy for conquering the Japanese market and Girls Generations' strategy to conquer the American market are also important case studies.

EXO is a good case study to analyze the K-Pop marketing machine because it is not only one of the biggest hits in Asia of the last decade, it is also aggressively marketed to an international audience. China is the primary international market for this band. EXO is a large band with 12 members, six of whom sing in Korean (dubbed EXO-K) and six who sing in Mandarin (dubbed EXO-M). The name EXO is also an English language phonetic pun for kisses and hugs, elaborated by their first album *XOXO*. For this album, the Korean version was the "kiss" edition and the Mandarin version was the "hug" edition. They all sing each of the songs and dance in the choreography but depending on the version of the song performed, different singers take the lead and the others become background singers. The band also releases two versions of the album, one in Korean and one in Mandarin. It is a testament to their fame and status that their album *Exodus* made it into the annual Korean Top 10 album sales of the year 2015 on the *Gaon* album chart with both language versions. When comparing

both versions of the lyrics of EXO's smash hit "Call Me Baby," English still plays the same technical and structural role in both of them. This is not surprising when it comes to the chorus, which makes use of the title of the song. The English title "Call Me Baby" is in the primary position of the song title in both the Korean and Chinese versions of the song, without any translation in the second position. The following is excerpt from the song "Call Me Baby" includes the Korean, Mandarin, and English translated versions of the final three stanzas of the text ("Exo"):

Korean Version:

Biccaneun geosdeureun manha
 Geu ane jinjjareul bwabwa
Call me baby, call me baby
Call me baby, call me baby
I'll be your baby yeah
You know my name girl

Ho nareul naro jonjaehage hae
You know I'm here girl
 Nae sesangeun ojik **you're the one**
You're the one
Girl you're the one I want

Biccaneun geosdeureun manha
 Geu ane jinjjareul bwabwa
Call me baby, call me baby
Call me baby, call me baby
 Myeot beonirado **call me girl**

Chinese Version:

Hua li de bu shi de ma ma
 Xu yao ni shuang yan zheng da
Call me baby, call me baby
Call me baby, call me baby
I'll be your baby yeah
You know my name girl

(I'll be your baby yeah~ Ho!)
 Shi ni rang wo cheng wei wo zi ji
(You know I'm here girl)
 zai wo shijie zhi you
You're the one, you're the one
Girl you're the one I want

Hua li de bu shi de ma ma
 Xu yao ni shuang yan zheng da da
Call me baby, call me baby
Call me baby, call me baby
 Jiaoji ci dou xing **call me girl**

These last three stanzas are quite telling of how English is used in both versions of the song. Even though the two versions are written mostly in the two primary languages (Korean and Mandarin), English is not only used semantically in the same manner but also structurally and syntactically. English is a stationary and nonfluctuating factor in the make-up of the track.

Big Bang's 2012 hit "Monster" also had a translated release in one of the primary international markets for Korea, in this case Japan. Big Bang is a boy band formed by YG Entertainment. Unlike EXO, Big Bang used the same artists to remake each track for a Japanese release. "Monster", much like "Call Me Baby", was released with only English in the primary position and no Korean or Japanese translation of the title in the secondary

position. While “Call Me Baby” adheres more strictly to the use of English structurally and quantitatively in both versions of the song, “Monster” actually sees an increase in English usage. For example, the following excerpt is the intro to the song in both the Korean and Japanese releases (“BIG BANG”):

Korean Version:

Oraen-maniya mot bon sa-i geudaen eol-ku-ri chowa boyeo
 Yeppeojeot-da neon hangsang nae nunen wonrae kowah boyeo

Keunde oneul-ttara jo-geum talla boyeo yunanhi mwonka deo cha-gawo boyeo
 Nareul boneun nunbichi dongjeonge kadeuk cha-isseo ne apeseo nan ja-ga boyeo

Japanese Version:

It's been a long time, since I've seen you
You're beautiful forever in my eyes
You ain't the same, you changed
So close but so distant
It's cold miles away from the love we once had

As is clearly visible in this intro, there is a disparity between the usage of English in the opening of the two versions of the song. The Korean version of the song includes no use of English while the Japanese version is only in English (it is a direct translation from the Korean into English). That said, most of the song is a Japanese translation of the Korean version, but also interjects more English loan words and code switching.

In order to attempt to break into the American market, some artists like Girls Generation have released versions of their songs entirely in English. Girls Generation made an English release of their 2011 album *The Boys*' title track “The Boys” specifically for American audiences. The group had an opportunity to perform the song on two American television shows in February of 2011: *The Late Show with David Letterman* and *Live! With Kelly and Michael*, to mixed reviews. While the original version hit the top of the Korean charts in 2011 (although falling to 43rd place for the annual chart), the English version hit the 62nd spot on the *Gaon* chart but managed to climb to 5th spot on the Billboard US Hot Dance Singles Sales Chart (“Dance Singles Sales”) and 15th on the Billboard US Hot Singles Sales Chart (“Hot Singles Sales”).

These three case studies demonstrate the manner and attitude in which South Korean cultural artifacts are actively and aggressively disseminated and marketed around the world from the outset. Instead of using a bit of the target culture as a way to enter the market, they adapted the entire song. Curiously, the role that the English language plays in translations of the songs has not changed in the least, or at least it has not diminished. The case of Big Bang's "Monster" shows that there is actually an increase of English in their Japanese release, even though the rest of the song is already fully translated and targeted specifically for their target audience. The EXO case study is especially poignant because it demonstrates a new phase for the marketing of K-Pop bands. Targeting different international markets from the groups' conception shows the hybridization that the K-Pop market is prepared to make. This is what Frédéric Martel stated, saying that they "are willing to give up their national distinctiveness and their language to turn their cultural production into mainstream, even if they (lost in translation) lose their identity" (Martel 299). In a bid to enter their target market, the K-Pop movement has started a strategy surpassing cultural hybridization into calculated cultural adaptation, and have completely changed their product.

Cultural products and the international transfer of these products are important aspects of what is called soft power. The goal of using soft power through cultural means is to attract cultures around the world to want to appropriate your culture, and through it, gain political and/or economic power. This is common practice and one that, in the last few decades, South Korea has become exceptionally adept at.

In an article for *Korea Marketing Consulting*, Seo Min-Soo outlined the four different strategies with which South Korean businesses spread the economic and political soft power of the nation. The first strategy is called "one source, multi-use," (Min-Soo) which is used in animation and game industries to which K-Pop songs and singers can easily be exported. The second strategy on the national stage is the development of tourism packages designed for K-

Pop fans around the world, a currently popular service put together by the Japan Travel Bureau (JTB), which offers concert packages as well as tours to filming locations of music videos and sets for K-Dramas (Min-Soo). It has been a successful way to boost the Korean tourism industry. The third strategy is direct product marketing and product development with K-Pop artists naming and advertising the product. This is usually done with luxury items such as cosmetics, perfume, and smartphones (Leong). The fourth strategy is having K-Pop artists model in advertisements and commercials to get the fans to buy the product, even if the artists or their producers have nothing to do with the product. This strategy has been successfully implemented by South Korean corporations such as Daesang Corporation which achieved great financial success with the girl group Kara (Min-Soo). What these strategies all entail are a manner to penetrate international markets on the back of the popularity of artists and groups in the K-Pop movement. Especially interesting is that the music itself does not seem to be helping with sales and advertising, but rather the international brand of the groups that is being cultivated for success.

Although Korean television dramas started the international appeal with the 2002 hit *Winter Sonata*, K-Pop has definitely become the jewel in the crown of Korean international cultural appeal. Not only has K-Pop helped fuel the nation's economy, but more importantly, it has put the country on the global stage with the help of "Gangnam Style". However, even though South Korea has been able to capture its own agency in manufacturing, training, and creating K-Pop songs and bands they are still subject to the forces of the international cultural market and large conglomerates which are forcing the cultural hybridization of the K-Pop movement. Chapters 2 and 3 concluded that the artists and producers of K-Pop throughout the three decades had control over their own agency in deciding how they integrated the English language and American culture into their music. Hip-hop and the international youth culture were credited as being the vehicles which not only brought and integrated English into the

musical culture, but were also the main sources of continued use of the English language. That said, by tracing the use of English through these three decades, the hand of the large corporations and their marketing strategies are shown to have strong influence in guiding how the culture develops.

In the third decade of the K-Pop movement, there is evidence that the Korean music industry is moving away from using the English language. One of the reasons for this development is that artists and producers were not convinced by the use of English and wanted to focus on releasing more Korean culture focused content. This would be easier to market internationally as well since they have soft power and popularity and visibility within Asia. Woongjae Ryoo argues that the Korean wave is a demonstration of new cultural global dynamics within the Asian region. He states that the *Hallyu* as a phenomenon signifies “a regionalization of transnational cultural flows as it entails Asian countries’ increasing acceptance of cultural information from neighboring countries that share similar economic and cultural backgrounds rather than from economically and politically powerful others” (Ryoo 147). Ryoo’s theory is definitely a way to explain the diminishing use of English in K-Pop in the third decade. He states that Asian countries are becoming more and more comfortable with consuming cultural products from neighboring countries, which could be a reason why South Korean groups no longer need to infuse English into their songs.

However, the case studies discussed in this Chapter regarding EXO, Big Bang, and Girls Generation would argue the opposite of that. The three case studies signal that the large media corporations’ new international marketing strategies are doing what Frédéric Martel stated about giving up national distinctiveness in order to gain international success (Martel 299). Martel’s argument seems even stronger in the face of marketing strategies applied in the third decade of K-Pop. The fact that bands such as EXO, Big Bang, and Girls Generation completely changed their songs into a new product void of Korean language markers shows

how they are losing their Korean national identity. However, what Martel does not keep in mind is that, at the end of the day, this is but a copy of the original. If the strategy going forward is to completely convert the internationally released singles into the language and culture of the target market, it would leave the original versions of the song with more freedom to express Korean language and culture since they are primarily targeting the South Korean market. K-Globalization, which can be seen as the more mature and evolved step following the cultural *Hallyu*, is increasingly characterized by complete adaptation to the target market, whether it is China, Japan, or the United States of America. However, it is important to note that these are new versions and international versions, and the diminishing of English use in the original K-Pop tracks in the third decade is a byproduct of switching to international marketing strategies by the big media conglomerates.

The fact that the American music genre of hip-hop is globally associated with youth cultures is evidence of how strong the influence of American culture is in the global cultural market. Chapters 2 and 3 show how the Korean youth culture uses its own agency to integrate the global youth culture with their own in order to create their own identity and separate themselves from the older generations. However, soon after the first few groups led by Seo Taiji and the Boys used hip-hop and the English language as a counter-cultural force and a way to provide social commentary, the big media conglomerates took over the music production of the industry. With the knowledge that the large Korean music conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment have had a huge hand in shaping their artists, and with it the music scene, since the early 1990's, the conclusion can be drawn that American global cultural influence definitely had a hold on the Korean music business during the early stages. This was mainly because the big conglomerates saw the use of American culture and English as a way to market the K-Pop cultural product around the world and, specifically, throughout Asia. A change in international marketing strategy in the

third decade and its effect on the K-Pop movement shows how influential the conglomerates are in the movement. Even though South Korean artists such as Seo Taiji and the Boys and Psy showed great agency in integrating American culture and the English language into the musical culture, the South Korean cultural market and big media conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment took over the reins and continue to influence the manner in which the K-Pop scene is hybridized.

Conclusion and Further Research Opportunities

Applying the American cultural transfer debate to K-Pop and *Hallyu* case studies has resulted in some interesting conclusions. While many scholars are fervently in support of the concept of the agency of the receivers of the culture and the creative manners in which they adapt and integrate the received culture into their native culture, this is not the only reality in the contemporary world. Agency does play a huge role in the debate, which is reflected by the data presented in this paper. However, this paper also reveals that global pressure from the international cultural markets has shaped the agency of the large South Korean media conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment who use cultural appropriation as a means to achieve profits and with it drive the cultural hybridization of the South Korean music movement.

The case for agency can be argued when looking at the data collected in chapters 2 and 3 in isolation. The linguistic data collected shows how English is integrated into the song writing process and how it is developed by the Korean musical culture. Seo Taiji and the Boys' hit "Nan Arayo (I Know)" in 1992 brought American hip-hop culture to Korean musical culture. From that specific point in history on, linguistic data reveals how hip-hop culture spreads and influences other bands and songs. The use of English in songs becomes more and more mainstream throughout the first decade of K-Pop, causing even non-hip-hop songs and artists to integrate English in a structural manner. At this point, however, the conglomerates start to create and influence the music more emphatically for the purpose of financial gain, and the case for artistic agency of musicians is put into question. Even though the music is still produced and created in Korea, it is starting to become mass produced and the insertion of American hip-hop culture and the English language becomes shallower.

The fact that non-hip-hop tunes do not use the English language in semantically relevant manners reveals that it was merely used as a veneer, and part of a fad. This reveals the agency of the Korean music scene in two distinct ways. The first is that artists who are fond of using hip-hop as a style find ways to integrate English into their own culture in creative and semantically relevant ways. This trend is traceable all the way through the history of K-Pop, from Seo Taiji in 1992 to Big Bang in 2015. Secondly, it reveals that non-hip-hop artists use their agency to be a part of the fad as way of either being cool, or for marketing purposes (most likely a combination of both). Either way, linguistic data from chapters 2 and 3 shows how the Korean music culture interacts with the arriving American hip-hop culture, and the fact that both outcomes occur shows that Korean artists and producers are actively interacting with and molding the culture. However, this is once again overshadowed by the agency of the big conglomerates, which fabricated and created many of the post-Seo Taiji and the Boys bands and groups.

The case for cultural transfer as a function of empire is strengthened by the data in chapter 4. The marketing culture and international business savvy of the Korean cultural conglomerates are important parts of the equation when analyzing the manner in which American culture is approached by the K-Pop music scene. Both the producers of the K-Pop scene and the Korean government are very keen to market their national culture abroad and make use of it as soft power. Keeping in mind Frédéric Martel's theory that counter-cultural formations such as K-Pop lose their national identities in the face of American cultural dissemination, the K-Pop scene should be seen as being subservient to the American cultural empire. However, the data presented in this study does not support a homogenizing cultural effect to any such extent.

In the first two decades that American hip-hop culture and the English language were increasingly being implemented in the K-Pop movement, it was not a matter of taking over

content, but simply accentuating it. However, the agency of the big media conglomerates does reveal that in an effort to internationalize their culture and share/sell it to the world, they needed to Americanize it in order to turn a profit. This does not necessarily signify a forcing of the hand; it does show that a burgeoning cultural producer such as South Korea chooses for itself to Americanize their national product in order to appeal not only the American market, but the Asian market as well.

However, what this study shows is that it is indeed popular and mainstream music that is mostly affected by this development. By researching the Top 10 hit lists of each year, it is possible that only the most significantly corporately produced and pushed artist were captured in this study. Underground music cultures and counter-cultural artists who have not broken through to the mainstream are beyond the scope of this particular study. It would be interesting to perform a study on underground South Korean bands and music in general to see to what extent they follow the trends set forth by the conglomerates since the eruption of Seo Taiji and the Boys' popularity. However, Busker Busker's surprise 2012 hit "Cherry Blossom Ending" serves as a reminder of how difficult it is for artists who do not grow out of the training camps of the large conglomerates such as YG Entertainment, JYP Entertainment, and SM Entertainment. The K-Pop cultural market is dominated by these large media conglomerates, and in order to be successful in the Korean music scene, artists are behooved to join them or at least follow their lead.

Studying the *Hallyu*, and K-Pop in specific, is a rich vein for the studies of contemporary globalization, hybridization, as well as Americanization and cultural transfer. One of the limits of this particular paper is that relatively little time has passed since the big international success of Psy's "Gangnam Style" in 2012 and the writing of this paper. It will be interesting to see what trends will be followed and implemented in the K-Pop scene going forward and how much more it can reveal about American and ultimately Korean cultural

transfer. K-Globalization is still in its infancy, though is rapidly gaining momentum not only in Asia, but on a global scale.

One area of investigation which would be particularly rewarding are the effects of the spread of K-Pop into their primary markets: China and Japan. K-Pop and the *Hallyu* have played a culturally significant role in the past decade and it would be interesting to analyze its influence in terms of cultural, economic and political power. Not only would this be particularly interesting for scholars of Asian political and cultural interactions, but for American cultural transfer scholars as well. The *Hallyu* is the largest non-American cultural phenomenon of the modern age, and has an increasing influence on the global stage. This particular paper established the role of American culture and the English language in the *Hallyu* and how it may manifest itself. It would be interesting to see how the English language and American culture are used in marketing strategies and how they are disseminated.

The *Hallyu* has many other facets worthy of investigation that are beyond the scope of this paper. First of all, the Korean cultural wave does not consist only of K-Pop; K-Drama (television shows) as well as Korean cinema play a large role in its international cultural spread. However, within K-Pop itself, there is much still to be analyzed. This paper focuses on a diachronic socio-linguistic approach to the song lyrics, band names, and song titles, but there are many other aspects that can be analyzed. This includes a closer analysis of musical styles, for this paper simplified those to uptempo and downtempo, hip-hop and non-hip-hop. An in-depth analysis of musical styles might uncover a great deal more pertinent information. Music videos and live performances are very important aspects of the K-Pop experience and are therefore important subjects for analysis. Choreography, fashion, make-up, cultural artifacts, and product placements are ripe areas for analysis. The marketing system implemented by Korean conglomerates could certainly use deeper analysis, as well as the effects of soft power implemented by the Korean government.

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