

**Korean Wave: Discourse Analysis on Korean Popular Culture in
US and UK Digital Newspapers**

Kwon, Eun Jee

-September 2017-

Supervisor: Dr. Tom Sintobin

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family and Dr. Sintobin for supporting my study.

I give thanks to Jesse, Taein, Austin and Brianna for their support and the moments we have shared together. I am thankful for those who participated for my interview. Finally, I would like to appreciate Radboud University and the Orange Tulip Scholarship for the opportunity to broaden my horizons in Netherlands.

I. Introduction

Korean pop artist, Psy's *Gangnam style* is one of the most beloved videos on YouTube with its views now reaching to almost 2.9 billion counts. In 2014 after two years of Psy's official album release, YouTube had to upgrade their counts to 64-bit integer for the first time, because its counter capacity could not handle the exponentially growing figure for watching Psy's viral music video. Since the Korean cultural boom or, *Korean Wave*, in 1998, Korean dramas and songs have been well received in South Korea's neighboring countries. The country's cultural products now swipe across Asia and even far beyond into the Western hemisphere. In Western countries, the *Korean Wave* may have different meanings from Asian countries due to their different cultures and ideologies. Therefore, new attentions need to be given to understand how Western perspectives perceive the images of Korean popular culture. Specifically, this paper narrows the research scope by concentrating on the cases of US and UK, and attempts to understand the representation of Korean popular music, abbreviated as K-pop¹, in their news media.

1. General Description

The Korean peninsula has been an area of great tensions for over a century because China, Russia and Japan deemed control of these areas was crucial for their national security (Kim, 2007). The tension resulted in the Russo-Japanese War and following the Japanese winning of that war in 1904, Korea became a Japanese protectorate until 1945. During the years of colonization, the Japanese forced Korean people to use Japanese names and languages and brutally threatened them to steal Korea's sense of identity.

¹ K-pop encompasses all the contents related to Korean popular music and all the musical genres produced in South Korea.

Furthermore, as price for entering the war against Japan the Russia demanded admittance, this led to the 'temporary' division of Korea along the 38th Parallel supposedly so that Russians could disarm Japanese soldiers north of the line and Americans south of the line (Oliver 1950). However, Russia immediately proceeded building a strong North Korean puppet regime with partly battle-hardened troops equipped with new Soviet tanks, artillery, and planes. In 1950 North Korea invaded the South, and over two years and after more than two million casualties sacrificed their lives, peace talks have started. An armistice was signed in 1953, but officially South Korea and North Korea are still at war since a treaty was never signed.

The conflict is not limited to South Korea and North Korea. The North received major support from Russia and China while South Korea was supported by the West led by the United States. Currently, China is still supporting North Korea for the same reasons wars were fought here over a century ago. China considers a strong united Korea with strong ties to the west as a direct threat to its national security. The US supports South Korea, both for the great strategic importance of the peninsula and the great symbolic value of a strong and democratic South Korea. Furthermore Japan is supporting South Korea, partly to gain more influence in the region and partly out of direct concern for its own national security, especially after the test launch of the North Korea's Taepodong missile over Japan (Kim, 2007).

This brief summary of Korean history does not show the full complexity of the situation, it's not a black and white standoff between two sides. South Korea disproves of Chinese support of the North, but at the same time both countries have mutual beneficial trade relations. South Korea wants close relations with the US as a deterrent for another Northern attack, but at the same time opposition rises against American military presence. Some fear that the US is not so much supporting South Korea, but using South Korea for their own geopolitical interests. Finally even the relationship with Japan is not as simple as it might seem, even though both countries feel directly threatened by North Korean nuclear capabilities. Especially elder Koreans have not forgotten about Japanese military actions of

the past and even today both countries are competing for regional influence and even disputing the Dokdo isles.

These sensitive circumstances require unique understanding about South Korea. South Korea had to work hard in order to compete with the strong powers and it has now grown to the 12th-largest economy in the world. So far, not only has the struggle led South Korea to carefully weigh its conflicting bilateral relationships with regional and global powers, but it also enriched the emotions of the South Korean people which are shown in their music and films. To overcome the tearful history, Korea has attempted to build bilateral cooperation with international partners by correctly informing about its small nation through its culture. In 2013, the center for public diplomacy was open under the Foreign Ministry with a mission to encourage the civilian participation in public diplomacy.

To meet the increasing demands of the audience looking for Korean media since 1997, the Ministries of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and Foreign Affairs, as well as major entertainment industries in Korea collaborated tightly and swiftly together. The American journalist, Wayne Arnold has pointed out that South Korea is the first nation to increase its investment in media industries with high-speed broadband, even after the financial crisis of 1997, while other countries have been cutting their budget on cultural sectors (Arnold, 2012). According to Asia-Pacific magazine, *The Diplomat* (2016), such a support doubled exports in Korean dramas, films, music, and video games between 1999 and 2012. As seen in this case, the creative industry sector has been one of Korea's main interests.

Korean popular cultural products are a part of what is referred to as the above mentioned. Korean Wave or “hallyu (韓流)”, and this term was first coined by the Chinese media in 2000 to describe the Korean drama boom in China (Kim & Ryoo, 2007). Since 2002, K-pop and K-dramas have become integral parts of South Korea's cultural diplomacy, and Korean celebrities have gained initiatives to serve on diplomatic missions. For instance, Korean actor, Choi Ji-Woo shook hands with Japanese prime minister to mark the Korea-Japan Friendship Year in 2005 while a K-pop singer Boa who is well known in Japan, sang her song at APEC to unify Korea and Japan.

The rise of Korean popular culture has also resulted in the increased awareness of Korean branding. Interest in Korean beauty-related products has risen, and cosmetic companies such as Amore Pacific are now extending their markets to other countries in Latin America and the Middle East. Korean popular culture has become one of South Korea's most powerful cultural, political, and economic assets and has won the hearts of international audiences. More recently, the popularity of K-pop has "exploded onto the international scene" (Howard, 2015, p. 298). As a result, the reception of Korean pop culture has become inevitably intertwined with interests of other countries.

However, it is not as easy to spread one's popular culture especially when historical or political issues are involved. For instance, Japanese magazines have interpreted K-pop's spread as "Korean invasion" (The Korea Wave, 2011, p. 37), and one Japanese author has even called for a need for their singers to move abroad and compete with Korean pop artists (Ota, 2011). When a Korean actress, Kim Tae-Hee, asserted that the highly disputed islets of Dokdo belong to the Republic of Korea, Japanese TV programs dropped her from commercial advertisements. Similarly, as the Korean government and United States agreed with one another to deploy THAAD² in its peninsula in 2016, the Chinese government has boycotted Korean films and dramas, prohibiting the entry and activities of Korean celebrities in China.

2. Existing Research

1) Nationalism vs. Internationalization

There are two main differing viewpoints when discussing the origins of Korean pop culture. One argues that South Korean culture is shaped by nationalism. The Korean media scholar

² THAAD2 (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense): United States Army missile defense system which is designed to protect the security of South Korea against North Korean missile capabilities.

Han Gil-Soo (2015, p. 12) posited that the “country has [an] ideology of ‘pure-blood’ nationalism....” which situates “...the foreigners outside the sphere of acceptance”. This point raises a concern that Korea is interested in spreading its culture in only a unilateral way and it is less open to other cultures. Other scholars postulate that there are open-minded attitudes behind the Korean cultural industry’s initiatives. The Chinese journalist Cai (2011, p. 1) asserts “the Korean wave is the combination of Confucianism and Western industrial culture”. From this perspective, Korea has sought for a balance between Oriental and Western values while maintaining its roots.

According to Patrick Messerlin (2013), a scholar in Economics and a chairman of the European Center for International Economic Policy, South Korea is good at diversifying K-pop to meet the needs of its global audience. Both Messerlin and Korean researcher Shin Wonkyu find K-pop success factors from its ability to integrate and diversify. K-pop group Exo-K, for example, created its twin band to make Chinese-Korean singers sing K-pop songs in Chinese in China. Diversification is also implemented by “K-pop performers who, for instance, interpret pieces of classical European music with their K-pop spirited guitar or with a mix of Korean traditional instruments and B-boying (Messerlin & Shin, 2013, p. 24). These scholars suppose that the internationalization of K-pop activities aid K-pop to “mobilize new skills” which “bring with them almost inevitably more variety” (Messerlin & Shin, 2013, p. 12).

K-pop is thus said to encompass the dynamic spirits of openness, transcendence, and trans-locality. Kim Suk-Young, an expert in the field of East Asian Performance and Visual Culture, observes that K-pop music videos have been inspired “by appreciating American Broadway-style musical” and that K-pop “flexibly associates itself with old and new, local and global, while interweaving both retrospective and anticipatory vectors of cultural modalities” (Kim, 2016, p. 137-138). In this regard, Korean pop culture is marked by flexibility and adaptation.

Many K-pop artists collaborate with American and European composers, believing that diversity enriches the soundscape. As noted by Oh and Lee (2014, p. 120), K-pop has characteristics of the global musical genre that is “produced and enjoyed by Koreans and those of other nationalities”. The American sociologist John Lie agrees that Korean cultural

practice “imports and outsources readily, seeking best talent from abroad” (Lie, 2012, p. 357). These views appreciate inspiration from other countries as a key attribute for engendering K-pop identity.

More recently, K-pop seems to be providing a turning point for the reversed cultural flow. The Japanese scholar Koichi Iwabuchi thinks K-pop gave a birth to new type of cultural traffic characterized by intra-Asian and trans-Asian cultural flow to the world (Iwabuchi, Muecke, & Thomas, 2004). An East-Asian Studies researcher in Austria informs that the Korean Wave is “now reaching the West” (Sung, 2014, p. 95). Their research claims that K-pop is extending its horizons to the international market. The Italian sociologist Adam Arvidsson describes Korean popular culture as “firmly international” (Arvidsson, 2015, p. 501). So far, academia has been much focused on K-pop’s influence in geographically adjacent Asian countries. Keeping this in mind, I find a need to explore the K-pop reception in the Western context.

The Korean Wave has received various reactions from different cultures. According to Jang and Paik (2012, p. 198), “Americans find Korean dramas relaxing and cheerful, and Europeans find the plots uncomplicated and romantic. Asians, meanwhile, discover lifestyles and trends they wish to emulate”. The Japanese scholar Kyoko Koma suggests “some fans are already familiar with Asian culture and on the other hand they are fascinated by ‘strangeness’ or at least the perceived ‘better performance’ that K-Pop brings” (Koma, 2012, p. 28). One can conclude that Korean pop culture is loved for varied reasons. To find those reasons for loving K-pop, it will be important to understand the portrayal of K-pop in different countries.

2) Reception of Korean Wave in Other Countries

The Korean media expert, Ryoo Woong-Jae, points out that K-pop has Koreanized Western popular culture such that it “reinterprets and mediates the imported Western culture in an Asian image” (Ryoo, 2009, p. 145). The balanced cultural stance of Korea allows Asian audiences to easily relate themselves with Korean culture and to dream about Westernized

lifestyle. Jang and Paik (2012, p. 201) further reckon that the Korean wave is readily accepted by people who are looking for “an alternative to Hollywood fare [...] which not only connected their everyday lives but also achieved technical sophistication”. Therefore, Korean popular culture is described as a combination of Asian sentiments and Westernized modernity.

According to the Japanese scholar Dinara Kozhakhmetova, Japanese women watch Korean drama series because Korean male actors fit their imagery of the “ideal man” which is “represented by rich, kind men [...] a tendency to shower women with unconditional love” (Kozhakhmetova, 2012, p. 48). K-pop scholar Shim Doboo finds that “for audiences in developing economies such as China and Vietnam, Korean dramas are more acceptable than Japanese or American ones because the former retain traditional values while having achieved the technical sophistication comparable to that of the latter” (Shim, 2008, p. 27). To summarize, audiences in Asia enjoy Korean pop cultural due to its relevance to their daily life.

Several studies have also been conducted to investigate the reception of K-pop in Europe, South America, and North America. The Swedish scholar Tobias Hübinette (2012) highlights that the majority of K-pop fans in Sweden are young females. Another study in Latin America also acknowledges that K-pop is best loved by female teens (Yoon, 2010). The Spanish researcher Vargas Meza added that “individuals scoring high on extraversion also look for stimulation in K-pop” (Meza & Park 2014, p. 1349). The American scholar Henry Jenkins suggests that K-pop fans are transforming the Korean Wave from a passive to a participatory cultural movement (Jenkins, 2006). Yet, the findings focus on K-pop fans’ demography and their tendency to follow K-pop. These insights do not reveal how the public in those countries perceive Korean popular culture in general. It thus gives me a reason to focus my research on the K-pop identity produced in the contexts of those countries.

There has been some self-hypothesis on the reception of K-pop raised by Korean researchers as well. Choi (2015, p.1) assumes Korean cultural commodities challenge discourses with the West. While Western cultures encourage South Korea to strictly deal with the irrational and brutal North Korea, South Korea prefers to solve this problem through the context of love: “togetherness, intimacy, conquering all – as part of the drive towards national unification”. In addition, Jang and Paik (2012, p.198) state that “while Asians enjoy the

common tradition and ‘against all odds’ themes in Korean historical epic dramas, Western audiences like the refreshing humor, fanciful plots, and sincerity”. Moreover, it is also believed that the less sexual or sensual topics present in Korean pop culture are more accessible to families (The Korean Wave, 2011). However, these are all postulations drawn by Korean scholars. A sharper analysis should be carried out by using international sources.

3) *Social Media vs. Mass Media*

Several studies have been conducted to explore the motivation for using social media. Business scholars, having uncovered the needs of social media users, revealed the primary motivations for using social media are to seek information, social support, and friendship (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). Another study yielded a different notion in which Twitter is sought as an information source rather than for social interaction (Johnson & Yang, 2009).

Some researchers attempted to link social media with K-pop. A team of Information Science researchers: Kim, Lee, Nam, and Song (2014) compared video networks from social networking sources, and found that Twitter users search for a “diversity of videos related to culture derived from K-pop” whereas YouTube users are “concentrated on K-pop music as the core of K-pop” (Kim et al., 2014, p.820). The finding was further supplemented by Kim’s (2012) study in which webometric methods showed European fans prefer Twitter to communicate about K-pop. I am convinced that these studies entail pre-requisites for people to be acquainted with K-pop before they use social media.

The above researches have not included the newspapers. The American political scientist Markus Prior tells us that media choices on the internet contribute to “an increasing knowledge gap” (Prior, 2005, p. 579). It reveals that the specific selection of media can result in different knowledge accumulation. Newspaper is believed to inform in a relatively objective and credible manner. According to the survey conducted by KOFICE (Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange), people who are not familiar with K-pop rely on their newspapers when they develop their perceptions about Korea (KOFICE, 2016). In this vein, people who read newspapers may formulate highly different expectations about

South Korea depending on the stereotypes developed by those sources.

3. Research Questions

As previously exhibited, the preliminary investigation provides three important insights. First, K-pop has emerged as a role model for the trans-national pop culture in Asia and it is now gaining new attention on the American and European continents. Second, different receptions of the Korean Wave have been recognized due to each country's different interests and political settings. Third, K-pop fans use social media to interact with one another, but less informed individuals often formulate their stereotypes by reading the news.

For my research, I will choose newspapers which conveys K-pop to a wide audience including non K-pop fans. To be specific, I will make use of the online news articles published in the United States and United Kingdom to answer my research question:

Question. How is K-pop received in the United States and the United Kingdom?

This issue unfolds into the following sub-questions:

1. How do news media outlets portray K-pop in the United States?
2. How do news media outlets portray K-pop in the United Kingdom?
3. Are there are differences between American and British media regarding their commentary on K-pop?

4. Database

Among the newspapers, I will select the electronic version published in the United States and the United Kingdom. The digital source enables easier access for readers than the printed

version. The rationale for choosing the US and the UK newspapers is as follows.

First, the country that holds the most K-pop concerts outside of Asia is the United States. The first K-pop concert outside Asia took its place in the US, which is still marked as the most active site with its cumulative counts of K-pop concerts outnumbering that of EU countries combined. Second, United Kingdom has been found to have the largest number of K-pop fans. The visitor analysis on K-pop community website, *Soompi*, revealed that the UK ranks the highest among any other European country in terms of K-pop fan activities (Jung and Kim, 2012). Thus, the US and the UK were selected with former having the most K-pop concerts and the latter having the active civilian participation in Europe.

In both the United States and the United Kingdom, there is a dividing line in political landscape. Democratic Party and Republican Party are two dominant parties in the US, and Conservative Party and Labour Party play as the major political parties in the UK. Those different political landscapes are also reflected in the national newspaper so that balancing out tones by selecting sources from both political affiliations seems to be legitimate. To this aim, I will use *The New York Times* and *Fox News* to study the case of the United States. The New York Times has been considered to have liberal bias by most of the Americans (Rasmussen Reports, 2007). It is the second biggest circulation followed by *The Wall Street Journal*. While *The Wall Street Journal* is business-focused, *The New York Times* encompasses diverse interests such as multimedia, movies, and travel, which allow access to a sufficient amount of K-pop articles. As for the other source, *Fox News* will be scrutinized as it has been accused of reporting conservative bias by American politician.

A similar logic is applied to selecting the UK news. *The Sun* is politically aligned with Conservative Party and it the second most read newspaper on the websites in the United Kingdom next to *Daily Mail* (Statista, 2017). According to Audit Bureau of Circulations³, *The Sun* boasts the largest circulation in the UK, and it deals with celebrities and gossip news, which is relevant to my K-pop topic. *The Guardian* will be additionally used as it stands out

³ Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC): a non-profit organization which was founded to verify the data figures and circulation of UK national newspapers.

as liberal mainstream out of top eight UK national newspapers (Smith, 2017). By doing so, I hope to balance out the biased stances from each national news media.

5. Methodology

1) Theories

Whereas secondary research is traced to existing knowledges, primary research's goal is to discover something new. In the latter research, researcher's role is to "collect data on events, objects, or people that are measurable, observable, and replicable" by using the scientific method (Driscoll, 2011, p. 154). Among many scientific methods, discourse analysis is useful for critically reflecting the depicted social phenomena.

The term 'discourse' covers more dimensions than the text itself and it considers both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects (Johnstone, 2008; Howarth, 2000). More than one analytic tool can be combined to yield the concrete answers to the research material. According to the Dutch scholar in the fields of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA), CDA's goal is to demand a change through arguing the "discourse in the reproduction of dominance and inequality" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 253), and its target is the power elites who ignore social injustice or inequality. On the other hand, broader meaning of discourse analysis is productive for "mapping out the construction of identities" (Bergström, Ekström & Boréus, 2017, p. 238). As this research aims to draw the representation of K-pop, I find discourse analysis better suited to justify my research goal.

Several approaches can be incorporated to answer the research question. Discourses contain "semiotic dimensions such as sounds, music, images, film and other multimodal aspects" (van Dijk, 2009, p. 192). In my case, the semiotic dimension will include the images of the K-pop events. Often, textual meanings are made through complex processes in which narrative and visual elements of texts interact (Rowley, 2010). This rationalizes my reasoning to further explore the multimodal event of communication. As suggested by Björkvall (2017),

I will combine critical linguistics, discourse analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis to draw the critical reflections on the press I have selected.

a) Critical linguistics analysis

Critical linguistics analysis is crucial to label how grammar delivers the choice of perspective. A reporter's sense-making depends on the way of "describing the process as an action, an event or a state" (Boréus & Bergström, 2017, p. 157). Unlike the state which is expressed in static nature, action and event imply some changes in which the former is taken place by someone's doing and the latter occurs without deliberate doing.

Boréus and Bergström (2017, p. 170) introduce the concept of transformation where certain elements in the writing are omitted in description. Nominalization is an example of such in which "nouns are used as replacements for formulations that describe process in a more complete way". In addition, the use of passive verb tense can also produce impacts on information recognition. By suppressing the individual human agent, the writer can describe the event as if it has taken place under the omnipresent ideology and power system.

In critical linguistics, there is a toolset for illustrating processes and participants. First, there are three kinds of processes: actions, events, and states. The 'state' implies no change is taking place while 'events' include changes, but those changes are not considered to be caused by someone's doing. On the other hand, 'actions' are believed to be "deliberately carried out by a sentient being" and they can be delivered as material action (observable), verbal action (speech or expressions), and mental action (someone's thinking or imagining) (Boréus & Bergström, 2017, p. 157-158). Here, depending on the authors' choice of interests, actors can be narrated as either human agents or non-human sources.

Metaphors can be also used to uncover implicit ideological messages. The conceptual metaphors are "collective ideas in a linguistic community according to which a phenomenon is conceptualized" (Boréus & Bergström, 2017, p. 148). There are three types of metaphors:

dead, inactive, and active metaphors. While dead metaphors are no longer perceived as metaphorical by average people, inactive metaphors are “set expressions but are seen as metaphorical after reflection”, and active metaphors are “the outcome of the creativity of particular language users and must be interpreted from the context in an active process” (Boréus & Bergström, 2017, p. 150).

b) Discourse Analysis

In discourse analysis, “language always involves a perspective on the world” (Bergström et al., 2017, p. 210). There is what Fairclough (2015, p. 27) calls “power in the discourse”. As noted by a Bergström et al. (2017, p. 210), one’s specific identity is constructed based on distinctions between the author’s perspective and the target object in the discourse. Thus, discourse analysis focuses on how creation of one becomes clear in relation to the creation of others. During the production of one’s image, it is important to draw attention to the power behind the discourse.

There are several important analytical concepts. Basically, those concepts include ‘sign’ which is designated in the discourse and when sign is placed under contention, it is called ‘element’. A ‘floating signifier’ means that sign is open to meanings so that their meanings become contested while reading the texts. ‘Antagonism’ is a term to indicate such battle over the meaning in the discourse. It is called ‘moment’ once the meaning of the sign becomes fixed. Likewise, when the discourse becomes stabilized and mitigates antagonism, ‘hegemony’ is made (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). In all, analysis is carried out by using these fundamental terms.

Actors are given ‘subject position’, which can be explained as “discursively determined positions for people, and they gain their ‘identities’ through the discourse (Bergström et al., 2017, p. 216). The writer can create a meaning by linking several signs with each other by using the idea of ‘chain of equivalence’, and ‘constitutive outside’ may provide “meaning to the inside by means of the inside being contrasted with it” (Bergström et al., 2017, p. 216).

Therefore, one's keeping in mind in search for the chain of equivalence and constitutive outside aids portrayal of subject position and identity of the elements.

It is also significant to see how discourse relates texts to each other. According to Fairclough (1992, p. 82), "intertextuality is basically the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts". The concept of intertextuality is usually used in critical discourse analysis, but this research will also shed light on its usage under the condition that the connection with other texts helps deepening my analysis.

c) **Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

In multimodal discourse analysis, texts and images are assumed to contain some potential meanings which reader may not notice at a conscious level. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), vertical perspectives in the image express power relations. The symbolic power is attributed to either the reader or the person in the image depending on the camera angle. The symbolic power of the three vertical perspectives described by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 140-143) is summarized as below.

- From above perspective: symbolic power is attributed to the reader who is place to look down on the person in the image.
- From below perspective: symbolic power is given to the person in the image.
- Eye-to-eye perspective: there is an equality of power between the reader and the person in the image.

Similarly, horizontal perspectives reveal "symbolic inclusion and exclusion in a social group" (Björkvall, 2017, p. 181). The larger the frontal exposure, the more social involvement it is expected. By understanding which horizontal perspectives have been used, one can estimate the symbolic distance between reader and the person depicted in the image.

The symbolic distance of three horizontal perspectives described by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 133-140) is as follows.

- Full frontal: there is a social involvement with the depicted figures so that reader is symbolically included in the social group in the image.
- Side view: there is a partial interest in the depicted person in the image.
- Rear view: there is a full detachment with the depicted person.

As put by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 124), social distance can be also estimated by “size of frame” whether the depicted person in the image is having personal, social or impersonal tie with the audience. Björkvall (2017) has simplified this concept in the diagram in figure 1.

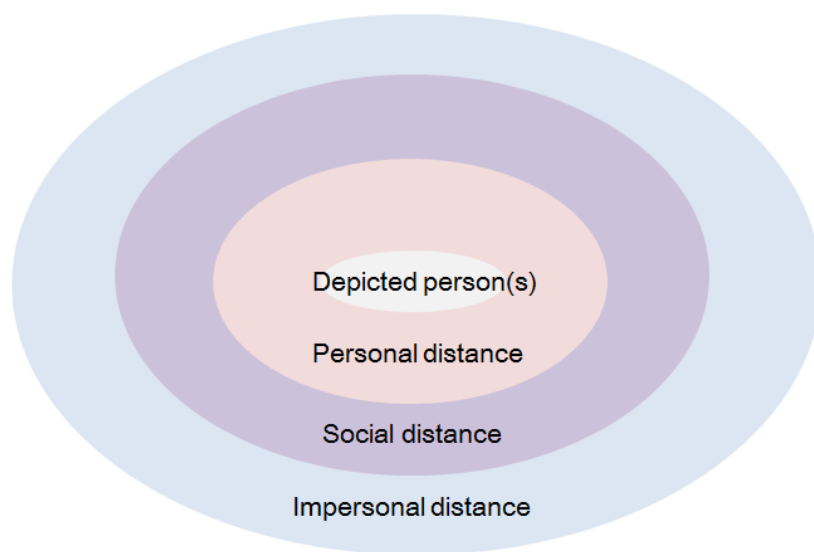


Figure 1. Symbolic distances in images

2) Methods

I gained prior insights from the interview to enrich my understanding and to specify my research questions. In the inspirational step, I interviewed thirteen K-pop fans who attended

Strictly K-pop fan gathering in Rotterdam, Netherlands on April. 4. 2017. To include broader audience including non K-pop fans, I also conducted face-to-face interview with twelve other university students who were enrolling at Radboud University. The question was about the respondent's perceptions on K-pop and South Korea. The interview results showed that Europeans build their stereotypical images about Korea based on K-pop video contents combined with their exposed mass media. The results have been organized in my archive: <https://yummyourlife.wordpress.com/> under its 'U say about K-pop' category.

To answer my research questions regarding narratives of K-pop in the mass media, I will analyze the articles in US and UK newspapers. For this research, I will use the operational definition of the discourse as a particular way of understanding K-pop or patterns for how K-pop is written and represented in each news article. I will look at whether human or non-human forces exist as an actor for the Korean Wave in the written texts. It requires me to grasp the journalist's perspective which had been already present before they reported about K-pop. The search terms I use are: 'K-pop', 'Korean pop', and 'Korean singer'. I will omit the articles that contain less than three sentences of mentioning on K-pop or K-pop singer. K-pop articles published from year 2011 to 2017 will be selected as Korean singer Psy's hit has become viral by 2012. The twenty-one articles from the United States and seventeen articles from the United Kingdom will be studied.

The main question to be answered through my discourse analysis is as follows. The first question will involve the identity of K-pop and South Korea during the discourse. Second, subject position of K-pop stars will be investigated. For these two missions, analytic factors such as floating signifiers, chain of equivalence, and constitutive outside will provide useful check points to comprehend the identity and subject position of the given subjects. Last but not least, I will attempt to see whether the body of discourse across various news sources produces any moment or formulates hegemony through its interpretative repertoire.

Along with discourse analysis, one needs to be aware of the discourse's role for serving the interests of the social community; in my case, the ideological context of United States and United Kingdom. As van Dijk (2009, p. 192) emphasizes, "discourses are studied in relation

to various kinds of situation, such as interactional, social, communicative, political, historical and cultural frameworks, interpreted by the participants as relevant contexts”. Then, I will attempt to support my analysis with available literatures to better understand the perspective of the press and to enlighten the socio-cultural context in which the discourses are situated.

The overall steps I will take for my analysis are as follows. First, I will extract all the significant concepts from K-pop reading contents in the selected four news press. Second, the recurrent motifs will be understood across the sources. Then, I will categorize and group the texts and images according to the matching keywords. Third, in order to facilitate the prospective comparison, I will make the distinction between UK and US newspapers with its political orientation as a sub-distinction. Fourth, thorough analysis including multimodal discourse analysis and linguistics analysis will be combined. Fifth, comparison and contrast will be drawn to test inter- and intra- commonalities among the four different news sources.

II. How do news media outlets portray K-pop in the United States?

1. Emerging music that has US origins

1) US-exported product

The New York Times views K-pop as an exported product from the United States. The media stresses Korean pop-culture products have been adapted from American musical genres: “Throughout the night, the group’s indebtedness to American pop was on full display” because the music was “thick with references to American pop, hip-hop and R&B” (Caramanica, 2017; 2015). For a more complete description, South Korea’s motivation for holding K-pop concerts in the US should have been stated. However, the article cares less for those details, and rather interprets Big Bang’s concert as a ceremony for giving thanks to American music genres.

It is suggested that the concept of boy bands originated United States, thus K-pop is rendered a mere cultural inheritor, a follower and not a leader in the global pop industry:

“Boy bands are an industry and aesthetic all but abandoned by the American pop machine. But like, say, automobiles, South Korean success with the form is another example of a concept kick-started here but perfected elsewhere. A night with BigBang is a loud reminder that American exceptionalism is waning — long live imports, though.” (Caramanica, 2015)

Caramanica imagines America as cultivating new concepts and leading world trends with its ‘pop machine’. Such a line of thought includes K-pop as a product of global trade, as US-originated product, but one that has been transformed enough to be re-imported into the US as a Korean export. The author focuses on commonality between K-pop and U.S. music industry, and K-pop bands’ hierarchy is taken as an ordinary phenomenon found in any band. Caramanica (2015) generalizes the statement: “as in all boy bands, there is a hierarchy here”, which hints at a mastery of the music industries in the world. Then Korean pop music is equated with American music: “While the music on the show has a heap of the saccharine

energy that often permeates the genre, it could just as easily be billed as American pop” (Caramanica, 2015). Other than ‘saccharine energy’, any musical elements found in K-pop are reluctantly categorized into the American music genre in the author’s own opinion. Power is then given to the author who portrays himself as a popular music expert. The term ‘easily’ demonstrates that the news does not make serious efforts to consider K-pop as a world music genre. Rather, the coverage tends to allude to this simple message through a chain of equivalence: K-pop is the same as American pop.

As a result, K-pop stars are seen to behave like Americans. The author compares one K-pop star with an American actor: “He regards his surroundings with Clooney-like reserve” (Choe, 2015). The oldest member in K-pop band Big Bang, T.O.P, is compared with the American figure George Clooney.



Figure 2. Cramming for Stardom at Korea’s K-Pop Schools

The multimodal analysis supports such a similar finding. In Figure 2, young Korean teens are wearing jeans, and the ‘Cypress Hill’ print on the boy’s T-shirt is visible. One can suspect young Korean students want to be like American pop artists. The young K-pop trainees’ movement is dynamic with its horizontal and vertical axes twisted and shifted in an angular position. A new source of energy, K-pop, is assumed to bring dynamic changes to Korean society.

Another source portrays K-pop stars as homogeneous characters to Americans. The following texts show K-pop stars go through an identical recruitment processes to that of the United States:

They were among two million contestants vying to appear on Season 5 of “Superstar K,” the country’s answer to “American Idol.” Besides South Korea, auditions were held in the United States and Canada. It’s one of several K-pop star-spotting television shows (Choe, 2013)

The article makes explicit the link between “Superstar K” and its US model, “American Idol”. It is believed that in the same way, Korean popular culture follows the footsteps of the United States with media commentary from the beginning of the stars’ identity formation. By revealing that K-pop auditions were ‘held in the United States and Canada’, the author hints that K-pop bands are not exclusively made up of Korean citizens, but openly seek talented individuals from North America.

2) Emerging social concept

K-pop is portrayed as a social trend benefitting from today’s social networking services. The author perceives that K-pop’s emergence could have been possible due to digitalization and increased mass communication resulting from the online social networking:

The Korean Wave has long conquered Asia, but before the proliferation of global social networks, attempts by K-pop stars to break into Western markets, including the United States, had largely failed. But now YouTube, Facebook and Twitter make it easier for K-pop bands to reach a wider audience in the West, and those fans are turning to the same social networking tools to proclaim their devotion. (Choe, 2012)

As seen in the feature democratization of social network channels is considered as the main drive for K-pop growth. According to this perspective, K-pop is not autonomous in nature, but needs social participants to actualize its full meaning. As a result of K-pop’s influences on the United States, it has a sort of sub-cultural dominance: K-pop emerged “mainly because of

the broad use of social media” (Choe, 2012). By virtue of social communication, K-pop is believed to be a subject of devotion by Western fans and it is finally received as social genre.

A third person’s opinion tells us that K-pop connects different people together. Rich (2016) shares the opinion of the American professor Katharine H. S. Moon who claims “It’s (K-pop’s) a very positive bonding tool.” Likewise, Choe (2012) quotes the opinion of the American singer as below:

“K-pop is a good icebreaker for foreigners,” said Tara Louise, 19, a singer from Los Angeles. “It gives a lot of affinity for Koreans and the Korean culture.” (Choe, 2012)

The article could have quoted any other K-pop fans, but it chose to listen to the singer in its attempt to strongly justify that opinion. Louise, not alone in her desires, is part of a subsequent dialogue that is continuing among the American audience. The texts show that K-pop is best understood by the young generation, as exemplified by Louise (whose tender age of 19 is emphasized by the article). A sociologist Sharon Boden (2006, p. 291) introduced the term “‘tweenager’ – a media-constructed age category that describes an expanding and increasingly powerful social group”. As Rice (2002) situates tweenagers have a high awareness of media and technology, the articles makes a sense that young people naturally develops their affinity for K-pop by using the digital technology at ease.

The attention given by young Americans is further enhanced when K-pop-related North American television series are reported to reflect young America: “The introduction of “Make It Pop” is a reflection of the music’s widening importance and reach, and also its traction with young America” (Caramanica, 2015). One can critically analyze the grammar specifically used. The author places the American program as an active agent of change, and gives power to American industries. The author also portrays K-pop as youthful, which appeals to a young audience in the United States. To sum up, a chain of equivalence is created as K-pop = emerging = young = young audience = young America. This focus of youth is supported by the Dutch scholar Paul Rutten’s description on the United States: “The United States embodied, for most Western European countries, a young, modern, free and industrializing

country” (Rutten, 1991, p. 294). Therefore, K-pop seems to provide an alternative to what the 'old' popular culture had to offer.

Fox News tends to focus on one significant Korean pop singer Psy. The journalist in *Fox News* (2012a) believes “It's not often that a K-pop song reaches No. 1 in America, but Psy's determined to make it happen”, seeing Psy is as an exceptional case that does not necessarily represent the overall embodiment of K-pop in United States. In addition, the author invites American singers such as Justin Bieber and MC Hammer to better inform readers of Psy's reputation in the US: “currently the second most-watched video on YouTube; Justin Bieber's "Baby" is still number one” (Fox News, 2012a; Fox News, 2012b). In this discussion, one can discover Slavoj Žižek's notion of the ‘imaginary other’, to which other people “like my fellow human beings” are “engaged in the mirror-like relationships of competition and mutual recognition” (Žižek, 2005, p. 143). It is through this mutual recognition with American performers that Psy's identity becomes more obvious to American readers.

The understanding of K-pop is dominantly shaped by one obvious instance in *Fox News*. The event involves Psy and it has been hallmarked: “Gangnam Style breaks YouTube's counter” (Fox News, 2014b). As media-induced tourists in South Korea are reported to be “especially from other Asian countries”, K-pop is best received among its adjacent countries (Fox News, 2013a). However, other factors such as geographical closeness may contribute to such results, so that the number of inbound tourists cannot be a correct indicator to assess K-pop reception.

A discourse analysis reveals that affinity of K-pop has increased over the past few years. The author first mentioned that “South Korean popular entertainment enjoys an avid following in Japan” (Fox News, 2011). In the article published four years later, the author introduces the term K-pop: “Japanese enthusiasts travel to Seoul for K-Pop concerts” (Fox News, 2015). The levels of superordinate and subordinate reveal what extent the author is aware of one popular culture. In the 2015 article, the author expects its readers should also know what K-pop means.

The growth of K-pop is supported by the voluntary following of K-pop by myriad societal

groups. When the news reports about the K-pop parody made by NASA scientists, the journalist describes: “NASA’s Johnson Space Center just released its own spoof of singer PSY’s cross-over Korean pop hit. A few astronauts even make cameos in parody video” (Fox News, 2012c). The active verb tense is employed: ‘astronauts even make cameos’, and such a way of describing action assumes K-pop parody making is entirely a voluntary action initiated by the American space scientists. Thus, the author is interested in how single dominant K-pop figure can lead to the group participation.

Both *The New York Times* and *Fox News* see K-pop as a socially emerging concept. In *The New York Times*, there is a tendency to receive K-pop as a US exported culture so that it describes that K-pop “could just as easily be billed as American pop” (Caramanica, 2015). Though *Fox News* does not approach K-pop as one of the world music genres, it defines K-pop’s identity by understanding one dominant K-pop singer.

2. K-pop stars: National hero

Various positions are discussed by different authors when reporting on K-pop stars. First, K-pop stars are seen to soften the image of the South Korea’s military. As Huddy (2001) defines, national identity is a subjective or internalized sense of belonging to the nation. In this sense, K-pop stars consolidate South Korea’s national identity by delivering a sense of attachment with Korean society including its military structure:

“Normally we don’t know what the soldiers do, and we always thought the image of the soldiers were so dry and scary,” said Park Eun-kyung, 36, a fan of U-know Yunho. “But they seem to be so hard-driving. I felt like my impression of them had softened.” (Rich, 2016)

The position of K-pop idols is seen as that of national image-makers who “unleash their talent to soften the image of the army” (Rich, 2016). The report says that the soldiers’ images have been changed from ‘scary to softened’ thanks to the K-pop stars’ involvement. The age

of its speaker, being in her late 30s, has been disclosed so K-pop idols are portrayed to even transform the perception of the mature audience. Then, it seems as if Korean stars influence the way how South Korean people think of their nation. In fact, Korean scholar Chung (2003) has discovered that one of the roles Korean stars play is to provide Korean citizens the values such as patriarchy and nationalism.

The author attempts to make legend of K-pop stars as contemporary heroes. In terms of the ideological effects of the 'Winner-Takes-All' train of thought, K-pop stars on the US stage are represented as the winners who have survived in the "flooded-with-talent and always-in-flux world of K-pop" (Caramanica, 2015). Following this, the article says: "G-Dragon, G-Dragon, G-Dragon- so many of the screams here were for G-Dragon" (Caramanica, 2015). Another American press aligned with liberal political nature, *The Washington Post* has raised the 'Winner-Takes-All' view under its capital business section: "this seems unfair; especially for those who trained thoroughly; played hard [...] the same is often true for top performing artists". It went on to express, "network effects can create winners who take all" (Bruner, 2014). In like manner, by nominating the principal agent in the K-pop band, the report winds up reproducing network effects itself.

One step in selecting heroes from other K-pop band members is by acknowledging their fashion sense. In the news article on the performance of K-pop band Big Bang, positions of K-pop members are individually formulated by what their attire. The news story discusses the hierarchy within the K-pop group by paying attention to the members' fashion styles. The top member wears "the best clothes" whereas the next in line is described to wear "Mondrian print on a suit" (Caramanica, 2015). As McCracken (1986) describes, the fashion system invents cultural meanings. Such an invention is "undertaken by opinion leaders who shape and redefine the existing cultural meaning, encouraging the reform of cultural categories" and "these opinion leaders are sources of meaning for individuals of lesser standing" (McCracken, 1986, p. 76). In the mentioned article, Caramanica acts as a leading voice in terms of defining current fashion trends.

In return, the author portrays Korean stars as the heroic figures who sets the hearts of young women aflutter. K-pop star touches the sentimental of the audience by providing them a dramatic sense of hope: "As he belted about hardship and hope, young women wept"

(Healy, 2013). Meanwhile, the author reports a speech from the K-pop singer who promises his continuing capacity: "'Popularity can just be a bubble when there is no ability' he said" (Healy, 2013). K-pop stars are superficially treated like heroes by their young fans and they endeavor substantiate their elevated reputations.

K-pop stars gain heroic identities through the self-discipline provided by Korean military service and their successful penetration into the Western market. The author reflects the opinion from the Oh Ingyu, a professor at Korea University in Seoul, which claims Korean conscription is "a way of ensuring fan loyalty" and reveals K-pop fans "romanticize" their stars who have completed their army services. Additionally, K-pop stars are depicted as conquerors reaching to the West. The author writes K-pop stars "break into Western markets, including the United States" (Choe, 2012). With the use of the active verb tense 'break into', the K-pop star is reminiscent of the conqueror occupying a new land.



Figure 3. Psy's performance in South Korea's presidential inauguration

Psy is also seen as a national image brander in *Fox News*. In Figure 3, the background setting shows a salient presidential inauguration podium to Psy's back. The podium is placed at the bottom-left, occupying the 'real' and the 'given' information value in the perspectives of the ideal-real dimension and semiotic space. Psy's mic is comparable to such a podium's

position which is placed at right, suggesting the ‘new’ semiotic value. Thereby, Psy is viewed to take new political missions, and to motivate foreigners to visit South Korea: “South Korea is whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop, whooping it up after having its strongest year ever in foreign tourism visits, thanks to the hit "Gangnam Style" the song by pop star Psy” (Fox News, 2013a). This statement leaves questions as to whether people would still have visited Korea if they had not listened to Psy’s song. At the same time, this insight shows the tendency of the modern tourists who arrange their tours to Korea to attend concerts of their favorite idol groups (Hanaki, Singhal, Han, Kim & Chitnis, 2007).

Furthermore, K-pop stars are described as the Korea’s national ambassadors who inform about the cultures that only exist in Korea. For example, the comeback news of Korean singer gains a spotlight in *Fox News* because that singer has been “released from mandatory military service” (Fox News, 2013c). Such a ritual is unique to the American perspective, because there is no longer such a civil obligation in their country. Different expectations for women and men in Korea are also mentioned in the article. The military service is only applicable to Korean men so that they get “caught sneaking out for to meet a love interest while on official duty” (Fox News, 2013c).

To sum up, *The New York Times* and *Fox News* see Korean pop singers are heroes in the Korean society. They draw the heroic representation both within the South Korean society as well as in the globalized contexts. To be more specific, *The New York Times* has discussed the Korean stars completing their military service and wearing nice clothes can contribute to forming a good image of the South Korean military and gaining the exemplary images of the stars. *Fox News* further assumes that K-pop stars are the national hero because they represent South Korea to the globe.

3. Man-made catchy songs

1) Korea’s effort to make a catchy song

In *The New York Times*, the interpretative repertoire narrates that K-pop is a mass-produced product, which demands precise movements lacking in one's uniqueness. Thus, K-pop is compared with "the product of the plastic-surgery clinics in the Gangnam district" that produces similar results and that such a view is supported by the expert's opinion: "K-pop critics contend that South Korea is producing cookie cutter performances: perfectly synchronized dances, catchy songs and outfits and chiseled but forgettable features" (Choe, 2013). The term 'cookie cutter' is used as the active metaphor, and production of K-pop is matched with mass production ('synchronized', 'chiseled') along with human alienation ('forgettable features').

In line with receiving K-pop as a man-made cultural product, Choe (2012) criticizes the "repetitive choruses" present in K-pop. In fact, these repetitive choruses can be helpful to differentiate K-pop from other music. As "It is possible for a reasonably experienced listener to World Music to identify music not only by singer but also by nation", experienced listeners would easily identify Korean music by noticing its repetitive lyrics (Mitchell, 1993, p. 314). Healy (2013) adds that repetition of the words makes K-pop catchy: "K-pop lyrics repeat the same words over and over and try to be very catchy, memorable, karaoke worthy" so that K-pop singer look like "he did in Caffeine". Not only does this statement imply K-pop is addictive, identifying K-pop as psychedelic drugs also reflects interest of 1960s American pop where "hedonism, movement, and freedom" have been largely emphasized (Frith, 1989, p. 78).

In *The New York Times*, the author peeks into a K-pop production site to depict the young Korean's efforts to become renowned K-pop artists. Choe (2013) writes: "With the motto "cultivating the next generation of K-pop artists," the Def Dance Skool trains 1,000 students [...] That's about the same price that some traditional cram schools, known as hagwon, charge for their academic programs. Almost half of the students at Def Dance Skool are trying to break into one of South Korea's top K-pop agencies". K-pop schools have been forged into the chain of equivalence with academic schools as they are given the identical character of having their students cram to enter the 'top K-pop agencies' which gives Spartan training to the young people.

In addition, the language pattern also provides a significant insight to readers: “Almost half of the students at Def Dance Skool are trying to break into one of South Korea’s top K-pop agencies, which recruit and train young talent to put them into girl or boy bands” (Choe, 2013). According to this view, ‘K-pop agencies put’ the students into a band based on decisions of the agencies themselves, not the students. Thus, the author describes ‘young talent’ as weak and powerless individuals who are taken and consumed by the top management.

Some voices contend that K-pop stars are hard-working individuals who have raised themselves up by their own merits. What is shown externally to the audience is said to be not telling of K-pop stars’ realities: “But not all of K-pop’s glitter is real” (Caramanica, 2015). The gorgeous aspect of the K-pop performances is said to be illusionary and momentary: “Maybe Ms. Lee realized that playing a K-pop aspirant on an American children’s show was preferable to being one in real life” (Caramanica, 2015). The United States is then supposed to give more liberty to its people than Korean society.

To sum up, it is viewed that “they (K-pop stars) all sing, dance and perform well, like well-made machines” (Choe, 2013). K-pop stars are compared with dancing machines that perform by mechanical efforts, and it includes the stereotyping of Korean people who are generally known to work hard throughout their lifetime. This finding is in line with another author who cites: “Mastering the English-to-Korean translation is only one of the challenges facing the K-pop stars, several of whom said that they dreamed as children about acting on the stage but were pulled into the K-pop world because the talent agencies and music-making assembly lines have become so dominant here” (Healy, 2013). Being powerless, young teens ‘were pulled into’ the Korean music industry by the power of the dominant agencies where they find no individual choice to pursue their personal dream. The ‘from below perspective’ of Figure 2 supports this potential meaning by giving more symbolic power to the readers than to the practicing teens.

Similarly, *Fox News* depicts the K-pop star as a hard-working person, but this time the author adds some human and humble characteristics to the Korean singer. It describes Psy as an ordinary person with a family rather than as some kind of mannequin.

“Psy, whose real name is Park Jae-Sang was born into a traditional South Korean family. He came to the United States to attend business school but dropped out to pursue his music career. [...] In 2006, Psy married his girlfriend of three and a half years, Yoo Hye Yeon.” (Fox News, 2012b)

Mentioning of Psy’s real name reveals a public curiosity about Psy as a real person, rather than some distant idol. Psy is described as having come to the US for his study which may build common ground with American readers. This approach results in putting its audiences at a more personal level of friendliness with K-pop stars. K-pop star’s easygoing and friendly nature is further supplemented by another comment in which it describes Psy mocking “a self-claimed gentleman who enjoys his time at a dance club”, and this time Psy is portrayed as a party person who dances and enjoys his life just like any other man in the club (Fox News, 2013b).

In Figure 3, the photo has been cropped at Psy’s waist and his knees and it illustrates that Psy enjoys social distance with the audience. Consequently, the reader is positioned to build a social relationship with Psy. Another element to consider is Psy’s stance. With one leg lifted in a ridiculous manner, his body is depicted in an asymmetrical manner whose motion reminds of one of playful boys’ posture. In all, Psy is depicted as a funny and friendly character that people can easily relate to.

The author also imagines the efforts that the K-pop singers must have invested until they became finally recognized: “Singer Psy might seem like an overnight success story. [...] his big break didn't come easy” (Fox News, 2012a). As K-pop star’s success is not a Cinderella story, the readers are adjured to appreciate the enduring values of patience and a hard-working morale. Psy’s expresses his untiring motivation even after his success: “Psy [...] promised “more joyful contents” in the future” (Fox News, 2014b). Psy’s promise for the joyful contents implies that he may not be a joyful character by his nature but it may be his deliberate positioning to meet the market demands. When talking about the efforts, the author’s tone is no longer satirical; it is accepting and respecting. Considering this news has been published in the same year as another source which made fun of Psy, it is likely that

viewpoint of the press has not necessarily changed, but the hard-working value intersects with *Fox News*' own interests.

Psy is portrayed as a humble person that attributes his success to others. One cannot find an arrogant attitude from “No. 1 in America” when he gives many thanks to people who surround him: “He couldn't be more grateful [...] Psy said during a recent press conference. [...] This is just unbelievable, and I'm thankful for everything” (Fox News, 2012a). Psy is dislocated as a floating signifier through intertextuality; once portrayed as a silly, young millionaire without any seriousness, Psy is received as a sincere man who takes life and his achievements modestly. Frith (1995, p. 7) says voice is “a measure of someone's truthfulness” and “people's voices change according to circumstances. [...] It is certainly a key to the ways in which we change identities”. With this respect, Psy is switching his voice to reflect his different identity and to show his truthfulness and earnest attitude to the public.

2) K-pop: a complete performance

The New York Times regards Korean stars as being talented in many domains which encompass both the musical and the visual. K-pop is not simply seen as a music genre, but it is rendered as a complete performance style. Philip Auslander (2004) suggests the music experience is not confined to the auditory senses but it is also “a visual experience” (p. 5). With this focus on the visual culture, the author considers K-pop concert as a fashion show:

“But for now: G-Dragon, G-Dragon, G-Dragon — so many of the screams here were for G-Dragon, fashion show front-row habitué and collaborator with Diplo and Skrillex. Slight and baby-faced, he was toned down from his usual visual excess. As in all boy bands, there is a hierarchy here, of course: G-Dragon is very much at the top. He gets the best clothes — a fascinating patch-covered oversize bomber jacket, or a snow-white turtleneck — followed closely by T.O.P., who at one point wore what seemed to be a Mondrian print on a suit.” (Caramanica, 2015)

The conceptual metaphor conditions the image of K-pop as a fashion show. A group of fans appear to take verbal actions through screaming for the K-pop stars' 'visual excess'. Verbal action involves other participants and depicts them as an audience attending the fashion show. Such invitation is also explained by analyzing the cover image. The camera angle shoots the star 'from below'. A perspective gives symbolic power to the performer, and situates the reader to look from below as if they are also part of the 'fashion show front-row habitué'. *Fox News* describes Psy's performance as the "electronic dance", and another article describes Psy's "sparkling black top" and the "energetic strobe-lit performance" (Fox News, 2013b; Fox News, 2012b). Such descriptions imply K-pop employs numerable visual elements.

Another columnist interprets K-pop shows as bringing excitement to South Korea's most rigid and secluded place: "Mr. Jung shouted, gesturing to the other soldier-musicians behind him as 2,500 civilian fans quivered and shrieked in delight" and "The fans are also treated to hand-to-hand combat drills, parachute landings and displays of tanks, rocket launchers and Chinook helicopters" (Rich, 2016). The scene involves K-pop stars' cheerful gesture with other soldier-musicians. The military training elements even boost the show's festival feeling. K-pop is thus believed to spread the spirits of excitement and a democratic air into "a scary organization" (Rich, 2016).

K-pop is illustrated as visually enticing experiences so that there is a focus on the 'look' of the performance: "G-Dragon and T.O.P. drew the most eyeballs during this electric, ecstatic show, in which multiple songs were accompanied by fireworks or lasers or streamers, and in which costume changes came Instagram fast" (Caramanica, 2015). The performance's visual appeal is highlighted and display of the eye-catching show elements hints that K-pop is more about more than just a song. The visual becomes the main interests in the "Day-Glo Korean pop music world" (Caramanica, 2015). The term 'world' reminds of the readers of a fantastic Disney Land-like world.

Furthermore, these contrasting terms are explored when the texts introduces K-pop's multi-faceted identities. As a whole, the combination of conflicting values turns out to be the key source in making its show more complete and further enriching:

K-pop bands' style is a fusion of synthesized music, video art, fashionable outfits and teasing sexuality mixed with doe-eyed innocence. (Choe, 2012)

“The Wonder Girls, like other K-pop girl bands, sport short skirts and skin-baring outfits, but their song lyrics stay well within the bounds of chaste romantic love and longing”.
(Choe, 2012)

K-pop style is seen ‘as a fusion of synthesized music, video art, fashionable outfits’. It is not only the music’s quality that is noteworthy, but the complete set of video technology and stylish fashion contributes to the production of K-pop’s sophisticated competitiveness. Another article also states that K-pop has “meaningful flecks of club music, R&B and hip-hop”, and adds that K-pop songs’ meaningful messages makes K-pop more of a complete concept (Caramanica, 2015).

The journalist finds that there is a mix in characteristics of K-pop singers which is marked by both sexy and innocent characters. This coexistence of sexuality and innocence seems to be the Korean female singers’ strength. According to Frith (1989, p. 81), songs “express popular sexual attitudes, but these attitudes are mediated through the processes of cultural control”. The addition of ‘doe-eyed innocence’ can be regarded as a type of cultural control that Korean pop singers implement to mediate their sexuality.

3) Catchy song turning away from reality

Unlike *The New York Times* which admires K-pop for nearly perfecting its show quality, *Fox News* tends to ridicule K-pop. According to *Fox News*, K-pop’s identity is established by understanding the Psy’s hit. The article regards Psy and MC Hammer as dumb figures, and throws a question as to “Which duet do you think was the dumbest of all time?” (Fox News, 2012b). It seems as if a contest on who is dumb and who is dumber is taking place. The subject position of those singers becomes public entertainers who turn their silliness into their competitiveness. The depiction of K-pop stars as dumb figures can be explained by what Richard Schechner calls performance persona in which “public appearances are manifestations of the performer’s persona rather than the real person” (Schechner, 1981, p. 88). In this instance, being extremely dumb is seen to secure the public attention, and Psy’s

dumb persona is construed as “musicians’ performance personae rather than characters” (Auslander, 2004, p. 7).

A mockery on K-pop goes on when the author describes: “the hilarious video for “Gangnam Style” has currently been viewed over 767 million times on YouTube” (Fox News, 2012b). The journalist divulges that it knows of Psy’s curse on the United States, and pays attention to the figure’s un-erasable past, the past that comes to evoke uneasy sentiments. *Fox News* traced every uncomfortable detail by sharing extracted lyrics from one of Psy’s past songs. This approach gives challenges to readings of isolated passages whose aim is to “think unhistorically about music” (Biddle, 2011, p. 31). By thinking ‘historically’, not only does the news encourage public criticism on the song, but it also appeals that the author is not as ‘dumb’ as those characters:

“To recap, Psy is the guy behind "Gangnam Style" who had just been exposed for a song called "Dear American", which had him rapping, "kill those bleeping Yankees who had been torturing Iraqi captives/Kill those bleeping Yankees who ordered them to torture/Kill their daughters, mothers, daughters-in-law and fathers/Kill them all slowly and painfully." (Fox News, 2012d)

Of course, he's now saying he's "Deeply sorry for how these lyrics could be interpreted."
So there is more than one way to interpret "kill them all"? (Fox News, 2012d)

The article exposes the controversial K-pop lyrics, and the power of the media makes Psy apologize to the United States. According to the American cultural critic Henry Giroux, “central to the construction of right wing nationalism is a project of defining national identity through an appeal to a common culture that erases history of oppression and struggle for the minorities” (Giroux, 1995, p. 43-44). Thus, the revelation of America’s oppression of the Iraqi people is a threat to American nationalism. K-pop then gains an identity through a rude song which in turn gives rational reasons to satirize and belittle K-pop. Here, directness of the lyrics can be a Psy’s marketing strategy as “the importance of ‘directness’ and ‘honesty’ in lyrics, and its succinct musical form have become features of marketing” (Gibson & Davidson, 2004, p. 390). The part of satire and making fun of K-pop can be interpreted as the US’ self-defense mechanism to get over the uncomfortable feelings ignited by Psy.

The author tries to remind of American military power: “Forty thousand or so Americans died in the Korean War. There are tens of thousands who are protecting the South Koreans right now from the North Koreans” (Fox News, 2012d). Accordingly, Psy is described as a person who takes the United States’ efforts for granted. If war with North Korea breaks out, Psy “would be doing that silly horse trot screaming “Save me America”” (Fox News, 2012d). This expression allows the US to continue down a path of American exceptionalism, reinforcing an “America First” attitude and it also gives the extreme power to the newspapers. As a result, the author to evoke his antagonistic attitude toward Psy: “This guy (Psy) should never have been there, number one” (Fox News, 2012d). Even though Psy’s music style has been articulated to be of “satirical style” in one article, it turns out that *Fox News* equally deals with K-pop in a satirical manner (Fox News, 2012a).

Satire is found in another article entitled “Singer Psy (Sort Of) Flattered To Be Called the ‘Herpes of Music’?” (Fox News, 2013d). When reporting the event in which Joe Armstrong called Psy the ‘Herps of Music’, the media ridicules Psy’s silly attitudes for not being able to properly understand the English: “he asked the host what exactly herpes meant” (Fox News, 2013d). The following sentence describes: “While Psy might not have understood what Armstrong’s comment meant, he appeared to shrug the insult off” (Fox News, 2013d). Whether Psy had been insulted by Americans as a whole is a matter of debate. Through this generalization; *Fox News* styles itself as the representative of the US as a whole, claiming to speak on behalf of US citizens, instead of a subset thereof.

Apart from the treatment on silliness, K-pop is articulated as unrealistic songs that evade Korea’s current situation. The author interprets K-pop as a distractor which steals away the attention from what is really urgent in Korea: “South Korean pop star PSY’s first new single since his viral hit “Gangnam Style” is stealing attention from inter-Korean tensions” (Fox News, 2013b). By using the term ‘stealing’, the author assumes Korean people are no longer concerned inter-Korean tensions due to their indulgence in K-pop. Through a deliberate use of personification and active verb tense, the non-human actor (K-pop) is transformed into the human agent whose goal is to remove the sense of realism from the people. Thus, *Fox News*

receives K-pop as an anesthetic drug which prevents the South Korean people from realizing their real life circumstances.

North Korea's missile test serves as the constitutive outside that provides a contrasting significance to the K-pop identity. It seems as if the author is more concerned about the "possible missile test by the North" than South Koreans do (Fox News, 2013b). However, while criticizing K-pop as reality-denying music that turns its people away from the issue of North Korea, the author himself also leads the audience "to listen to gentleman" (Fox News, 2013a). There is a marked juxtaposition between the writer's satire and his suggestion to listen to the Psy's new song.

In this vein, K-pop is depicted as far-fetched music with dulling effect. It is described to be "supremely silly" and "annoyingly catchy", which makes it makes South Korean people lose their sense of reality (Fox News, 2014b). Such a view has been previously shared by some other music scholars as well: "To the Western listener, World Music may often be an entirely synthetic sonic experience of surface impacts" and "above all, this music is shallow, an array of surfaces and forces that engage the listener through fascination: there's no depth, no human truth or social concern to be divined" (Mitchell, 1993, p. 336; Reynolds, 1990, p. 17). Thus, a portrayal of K-pop as dull music represents stereotyping of World Music that is produced outside the normal Anglo-American sources.

In case of *The New York Times*, the third person's saying is used to support such a view. The interview result proves that K-pop star alleviate the worries and burdens of the South Korean citizens:

"I am here to see U-Know," she said, sitting in the stands wearing a red U-Know Yunho scarf. "I don't really care about the military." (Rich, 2016)

By exposing the indifference to the military of the K-pop fan, yet willingness to be in that environment, a binary opposition is established between the two elements. It is through the contrast of pop cultural stardom and military representation that K-pop finally gains full meaning in its identity. Hence, K-pop stars are portrayed to liberate South Koreans who have otherwise been riddled with worries coming from North Korea. Multimodal analysis also

supports this perspective. In Figure 3, the view is neither a full frontal perspective nor a completely side perspective. Even though the torso has been positioned for the full frontal angle, Psy is not really facing toward the reader. Psy's looking away can be interpreted as a partial facing of the reality.

K-pop drives people crazy as it is "likely to have you screaming "pleeeeeeease noooooooooo"" (Fox News, 2014b). It hints that not everyone is welcoming K-pop as it may be too crazy to handle. As suggested by Frith (2002, p. 46), music is "a means of communication and as a form of sociability" so that "musical activities are central for their understanding of who they are". According to the texts, K-pop must be a communication channel among the specific social group who are interested in the unusual level of emotional expression. However, one should note that this is the author's own opinion and some other people may just perceive K-pop as easygoing music. The author could have interviewed other people to see whether the audiences really feel like screaming 'no' to Psy's song.

In brief, both sources acknowledge the South Korean stars' efforts and emphasize the performance's visual aspects. *The New York Times* tends to focus on managerial efforts by the K-pop entertainment agencies and believes such Korea's top-down management produces "cookie cutter performances" in the manner the product is produced by the "well-made machines" (Choe, 2013). Meanwhile, *Fox News* focuses on the personal characteristics and sees the personal effort that led Psy to become the "No. 1 in America" (Fox News, 2012a).

The New York Times sees K-pop liberates of Korean citizens from Korea's "rigid social structure", but *Fox News* interprets that its music turns people away from "inter-Korean tensions" (Fox News, 2012b; Fox News, 2013b). Such interpretations affect the way of receiving K-pop. *The New York Times* accepts South Korea has perfected the America's unfinished concepts: "South Korean success with the form is another example of a concept kick-started here but perfected elsewhere" (Caramanica, 2015). However, *Fox News* finds that K-pop is merely "hilarious" and "supremely silly" (Fox News, 2012b; Fox News, 2014b). This gap may result from the different political landscape of the press. Still, to better

understand why some authors are hesitant toward accepting K-pop, the study on impact of K-pop on the US domestic music industry may be carried out.

4. Political representation

1) Diplomatic tool with North Korea

An overall interpretative collection is produced through many articles on K-pop in South Korea's political relations with other countries. First, K-pop narratives evoke the desires of North Korean citizens, thereby enabling South Korean people to continue their contact with the North:

North Korea considers the broadcasts an act of psychological warfare. Pyongyang is extremely sensitive to any outside criticism of the authoritarian leadership of Kim Jong Un, the third member of his family to rule. (Fox News, 2016a)

"[...] the illegal imports of South Korean pop music and videos and a host of other issues that gives an image that incremental changes are taking place in the North," he⁴ said. (Fox News, 2015c).

The above two views agree that K-pop is penetrating deep into the North Koreans' minds. Here, broadcasting of K-pop is depicted as 'an act of psychological warfare'. This notion implies K-pop contains democratic ideologies linked to the United States which threatens the communist North. This produces a conceptual metaphor; while North Korea is threatening the South with its nuclear weapons, South Korea is using K-pop as their counteracting weapon.

Furthermore, K-pop is viewed as a positive sign that reflects gradual changes that are taking place in North Korea's society. Thereby, it is assumed that people in North Korea are

⁴ 'he' indicates Marzuki Darusman, who is the special rapporteur on human rights in North Korea.

not different from those in the South, and they basically share the same minds.

The author highlights K-pop as an optimistic sign that represents North Korean's step-by-step autonomy from their government. Termed as 'illegal imports', acceptance of South Korea's pop culture is a good indicator for the 'incremental change' in the North. *Fox News* does not interpret South Korea deliberately uses K-pop to manipulate North Korea. Rather, it is perceived that North Korean citizens accept South Korean pop-culture and "these changes are allowed to develop according to their own dynamics" (Fox News, 2015c). Thus, the author assumes that citizens in the North and South are already similar people who have been segregated due to the ruler's choice, but K-pop is recently acting to bridge them.

2) *Diplomatic tool with Japan*

The columnists in *Fox News* mentions about South Korea's changing political climate with Japan and receives Korea and Japan as "the most important U.S. allies in Asia" and expresses that it "has been concerned about allies' strained relations" (Fox News, 2015). For this reason, the passages in connection with Japan provide a solid framework for understanding K-pop's reception.

Many Koreans still remember Japan's 35-year colonization as the era of brutality and humiliation, during which they were forced to use Japanese names and language while their pride, heritage and sense of identity were severely threatened. (Fox News, 2015d)

In another strange twist involving Sony and its film "The Interview," two South Korean hip-hop stars are threatening legal action over the alleged unauthorized use of their music in the movie. (Fox News, 2014)

Even though Koreans are explained to be the long-time sufferers who 'were forced to use Japanese names and language while their pride, heritage and sense of identity were severely threatened', they are no longer seen to be weak. The change in subject position of South Korea is supplemented by transformation. The passive verb tense is used to describe the Koreans as victims in the past, but then active verb tenses cite the current changes in South Korea-Japan relations.

When calling for the legal action over the unauthorized use of K-pop in Japan, the reporter could have used more neutral terms such as ‘asking’ or ‘claiming’. However, the journalist expresses that South Korea, once intimidated by Japan, now threatens Japan with its pop music. Therefore, K-pop is represented as South Korea’s new weapon.

Popular culture is a good indicator of the affinity between Korea and Japan. In an article published in 2011, it is articulated that cultural exchanges among these two countries are brought about by improved national relations: “Despite their harsh history, South Korea and Japan have been getting closer economically, diplomatically and culturally in recent years” (Fox News, 2011). The acceptance of the counterpart’s pop culture is interpreted as an indicator of the enhanced communication.

There is the change in tone about Korean pop culture in the article published in 2015. This time, the author asserts that the country’s culture can facilitate the bilateral talks:

The relations improved in the late 1990s, following Japanese apologies, cultural exchanges and a Korean pop culture boom in the 2000s, but nosedived a few years ago largely because of differences over their shared history. (Fox News, 2015)

The ministers then held talks for two hours before talking for another hour over Japanese "tempura" cuisine, which Japanese officials said was a good start. But Japanese officials were tight-lipped about whether any progress was made on Japan's sexual enslavement of Korean women and other outstanding issues related to wartime history. (Fox News, 2015)

Even though both passages contain similar contents, they reflect the shifting view of *Fox News*. Whereas the texts in 2011 imply that one’s culture ‘reflects’ the status, the recent article narrates as if culture ‘causes’ a certain desirable status. It is suggested that improved relations followed after a K-pop boom by depicting K-pop as a diplomatic tool. In other words, K-pop is a floating signifier which is interpreted as both cause and effect of the certain state (in this case, the state can be defined as ‘Korea and Japan are well together’).

The perception of one’s culture as a diplomatic tool is seen in ‘Japanese "tempura" cuisine. It is claimed to be a ‘good start’. The premise is that nice foods lead the nice bilateral talk. However, it is said such an attempt was dismissed due to the Japanese reserved stance on

admitting their history-related issues. The improved relations with Japan after the ‘Korean pop culture boom are explained to have nosedived [...] largely because of differences over their shared history’. Thus, ‘Korean pop culture’ is placed in a chain of equivalence with ‘Japanese "tempura" cuisine’, for both not being able to wield their powers in the complicated political situation. Finally, it is suggested that K-pop becomes powerless Korea’s historical issues are involved.

The author postulates Japan denies K-pop for some other grounds: “Deterioration in relations could also be traced to South Korea’s rising economic clout and international profile, which have touched a nerve for many Japanese, who have lost confidence in their own leadership amid economic slump and political disarray” (Fox News, 2015). It is assumed that reception of K-pop in Japan may involve not just historical dynamics, but also the current economic situation as well as emotional factors.

3) A rigid, democratic and open society

In *The New York Times*’ view, South Korea is a country characterized by a rigid society wherein a strict mood is waiting to be untied and dismantled by an exciting K-pop song. Psy’s “chubby” does not only produce visual contrast with Korea’s “rigid social structure”, but it also suggests he is an aberration outside of Korean society (Choe, 2013). The author attempts to make fun of K-pop by using the terms such as “poked fun”, “lasso-swirling, clip-clopping” (Choe, 2013). The tone sees such a funny character as lampooning Korea’s rigidity.

K-pop stars are believed to increase the foreigner’s motivation for learning about South Korea. This assumption shares the same view with the Dutch scholar in cultural heritage Stijn Reijnders who says: “fans actively go looking for the actual sites where movies and TV series were filmed” (Reijnders, 2010, p. 38). As a result, places like Gangnam, which have featured in K-pop music videos, become easily commodified and turn into tourist destinations. To show this impact of K-pop in Korean tourism, *Fox News* published its article under the

‘Travel Section’ with the title: “South Korea has best ever year for tourism thanks to some Gangnam style” (Fox News, 2013a).

The author states: “even the tiny number of Western tourists is on the rise, according to the figures” (Fox News, 2013a). The expression, ‘even Western tourists’ suggests Western audience’s interest in Korea is a recent phenomenon, and the term ‘tiny’ reflects the unmoved tendency of the average Western citizens. Then, the author shows its acknowledgement of the change in K-pop’s social meaning by looking at the paradigm shift in Korean society:

“They are responding to a growing demand. In a survey by the Korea Institute for Vocational Education and Training late last year, entertainers, along with teachers and doctors, were the most popular choices for future jobs among primary, middle and high school students — a far cry from a more traditional era, when entertainment was considered an inferior profession and its practitioners belittled with the derogatory nickname “tantara.” Now, in college, pop music is one of the most coveted majors, where it’s “practical music.” (Choe, 2013)

Once considered as an ‘inferior position’, a new perspective is conferred to K-pop, currently acknowledged as being ‘coveted majors’. The writer assumes Korean people’s perspectives on popular music have become less rigid with time. Also, the author’s awareness of such a change in the social meaning of K-pop to Korea implies that the US has begun to open up to K-pop. The use of the term “tantara” suggests that the author is more knowledgeable about K-pop than the readers.

The journalist makes use of K-pop as a social filter to learn about Korean rituals. The passage addresses the “realization that the boy band mode comes with built-in time limits. There is also the looming specter of conscription: South Korean men are required to perform two years of military service” (Caramanica, 2015). This information explains the conscription of Korean males. By reporting the story of Ms. Lee, who “sued her Korean label [...] to nullify her contract, alleging verbal abuse and that the label entered her into projects without her consent” the author reveals the Korean entertainment agency lacks in human liberty. (Caramanica, 2015). Then *The New York Times* describes the Korean military is taking away one’s liberty and freedom:

In 2002, Yoo Seung-jun, one of South Korea’s biggest-selling pop artists, obtained American citizenship just a few months before he was scheduled to enlist in the army.

He was barred from South Korea and just last month lost a lawsuit in which he demanded the right to re-enter the country. (Rich, 2016)

Two K-pop performers were jailed for 10 days two years ago after they were arrested during their military service for visiting massage parlors that also sold sexual services. Another star soldier was disciplined after he sneaked out to visit his girlfriend, a famous actress, while on duty. (Rich, 2016)

In the given texts, Korean singer Yoo is depicted as an innocent individual who has become exempted from his military obligation with no intention of evading it. By explaining ‘American citizenship’ has allowed his remit from South Korean conscription, *The New York Times* positions the United States as a liberating country that frees its people. Also, understanding that each sentence starts with the subject, and past tenses such as ‘was scheduled, were arrested, was disciplined’ are dominantly used, one sees that it is the newspaper source that wields power.

There is an inner-conflict among the Korean citizens and the author sees such conflict is come from the Korea’s collectivism. Two antagonistic ideas have been retrieved as below:

Many citizens resent military service as an unwanted interruption to the education and careers of the country’s young men. (Rich, 2016)

The public expects all men to fulfill their civic duty and harshly judges those who do not. (Rich, 2016)

In the big picture, the statements are ironic. Even though the Korean people ‘resent’ the military concept, they push each other for the obligation, and even ‘harshly judge those who do not’ complete the service. Korean society is portrayed as pursuing conformity through shared experiences, which makes willing to follow the military service. Behind such double-edged attitudes lies an ideology of collectivism in Korean society. Henry Giroux explains “national identity is developed around cultural differences constructed within hierarchical relations of power that authorize who can or cannot speak legitimately as an American” (Giroux, 1995, p. 53). The journalist takes the power to speak legitimately as an American, and unveils South Korean’s collectivistic behaviors as the culturally different factor.

In another passage, a “passport for the United States” was mentioned as a way to give the

freedom for the Korean singer, but now it reports: “K-pop stars who held passports for the United States or other nations were enlisting anyway” (Rich, 2016). Here, the active tense is used to deliver the people’s action, and it explains such choices come from the individual’s free-will. There is a recent trend in which “some politicians also debating whether the military should convert to a voluntary service” (Rich, 2016). This shows Korean politicians are no longer stubborn, but are showing some degrees of lenience and the possibility of change. In this way, civil service in Korea is narrated to be smoothly propelled by its own people with democratic minds. Just as democratic ideas occupy pride-of-place in the United States, the same seems to be the case in South Korea.

In line with *The New York Times*, *Fox News* assumes Korea is an open country in terms of accepting foreign cultures. The article sometimes generalizes Korea as one of the Asian countries: “Last year, the Asian country saw some 11.1 million visitors [...]” (Fox News, 2013a). A metonym has been additionally adapted, and the non-human ‘Asian country’ is reported to have “seen” the visitors through personification.

"How can South Korea-Japan military cooperation be possible without resolving the issue of Japan's past wrongdoing?" the activists asked in a statement distributed at the protest site. (Fox News, 2011)

Seoul has objected to Japanese industrial sites, criticizing Japan for neglecting their dark history of using Korean slave laborers. (Fox News, 2015)

Two South Korean hip-hop stars are threatening legal action over the alleged unauthorized use of their music in the movie. (Fox News, 2014)

In the given paragraphs, dual identities are given to Korea; a historical victim and a cultural attacker. In contrast to the depiction of Japanese as withholding individuals who are “tight-lipped”, and do “not respond”, it is received that Koreans express their thoughts directly to the government (Fox News, 2015; Fox News, 2014). They team up together to allege the ‘wrongdoing’, and to seek for accepting and ‘resolving’, which constructs Korea’s national identity to be open and straightforward. Also, some events between South Korea and Japan act as nodal points by allowing the reader to explore different national identity of those

countries.

A downturn started in 2012, when then-South Korean President Lee Myung-bak visited a cluster of Seoul-controlled islets also claimed by Japan. [...] Anti-Korean books and magazines have become bookstore staples, while Korean pop idols who once dominated Japanese TV shows have largely disappeared, and many shops in downtown Tokyo once known as Korea Town closed. (Fox News, 2015)

After South Korea began lifting its ban on Japanese pop culture in the late 1990s, Japanese movies, cartoons and other pop culture flooded in. (Fox News, 2015 b)

The way of managing foreign pop-culture has been discussed where Korea is portrayed as being open and accepting other cultures. While Japan cuts back on Korean programming after Korea's president's visitation to the disputable islets, South Korea keeps accepting the partner's pop-culture 'by lifting its ban' and let them 'flooded in'.

As seen above, *The New York Times* and *Fox News* regard K-pop as a mirror that represents South Korea's national identity and its political relations with other countries. However, the former news source is interested in how K-pop singers react within South Korea's social dynamics (i.e. military duty). The latter source is interested in how the identity of K-pop is being shaped in terms of its bilateral relations with other countries. As a result, *Fox News* frequently mentions K-pop in conjunction with the past events concerning Japan and US, so it publishes innumerable articles on Psy's US-targeting song (Fox News, 2011; 2014b; 2015d/ Fox News, 2012d; 2012e; 2012f; 2013d).

5. Music that brings money

Another aspect to look at is a portrayal of K-pop as a marketing tool for the profitable businesses. As Paul Rutten mentions, "an important objective of the music industry is that of acquiring a greater share of revenues from music which is freely consumed by people, as they

listen to the radio, watch television, and so on” (Rutten, 1991, p. 298). In this respect, K-pop can be perceived as a money-making tactic that generates considerable amount of revenues:

Revenue from K-pop has climbed. The combined sales of South Korea’s top three K-pop agencies — SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment and JYP Entertainment — soared to 362.9 billion won, or about \$326 million, last year, from 106.6 billion won in 2009, with most of that growth coming from overseas. (Choe, 2013)

K-pop stars frequently are the faces for top South Korean brands in television commercials, and Psy fronts for a range of products, from Hite beer and Samsung refrigerators to a line of cosmetics for men called Man’s Balm. (Choe, 2013)

Informative reputations are produced, and goals such as being the face of ‘commercials, a range of products and revenue’ have been selected to become the final destination of K-pop stars. This consideration of music for commercial purposes is also found in the research done by Adrian North and David Hargreaves, who studied the ‘influence of in-store music on wine selections’. French wines outsold when French music was played; German wines outsold French wines when German music was played (North, Hargreaves & McKendrick, 1999, p. 271-276). For German philosopher Theodor Adorno, contemporary music life is dominated by the “commodity character” and from Frith’s perspective, “we primarily think of music in terms of its use” (Adorno, 1991, p. 27; Frith, 2002, p. 43). In our case, Psy is ‘used’ to increase the sales of Korean brand products ranging ‘from Hite beer [...] to a line of cosmetics’. By equating ‘K-pop stars’ with ‘South Korean brands’, the news coverage focuses on the commodity character of K-pop. Mitchell (1993, p. 225) describes “commodity fetishism and consumption” is “an essential component of the popular music industry, from ownership of records, cassettes and CDs to fanzines, T-Shirts, artifacts and ephemeral objects related to groups, genres and subcultures”. In other words, K-pop feeds the people’s hunger for the commodity fetishism.

According to *The New York Times*, Korea uses their K-pop stars to their marketing advantages. The different author points out “Korean theater producers are trying to ride this wave by putting K-pop stars into Broadway musicals” and “Television and radio advertising emphasize the K-pop stars first and the show titles second for the dozens of musicals running

across this city” (Healy, 2013). K-pop is thus treated as a marketing tool to increase the ticket sales of the Broadway style musicals. Finally, it is reported that tickets for the musicals are “sold well with K-pop stars” and the Korean stars’ “the ultimate goal is to bring these tours to China” (Healy, 2013). It is important to note how these insights have arrived. The author reflects the opinion of the Korean experts and Korean citizens:

“The stars bring in women, but they’re also famous enough to bring in Japanese and Chinese tourists, whom we need badly to keep growing our market” he⁵ added. (Healy, 2013)

“There are so many musicals in Seoul now, dozens and dozens, that the stars help ticket buyers make choices,” said Gina Lee, the director of “Guys and Dolls”. (Healy, 2013)

Both Korean producer and the audience agree on seeing that K-pop stars target the foreign tourists and they differentiate the character of the musical shows by simply showing up on the stage. At this point, the author understand those stars are already ‘famous enough to bring in Japanese and Chinese tourists’, which implies the name value or brand awareness of the K-pop stars is a pre-condition for effective K-pop’s marketing.

The author believes K-pop creates new market values for the American entertainment industry, and suggests it is “easy to advertise a show as K-pop-influenced when its three leads have Asian heritage” (Caramanica, 2015). At this point, the concept of international marketing is introduced where “international transactions can be carried out more effectively” via its international marketing tactics (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2003, p. 18). According to Cayla and Arnould (2008, p. 88), a “cultural approach involves recognizing that international marketing is more than a technique, that it consists of a constellation of understandings such as the relationship between individuals and society, and that, so far, these understandings have been predominantly Western”. This passage provides a significant shift as K-pop is dislocated as an Asian brand, and it considers Asian heritage is “not a thing to be overlooked” when it comes to international marketing (Caramanica, 2015).

⁵ ‘he’ is Chang Jun-won who is Korean talent agent producer.

Fox News also shows a similar interest in money. The news coverage is also interested in the total revenue attained by famous K-pop songs:

While it's hard to know precisely how much ad revenue the video has generated for PSY and his team, it's certain to be in the millions of dollars. Just prior to hitting a billion views in December 2012, video marketing firm TubeMogul calculated that Gangnam Style had generated \$870,000 from YouTube ads alone. And with music downloads, streams, CD sales, merchandise and TV ads, that figure will of course go way, way higher. (Fox News, 2015a)

The famous k-pop video like Psy's Gangnam style has been shown to make the huge profits. Nonetheless, the article says 'it's hard to know precisely how much ad revenue the video has generated'. Yet, tracking such data is a possible thing, but by not doing so, the author positions himself for having the same knowledge level with his readers. Another article stresses that K-pop makes the individual singer become rich in the American style: "The LA Times is reporting that he purchased a condo in the exclusive Blair House on Wilshire Boulevard for \$1.249 million in cash" (Fox News, 2013). When the news discusses Psy's new expensive house, the observation is made at a paparazzi level. It now reveals Psy's age: "35-year-old pop star" in its aim to emphasize this famous K-pop star as a young millionaire. It is said that the information is retrieved from the LA Times, and this maintains the objective attitude of the author.

The interest for luxury is found when the author describes: "Psy flees scene of Rolls-Royce crash in a Porsche" (Fox News, 2015). The article precisely points out Psy's car is a Rolls-Royce, which is one of the most prestigious automobiles in the world. A series of actions then replace participants by the brand of the cars. The cars' brands receive as much attention as the event when the press describes "it's not clear who was driving the Rolls-Royce", and "Psy was picked up by a Porsche" (Fox News, 2015). The gap between Psy's affluence and his ordinary persona is highlighted in the mentioning of compensation which "pegged the damage to the bus at about \$300 and the damage to Psy's Rolls-Royce at around \$112,000". With collection of such wealth indicating signs, a moment is reached where the Psy comes down to a rich man.

Then, the author captures business opportunities for using K-pop. K-pop brings in many tourists, thus supporting the community with appropriate facilities seems inevitable to satisfy the growing demands from those media-induced tourists:

But now local officials want to seize the “Gangnam Style” craze. According to the New York Times, plans are in the works to open a visitor center in February that may include a life-size hologram of the singer PSY, and a road that would feature the stars’ handprints in its sidewalks. (Fox News, 2013a)

The South Koreans may have to hurry if they want to capitalize on PSY's continued popularity. (Fox News, 2013a)

Community reactions to place marketing are crucial in tourism due to the social and economic impacts of resulting development and tourism activities (Brunt & Courtney, 1999). In this respect, establishment of a new visitor center in Gangnam area is understood as an example of Korea’s place marketing. Still, however; in the author’s eyes, Korea has not yet fully seized the market opportunity. The author believes Korea should be like the US in terms of better ‘practicing’ K-pop’s popularity. Such an analysis becomes legitimate when one reads the subsequent line: “The South Koreans may have to hurry if they want to capitalize on PSY's continued popularity” (Fox News, 2013a). It is assumed that South Korea lags behind the United States in terms of capitalizing on its popular culture. The methods on how Psy invests his money in Korea have not been specified. Nonetheless, his fortune is described in an American sense: “exclusive Blair House on Wilshire Boulevard for \$1.249 million in cash” and the news is positive that the K-pop star “wants to live Gangnam style in LA” (Fox News, 2013a). Thereby, the author catches K-pop’s capital baton and passes it to the United States.

The notion of opportunity-making through K-pop as a marketing advantage is illustrated in the article entitled: “Summer's a great time to dive into a foreign language” (Fox News, 2017). The article advises its readers to learn the Korean language at its language center:

"Having a foreign language and cultural skills in your background is vitally important. [...] Or it's just what a child seems to be passionate about." says Christine Schulze, executive director of the program, based in Moorhead, Minnesota. "Korean pop culture, for example, seems to be a big driver of interest in Korean language and cultural studies." (Fox News, 2017)

Of course, you don't have to leave home to get summer language study. Many bilingual and language schools across the U.S. offer their own immersive day camps. (Fox News, 2017)

K-pop is introduced as ‘a big driver of interest in Korean language and cultural studies’, which gives more power to the institution to convince its audience group. It is advised that American children simply pick up the Korean language in the US. The author emphasizes that there are numerable bilingual language programs offered by American institutions so that people ‘don’t have to leave home’. By stating so, the author promotes the ample educational resources in the United States.



Figure 4. Psy: a millionaire

Last but not least, messages behind the image are waiting to be decoded by one’s creative imagination. A study of performance can be done by “readings of performances by popular musicians, readings that attend to the particulars of physical movement and gesture” (Auslander, 2004, p. 3). In Figure 4, it seems something is flying around the people. The type of image with the individual in the center of flying-money is used to express that the person has all the money in the world, and the message is consistent with the meaning-making of the articles which portrays Psy as a millionaire.

Psy looks as if he is proud with two beautiful women on both his sides, which recalls a saying: ‘Money and Women. They are the two strongest things in the world’ (Satchel Paige).

In accordance with Ian Biddle's treatment of musicology as a "well-guarded gentleman's club" enforcing a monolithic compulsory masculinity" (Biddle, 2011, p. 11-12), Psy's masculinity is enforced by his song that brings him money and women into his life. Frith (1990, p. 96) contends that "arguments about music are less about the qualities of the music itself than about how to place it, about what it is in the music that is actually to be assessed". In this regard, arguments about Psy as a successful musician are made possible by assessing his personal wealth and power.

Though both newspapers look at the profits made by K-pop, *The New York Times* finds South Korea is already doing well with its deployment of K-pop stars in the Korean commercials and musicals. On the contrary, *Fox News* implies that South Korea should follow the US in making good opportunities and uses its power to speak on behalf of the successful American capitalist.

III. How do news media outlets portray K-pop in the United Kingdom?

1. Music made by Global mindsets

1) Reaching to the West with fearless attitudes

There are several mentions of K-pop personalities in *The Guardian*. First, the author quotes the opinions of popular singers to introduce K-pop's easy-going personality:

"K-pop, I think, is personality," says the Korean-Canadian singer G.Na. "It's very melodious, very easy to sing along to." (Mukasa, 2011)

The author invites a Korean-Canadian professional to explain about K-pop's personality. The fact that Gina Jane Choi is a Canadian singer based in South Korea provides deeper

understanding of K-pop's identity. When it comes to describing K-pop stars' personality, however; the author tends to speak with his own voice and uses the opinions of American K-pop columnists to support his ideas. The author especially highlights the brave attitudes of the K-pop singer:

CL seems best placed to be the person to take K-pop properly mainstream though. For one, she's always felt like an anomaly: a bold and brash personality in a world of high-gloss uniformity, Diplo has called her the Nicki Minaj of K-pop. "Her attitude makes her a more international artist," agrees Billboard's K-pop columnist Jeff Benjamin. "She has a more fearless mindset when it comes to her career that's not seen in most K-pop stars."

In 2013, this fearlessness prompted her to step away from 2NE1, one of Korea's biggest girl bands, with her solo track *The Baddest Female*, a clattering ego message that channeled Atlanta hip-hop. (Cragg, 2015)

The British journalist Cragg highlights fearless personality of K-pop singer CL for stepping out of her comfort zone. As Bourdieu (2001, p. 52) has suggested, courage is understood "as the suppression of natural physiological impulses, by men, often comes from the fear of losing the respect or admiration of the group, [...] from being relegated to the typically female category of 'wimps', 'girlies'" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 52). One cannot find the stereotypical female category in the author's description about CL. By revealing existing band 2NE1 could have been a safe choice for CL as it used to be one of the Korea's biggest bands; CL is depicted as a courageous individual who cultivates her sole territory and is unafraid to fight it out with the big US guns" (Cragg, 2015). Her fearless mindset is perceived to be unique and is 'not seen in most K-pop stars'. Therefore, the rest of K-pop stars are taken as the constitutive outside who are afraid of stepping out of Korea.

The concept of constitutive outside then reaches a moment where the identity of CL and other K-pop singers becomes firmly fixed. In the eyes of *The Guardian*, non-stereotypical Korean artists best suits with the Western market:

One of the things that sets CL apart from her K-pop affiliates is her self-assuredness. "I don't think about myself as the representative for all Korean artists," she says.

(Cragg, 2015)

The author generalizes the voices of the UK and the US as the international standard. By simply borrowing Diplo and an American columnist's ideas, CL is depicted as an international artist with world appeal. While mentioning about CL's bold and brash personality, there is no comment on CL's musical talents. One may postulate that most Korean singers' vocal talents are received to be more or less equal. It appears that a favorable personality counts the most when K-pop stars enter the entertainment industry overseas.

It is also significant to recognize that CL is depicted to be an "anomaly" (Cragg, 2015). On the surface, it appears that the media favors exoticism found in other cultures. However, such an assumption turns out to be untrue as soon as the reader examines the sentence which constructs 'she's always felt like an anomaly'. It is implied that CL found herself different from average Korean people. Then, CL should not feel as an anomaly anymore when she performs outside of Korea. In this manner, *The Guardian* welcomes CL as a homogenous counterpart who is similar to UK pop artists. Taking CL as a homogenous counterpart and praising her characters underlies "a widespread belief that women in the United States and Western European countries are better off vis-a-vis their menfolk than their sisters in societies that are not developed" (Nadar, 1989, p. 323). These assertions give power to the Western discourses and give a rationale to have favoritism toward CL.



Figure 5. CL: a fearless female singer who is ‘anomaly’ in South Korea

The multimodal analysis further helps one to analyze the media’s perspective. In the image, an Asian female who dyed her hair completely blond is facing directly to the audience. Her staring, direct eyes are equally matched with fearless personality traits. As mentioned by Auslander (2004, p. 9), “popular musicians do not perform their personae exclusively in live and recorded performances; they perform them as well through the visual images used in the packaging of recordings”. The news article thus produces its own visual packaging to reflect CL’s persona. A full frontal perspective places CL in a horizontal line right in front of the reader, which indicates that there is a high level of social involvement going on between CL and the audience. The image has been cropped so that no more than her head and right side of her shoulders are visible, and this close-up framing reduces a social distance with readers, symbolically putting the reader to a friendly position with the depicted figure.

The differentiation of CL from other Korean pop stars is backed up by CL’s own comment: “I don’t think about myself as the representative for all Korean artists”. Then, the author assumes it must have required ‘self-assuredness’ for the Korean star to be different from others. This idea of the Guardian author reflects collectivism in which standing out uniquely alone is considered a less socially desirable value. The author also quotes CL’s remarks: “my goal is [...] to keep doing what I love” (Cragg, 2015). It is assumed that many Korean artists act according to other people’s expectation.

A few individuals like CL are appreciated to break such boundaries: “For too long, K-pop artists have been happy to remain a niche, almost novelty, and proposition. Not CL.” (Cragg, 2015). It is perceived that K-pop stars do not have much courage to go abroad. This conclusion is drawn from the author’s own thoughts who wish to affirm that K-pop’s “world domination” is all about “artists stepping up” (Cragg, 2015). As suggested by Eckehard Pistrick and Cyril Isnart, “music plays an important role in the way people define their relationships with local, everyday surroundings, at different scales, in a globalized world” (Pistrick & Isnart, 2013, p. 511). In this respect, CL is considered a K-pop leader in establishing and re-defining the Korea’s music relationship with the West.

2) Collaboration with Western artists

K-pop is seen to need help from the West in order to achieve the worldwide success. The CL's album is said to be distributed due to the "help of Scott and producers such as Diplo" and as "she signed with Justin Bieber's manager Scooter Braun, the man responsible for breaking Gangnam Style" (Cragg, 2015). In a similar manner, Korean boyband JJCC is reported to be "formed by Jackie Chan's management company" which is Hong-Kong based, and the author puts the subtitle that such a Korean band is "under the watchful eye of Jackie Chan" (Tan, 2014). Using the past verb tense, 'formed by' and showing the power relations indicating 'under', K-pop stars are situated under foreign supervision. The foreign artist's subject position is the main dedicator for K-pop's international success.

Another article also highlights the importance of the management of foreign artists. Korean pop group *U-Kiss* are said to "be represented in the US by the same agency that looks after Mariah Carey, Kanye West and Justin Bieber" (McCurry, 2012). Meanwhile, the efforts of the Korean entertainment is overlooked and concealed. From the author's perspective, K-pop singers are waiting to be picked by foreign managers and only those who have courage and open-minds about accepting such help can become a global mainstream. Thus, K-pop's global outreach is possible by a considerable level of personal initiative which involves a fearless personality on behalf of the individual as well as the strategical management of Western pop managers.

Likewise, the article describes many circumstances of K-pop stars collaborating with Western pop artists, thereby showing the Western singer's influence on K-pop's identity. First, Gani (2014) says Korean singer G Dragon has "teamed up with Diplo and Baauer for his recent dark album *Coup d'etat*, so it's little wonder that other US artists – such as Missy Elliott – are collaborating with him". Second, McCurry (2012) points out the Korean girl band "Wonder Girls collaborated with the rapper on *Like Money*," and explains that exposure "will bring more collaboration with US artists". Third, K-pop group member Prince Mak is introduced as an international pop singer because he was "born in Sydney" and now became

“K-pop's Australian star” (Tan, 2014). These voices contend K-pop identity is constructed based on close collaboration with Western artists.

The Guardian columnist talks as if he is an expert in the field of music and believes that K-pop needs to blend with Western pop music to fit with British taste: “Key to her success is how CL has grasped that the manicured K-pop approach needs to blend with the grittier, more risqué experimentalism of Rihanna and Miley Cyrus” (Cragg, 2015). Cragg (2015) describes K-pop as “slick” music, and this is the antithesis of the term ‘gritty’ which has been used to describe Western music. Therefore, K-pop is seen to be more polite than Western music. Barbadian singer, Rihanna is then introduced as a role model for K-pop stars. The author claims K-pop stars need to be ‘grittier’ and ‘more risqué’ like famous Western pop singers where the premise indicates that current K-pop is too self-disciplined and ‘manicured’. In brief, for Western audiences to be as interested as they are in Miley Cyrus or Rihanna, K-pop needs to change their style. In this context, Steven Feld's concept of “interpretive moves” through which the listener links new musical experiences to an accumulated musical experience, can be useful to understand such author's suggestion (Meintjes, 1990, p. 48- 49). A desire to add some characteristics of Western music to K-pop may be derived from the accumulated musical experience of the Western authors.

Despite those slight differences, K-pop is believed to be well received in Europe. When mentioning about K-pop's popularity among European audiences, the data from a K-pop website are used instead of the author's own opinion:

Since Allkpop.com launched in 2007, Han has seen a consistent growth in its European readership, reflecting K-pop's spread from its homeland. “When we first opened our blog, the Europeans made up maybe 1% of the readers,” he says. “Now it's close to 25%.” That spread has been noticed by the big corporations: iTunes started selling K-pop to European audiences early in 2010, and Google is planning to set up a K-pop channel. (Mukasa, 2011)

The author listens to the opinions of Han, the founder of this K-pop fan website. A similar report is forwarded: “The result, according to a survey conducted by the Korean Culture and Information Service, is that there are an estimated 460,000 Korean-wave fans across Europe,

concentrated in Britain and France” (Mukasa, 2011). By using this source from a third party, the author takes as neutral a stand as possible. At the same time, the author reveals that there are a growing number of K-pop fans, which is marked by the “sellout concert in Paris” (McCurry, 2012). Likewise, it is mentioned that big corporations like iTunes and Google are ‘planning to set up a K-pop channel’. To sum up, the news article shows that K-pop stars are helped by the international managers and Korean signers’ fearless and open attitudes helps K-pop’s successful launch into Europe.

3) *K-pop concert: the language and cultural exchanges*

In the article that describes the activities *U-Kiss*, the author focuses on the bands internationally diverse members who can speak English fluently, and notes that the album is recorded in both Korean and English:

If, as some expect, they make it in the US, chat show appearances shouldn't be a problem: several members of the band speak English, including AJ, who recently took time off to study at Columbia University. Their new single, *Stop Girl*, released this month, was recorded in Korean and English, and is being promoted in 10 countries, including the US, China and Japan. (McCurry, 2012)

The band comprise Korean, Korean-American and Thai members, most of whom speak English, and are represented in the US by the same agency that looks after Mariah Carey, Kanye West and Justin Bieber. They are about to embark on a global tour, performing at venues in Europe, North America and Asia. (McCurry, 2012)

Communication in English is believed to aid K-pop stars ‘to embark on a global tour, performing at venues in Europe, North America and Asia’. Cragg (2015) says K-pop songs needs to be in a “chiefly English-language” in order for its album to be globally distributed, and Haynes (2017) expresses “BTS have no plans to release any English-language output”. Usually, when people listen to the music from another country, they do not ask to translate those lyrics into their language. By pressing the importance of English lyrics in the globalized world, the author locates UK at the center of cultural exchanges, which it reminds readers of the “unchallenged centrality of a sovereign Western consciousness” (Said, 1978, p. 8).

At the same time, the news admits K-pop stars are doing quite well to meet global expectations. For example, it is reported that “BTS have expanded their reach via two Japanese-language albums” (Haynes, 2017). Furthermore, Gani (2014) takes an example of the Korean band EXO which has “split into EXO-K who performs in Korean and EXO-M who perform in Mandarin”. Tan (2014) reveals that K-pop star Mak can “speak fluent Mandarin, Cantonese and English, is learning but has yet to master his fourth language”. These examples identify K-pop stars as internationally competitive people who can sing and speak different languages for their global audiences.

Just as K-pop singers manage to speak English, K-pop fans appear to sing in Korean as well. From a sociological perspective, Frith (2002, p. 40) says “we can better understand the domestic relations of intimacy and distance, power and affection, by mapping patterns of musical use”. In like manner, language usage pattern in K-pop concert can be a valuable indicator to understand the intimacy between Korean singers and foreign audience groups. Hunt (2016) describes a scene of language exchanges: “[...] it’s clear that some of these devout fans know the words, if not what they mean: aside from a couple of songs with English-language choruses (“the roof is on fire!”), the groups mostly sing and rap in Korean”. Thus, K-pop performance is seen to break language boundary and to increase the cultural interaction among various social participants.

The interests of *The Guardian* in spotting the cultural exchanges are continued as below. The article introduces a scene where K-pop stars are eating Western foods and giving their performances to the West:

It’s part of a surreal cultural exchange – west meets east, east eats western meat – going on at the contemporary arts centre Carriageworks tonight. The City of Sydney is celebrating the lunar New Year with a K-pop Party, featuring the double act of JJCC and the six-piece Boyfriend live in concert and conversation, wrangled by SBS PopAsia. (Hunt, 2016)

Tonight’s crowd is the most diverse I’ve seen at such a concert, across age, race and gender. By contrast, the tens of thousands at 1D’s Sydney stadium show last year broadly fell into two categories: female fans of up to 25, and their parents. (Hunt, 2016)

K-pop performance seems to bring ‘a surreal cultural exchange’ to the West and a diverse group of people ‘across age, race, and gender’ are now interested in following K-pop. The journalist Hunt regards herself as one of K-pop’s audience members like any other female fan. The description of K-pop fans in this passage is identical to how Haynes (2017) describes: K-pop is loved “by no means just among young women”. Still, the author is expecting to see a blend of the audiences and an active cultural exchange in K-pop concerts. Here, a notion of ‘multiculturalism’ can be taken into account. Multiculturalism in Australia is ideologically inscribed in the core of the ‘new Australia’, and it is considered to be “a form of symbolic politics aimed at redefining national identity” (Ang & Stratton, 1998, p. 22). According to Australian scholar Ghassan Hage (1994), the discourse of multiculturalism revels in the enrichment provided by a plurality of cultures within the country. In other words, the idea of ‘west meets east’ meets Australia’s interest in joining in the chorus of "celebrating our cultural diversity" (Ang, 1996, p. 39).

2. K-pop stars: Artistic Innovators

1) Demonstrating many talents

The Guardian columnist emphasizes the multifaceted talents of K-pop stars. It puts: “K-pop stars can often sing and dance. SHINee, who were in some ways the Korean One Direction, have some pretty awesome choreography and a ridiculous number of outfit changes” (Gani, 2014). When K-pop shows are illustrated as a combination of good looks, good music, and unique dance styles, the opinion is posed by the author himself as if he is one of K-pop fans. McCurry (2012) depicts Korean band 2PM as the “alpha males” with “impressive six-packs”, “unforgettable sing-a-long chorus” and “edgier rap repertoire”. He views such a set of visuals and vocal talents “have given us the smash pop hit” and broadly appealed to the UK audiences (McCurry, 2012).

As a member of K-pop’s audience, which is also confirmed in other text, the author shows

good knowledge regarding some K-pop stars. Haynes (2017) explains that “Their rivals EXO started out with 12 members split into two sub-groups. Their other rivals, the girlband Twice, have nine members” (Haynes, 2017). Unless the author is really interested in K-pop himself, such detailed information would have not been known. In other words, *The Guardian* invites field experts in K-pop or North Korea to write detailed descriptions about K-pop.

K-pop stars are acknowledged to employ a comprehensive understanding of their music. According to the descriptions, K-pop stars do not just sing, they compose their own music which adds enrichment to their songs: “Past failures aside, Beast are a talented bunch. They wrote all of the songs on their newest album, *Midnight Sun*” (McCurry, 2012). Here, the author writes approvingly of talents of Korean band Beast who continuously cultivates and exercise their talents regardless of the past failures. Also, female Korean singers Hyorin’s husky voice is believed to make her song soulful: “Hyorin, has been likened to Beyoncé for her husky voice, incredible range and soulful contributions to songs that, unusually perhaps for this genre, deal as much with falling out of love as falling in love” (McCurry, 2012). According to Frith (1995, p. 1), “voice seems particularly expressive of the body: it gives the listener unmediated access to it”. Therefore, K-pop singers’ soulful voice gives access to the serious emotion and body expression of the singer.

Gani (2014) introduces Korean singer G-dragon as: “The 25 year old genre-masher, songwriter, producer and front man of group Big Bang is a K-pop juggernaut”. The age of G-dragon has been revealed to show that young Korean singers can cover a lot of career responsibilities. In the same manner, the author in *The Sun* regards the singing of K-pop stars to be as good as UK counterparts. The article describes: “Honey G has divided the nation, with many boycotting X Factor due to her continuing success – and lack of singing talent” (Gritt, 2016). In its original texts, two Honey G’s- one in UK and one in Korea are introduced, and the author interprets that the success of Honey G in UK is threatened due to her ‘lack of singing talent’. The UK’s Honey G is served as a constitutive outside to reveal the comparatively moderate performance of Korean pop bands.

Finally, the notion ‘complete show’ is introduced by the *The Guardian* columnist:

Maxime Paquet, its president, sees K-pop's strength as being its refusal to stand still. The average K-pop event, he says, is "close to what we can call 'total entertainment' ... K-pop is not only music, but a complete show. K-pop groups are managed by smart entertainment companies that invest a lot in artistic innovation. Every month, new groups appear and disappear." (Mukasa, 2011)

K-pop stars are described as artistic innovators who provide a complete stage show. It is mentioned that the K-pop world is full of changes and competitions. Moreover, the authors underline the fashion changes as seen in the Gani (2014) texts: "ridiculous number of outfit changes" Mukasa posits K-pop's strength comes from "its refusal to stand still" (Mukasa, 2011). As "new groups appear and disappear" every month in their competitions, a mastery of a variety of skills seems to be a necessary condition to survive in the highly competitive K-pop industry. It is usually the case that "high market concentration leads to homogeneity and standardization, while low market concentration (competitive market) leads to innovation and diversity" (Lopes, 1992, p. 56). K-pop is marked by the low market concentration in the United Kingdom, thus its diversification and innovation seem to be crucial for K-pop to gain its competitiveness.

2) *Working hard to achieve perfection*

A lot of effort is assumed to have been invested to make K-pop performance complete. *The Guardian's* columnist sees the combination of good hairstyles, dance, and vocal harmonies as the products of their hard work:

Architectural hairstyles, high-energy dance moves, rapping and vocal harmonies: it all looks like hard work from performers programmed to entertain. (Hunt, 2016)

At the end of each song, each member's faces are slick as though coated with Vaseline – one passes around paper towels. (Hunt, 2016)

It contrasts with the front-facing, painstaking enthusiasm of JJCC, but after close to five years at the K-pop coalface – and many more besides in the industry – Boyfriend still put on an engaging show. Because how could they not? Two hours of song, dance and "fan service" from performers programmed to entertain – fans couldn't help but feel they'd had their piece of the pie. (Hunt, 2016)

The passage introduces a scene where K-pop singers ‘pass around paper towels’ to wipe their faces. At this point, a conceptual metaphor is used to say that each member’s faces is sweaty ‘as though coated with Vaseline’. Also, the passive verb ‘(that were) programmed to entertain’ was used to emphasize the engagement of the planned efforts designed to please the audience. Thus, the subject position of the K-pop stars is described as the entertainer. The author views K-pop idols’ ‘fan service’ as a unique contribution to its complete show. The author could have simply described that artists provide a fan service. Nevertheless, the author repeats by using the term ‘programmed to entertain’ in order to indicate that human agents intended to add the extra service to give a more satisfying experience.

Another author in *The Guardian* mentions the harsh training processes that K-pop stars have to go through. It is reported that K-pop groups “rarely receives positive feedback from their manager” and the author sees such a tough environments “a distinctly East Asian trait” (Tan, 2014). The interesting part comes when the photograph of the author reveals the author is Asian. Having an Asian author saying this, makes the statement more convincing and suggests this is genuinely true of East Asian culture. Therefore, one can recognize that the news uses K-pop as a source to understand Korean pop singers but also to understand East Asian culture as a whole. In addition, the author compares K-pop training with “a soldier in training for an elite commando squad” (Tan, 2014). Here, the article formulates a chain of equivalence between South Korean soldiers and K-pop singers. It is assumed that the K-pop world is as strict as any other ‘commando squad’ whose aim is to nurture the elite through its ‘Spartan training’.

Painstaking efforts to achieve K-pop’s mastery, in many fields, is said to increase the potential applications for K-pop music. First, K-pop is seen to encompass various musical genres. The author posits that Big Bang’s “musical range is equally eclectic, covering R&B, hip-hop, house, electro and pop” (McCurry, 2012). While this opinion reflects the author’s own view, another author Mukasa (2011) quotes a co-founder of the South Korean pop culture blog site Paul Han to define K-pop as: “fun music, with a fusion of many genres” and “electro-driven bubblegum pop; sometimes it’s sprinkled with semi-nonsense English lyrics;

sometimes there's an added R&B sway". K-pop composers are treated like talented chefs who sprinkle extra elements into songs and performances to make K-pop more appetizing. Thus, *The Guardian* reproduces interpretative repertoires that K-pop is a synthesis of many genres that combines R&B, hip-hop, and others.

Second, the author views that K-pop is exchanging positive influences with Korean drama. Mukasa (2011) suggests: "K-pop has benefited from the rise of these dramas, because music is a key part of these shows [...] Key songs are repeated in Korean dramas, giving them exposure every bit as potent as a video in heavy rotation". From this perspective, K-pop is understood through other Korean cultural products such as Korean dramas. With this regard, K-pop and K-drama have an inseparable tie and they produce the long-term win-win strategies to promote each genre. Considering the efforts which have been put into promote K-pop music, Haynes (2017) views that "it's no wonder the South Korean seven-piece beat Justin Bieber to a Billboard music award".

Third, the efforts of K-pop stars do not cease at making fine music, but their efforts extend to actively promoting K-pop culture both offline and online. *The Guardian* takes an example of the K-pop, fan supporting club based in Paris which is organized by "The Korean Connection [...] established with the backing of the state-run Korean Cultural Centre, which arranges K-pop club nights, dance classes, and trips to Korea, and spreads the word about K-pop through social networking sites" (Mukasa, 2011). Gani (2014) comes up with an example of the online social marketing as well: "They do great music reviews and vlogs and have a Music Monday K-pop chart on their website, where fans can vote for their top track of the week". One can clearly see that top-down management has systematically promoted K-pop culture to the world. Also, one can note that the author is well acquainted with K-pop herself, so she reports about the recent updates of the K-pop fan club site using her own voice: "Although allkpop.com has been around since 2007 and feeds you with the latest K-pop news, the best site (at least for English speakers) is probably Eat your Kimchi" (Gani, 2014). It is assumed that writers share, more or less, equal knowledge level of K-pop fans, and views that completeness of K-pop is well supported by the follow-up promotion strategies.

The Sun is slightly different in that its author views Psy's success as a "Korean one hit

wonder” followed by luck (Gritt, 2016). One of the authors in *The Guardian* has a similar view when he puts: “Other K-pop artists might feel aggrieved at his rapid, effortless rise, appearances on the US TV chatshow circuit and myriad copycat routines” (McCurry, 2012). Both authors from *The Sun* and *The Guardian* hint that there may be more variables than just the efforts that make certain K-pop singers become more popular than others, so the author calls it an ‘effortless rise’. However, while *The Guardian* still maintains a focus on K-pop stars’ effort-making process from the fan perspective, *The Sun* is much more interested in focusing on other celebrities who follow K-pop. First, here is the example of *The Guardian*’s narration on the human story of Korean band, Beast:

The six-member boyband came in for some unkind press coverage when they debuted in 2009. South Korean media pointed out that the members had all had solo careers or been part of other, unsuccessful, groups. Despite their status as a "recycled" act, Beast set about proving their doubters wrong with a combination of self-belief and sheer hard work. (McCurry, 2012)

The author points out that Beast have proved their doubters wrong ‘with a combination of self-belief and sheer hard work’. It is assumed that it must have been especially difficult due to the previous ‘unkind press coverage’ in the past for Beast to gain awareness. Due to this reason, the author gives credit to Beast which stood up with its ‘recycled act’. These texts add human character to K-pop band members who can sometimes collapse and be ‘unsuccessful’ from time-to-time. In this manner, K-pop stars are not articulated as a hero who lives in one’s imagination; rather, the article’s sharing of the stars’ struggles adds a human character to the K-pop stars and easily relates them to ordinary readers.

On the other hand, *The Sun* veils the presence of K-pop stars and it emphasizes Korean pop star’s dances are being followed by other local celebrities, which turns K-pop stars into an imaginary hero. The article describes: “New England boss Sam Allardyce breaks out in Gangnam Style dance to show his nifty footwork.” (Wright, 2016). One can notice that Psy’s dance is articulated as a supporting signifier that can be used to prove an English football player’s ‘nifty footwork’. Another article of *The Sun* shows a similar approach when it reports about the Gangnam style dance by “former Labour politician Ed Balls on the 2016 series of Strictly Come Dancing” (Newton, 2017). The author then continues to list: “Which

other celebrities have performed Gangnam Style?”, and it introduces that “Former Prime Minister David Cameron and Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson are said to have danced to the song at a Tory Party conference in 2012” (Newton, 2017). Thus, the author assumes that K-pop is interesting enough for “countless celebrities” to follow its move.

3. Sensational performance

1) Attractive visuals and sexual appeals

As Nye (2008, p. 95) points out, “soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument [...] It is also the ability to entice and attract. In behavioral terms, soft power is attractive power”. In its behavioral terms, K-pop singers possess soft power, and such power comes from their good visuals. It is equally important to note that the ability to entice is not confined to female figures. Hynes (2017) observes a male Korean star from the perspective of the paparazzi, and reports he looks attractive even off the stage:

The band also has looks on their side. At the Billboard music awards, band member Kim Seok-jin went viral as “third one from the left” when he was spotted in a red carpet photo by non K-pop fans. This was two years after he became “car door guy” at an Asian awards show simply for looking really good while getting out of a car. (Haynes, 2017)

The passive verb tense ‘was spotted’ shows that non K-pop fans find South Korean stars attractive. McCurry (2012) sees K-pop stars’ good appearance helps them to stand out on the global stage: “highly stylised, impeccably sculptured boy and girl bands made the leap to the US and Europe the hard way” and “this girl group have matched their stunning physical presence”. These description implies Korean stars’ physical appearance is not a natural one, but it has been ‘sculptured’ and produced.

Several attempts that aim to improve K-pop stars appearance are introduced in *The Guardian*. Lee (2015) adds: “big-budget music videos” contribute to making Korean bands’

even better looks. The unique fashion style is sought after by K-pop idols as well. K-pop stars are seen as fashionista: “For all his musical skills it’s probably his hair and fashion-sense that’s most influential – the androgynous star recently graced the front cover of Italian Vogue and had a front row seat at the YSL show at Paris fashion week last month” (Gani, 2014). Korean stars’ “musical skills’ are not the main interest of foreign audiences. Rather, it is K-pop stars’ ‘fashion-sense’ that seems matters to Western audiences. Hunt (2016) shares the interest in visual characteristics of K-pop stars: “South Korean boyband JJCC are all razor-sharp cheekbones and architectural hairstyles, dressed in the kind of fashionable get-ups you or I might struggle to put on by ourselves”. This time, the author regards the K-pop stars’ hairstyle and fashion is unusual and different from the daily looks of Western people. Another author describes k-pop stars as having “fluorescent hairstyles” so that their performances look as if: “K-pop’s explosion of colour, crazy fashion and elaborate pyrotechnics looks set to light up Austin’s South by Southwest festival this March” (Gani, 2014). From such a viewpoint, K-pop star’s fashion adds a unique layer to their performances. In all, the columnist Cragg (2015) defines K-pop as “flash and slick, all futuristic swirls of DayGlo pop”.

The Korean scholar Lee Hee Eun (2007, p. 132) gives a rationale to explain why Korean pop singers do care much about their visuals. She finds “those singers who merely possess singing talent are less welcomed by television than those who have ‘visually’ entertaining talent”. Thus, K-pop stars’ visuals are perceived as the product of both personal and entertainment company’s efforts to meet the expectation demanded by Korean society.

Additionally, McCurry (2012) is interested in the sex appeal of some K-pop’s female bands, and pays attention to the certain K-pop singers who show their sexual charms without hesitation:

Unlike their saccharine Japanese counterparts 2NE1 don't attempt to hide their sexuality, but balance it with an "assertiveness" that Scobie likens to the Spice Girls, "minus the bad singing". (McCurry, 2012)

Sistar: The group were the centre of controversy when their saucy "butt dance" for How Dare You was banned on South Korean TV. (McCurry, 2012)

From a feminist perspective, popular songs “express dominant sexual ideologies through their recurrently exploitative images of women” (Goddard, Pollock & Fudger, 1997, p. 143). As sexy dancing style is ‘banned on South Korean TV’, overt sexual images are not officially welcomed to South Korea. For this reason, it is legitimate to say that the Korean girl bands such as 2NE1 and Sistar do not necessarily reflect the images of average Korean women. Still, the author is interested in young and sexy K-pop stars who confront the controversy posed by the conservative Korean society. According to Willoughby (2006, p. 103-104), “In 1996, sex appeal was engendered with a look of demure sophistication, while in 2003 it was far more blatant” and showcase of sexually charged girl archetype is now received as product of a “dream-world of male producers, managers, and media makers”. Therefore, it can be construed that K-pop female singers reflect South Korea’s modern expression of sexuality while representing the Korean male producers’ dream-world.

2) *Energetic and controversial music*

Apart from South Korean stars’ visuals, another point addressed by various authors is K-pop’s high energy. Haynes (2017) introduces K-pop as “the exhaustingly energetic world” and Gani (2014) explains “Girls’ Generation won YouTube’s best video award last year, for their hyper-energised hit I Got a Boy”. In the similar manner, McCurry (2012) describes Korean bands “specialize in high-energy dance routines” and “Heartbreak is the thread that runs through most of their music” (McCurry, 2012). Frith (1995, p. 2) suspects “certain physical experiences, particularly extreme feelings, are given vocal sounds beyond our conscious control”. Thus, one can interpret that K-pop liberates its performers to express their intensive feelings and allows them to lose their conscious control via energetic physical movement.

Another British newspaper, *The Sun*, mentions about the man who died after following Psy’s energetic dance:

A DAD-OF-THREE collapsed and died from a heart attack at his office Christmas party – after dancing to Gangnam Style. Eamonn Kilbride, 46, had been doing the energetic horse-riding style moves to Korean pop sensation Psy’s No1 tune with his workmates

but seconds later suddenly dropped to the floor. [...] His wife Julie was with him, celebrating her birthday, at the Whitehall Country Club in Darwen, Lancashire, when he began to complain of chest pains. She desperately tried to revive him with CPR. (The Sun, 2012)

Psy's 'horse-riding style moves' is believed to cause the old man's pains in his chest. In other words, K-pop's hyper-energy is seen to "connect with the bodies of those listening" (Fast, 2001, p. 114). Its title: "Man dies of heart attack after doing Gangnam Style dance at Xmas party" makes readers to approve that K-pop dance nearly killed man (The Sun, 2012). As "the bodily gestures demand an embodied response", the passage dramatizes a scene where the audience is compelled to respond to recorded music by moving his body (Auslander, 2004, p. 5).

The Sun is also interested in how K-pop is different from the standards of North Korea. The author Sam Webb is not North Korean himself, but he imagines what North Korea would think about K-pop. North Korea's "regime is trying to crack down on images, photos, books, music and movies that are decadent and suggestive" but K-pop is said to be "popular despite the draconian punishments" in North Korea (Webb, 2017). There must be some decadent content in K-pop performances that are not acceptable in North Korea, but the columnist does not comment on what kind of content elements are considered decadent. As the author is not North Korean himself, his personal opinion on K-pop content could have provided some interesting insights.

The author in *The Guardian* invites Jeon Son Lee, who is the North Korean, to write the article. Lee (2015) comments: "North Koreans tend to pay more attention to the lyrics and the vocals, than to how the singers are dressed", indicating the contrasting interests between North and South. Though K-pop videos are "fresh and shocking" to most of North Koreans, they still "watch them in secret" (Lee, 2015). Such a notion is introduced by two other scholars; sociologist Tia deNora and the psychologist John A. Sloboda, who regard music as a 'personal tool'. According to their opinions, today's music has become crucial to the ways in which people organize their identity and their autonomy (Sloboda & O'Neill, 2001;

DeNora, 1999). In other words, favoritism toward South Korean pop songs can be treated as North Koreans' wish to establish their autonomous identities.

Likewise, *The Guardian* views Psy's song is a viral and sensational one: "Then along comes a chubby 34-year-old armed with a catchy tune, an endearing, if hopelessly daft, dance, and becomes an overnight viral sensation"(McCurry, 2012). According to McCurry (2012), Psy is a sensational character whose 'catchy tune' has made his song become viral overnight. It is suggested that exaggerated and unusual characters described with words such as 'daft' and 'endearing' received with shocks. Then the discourse analysis brings a moment in which K-pop singer's sensational performances wind up surprising both North Korea and Western countries. Rather than seeing K-pop's craze in the negative perspective, the columnists articulates K-pop's sensational factor as the positive drive that moves conservative society and impresses the world. Finally, Je Son Lee concludes: "North Korea's teenagers might be dancing to EXID's Up & Down at this very moment" (Lee, 2015).

4. *Political Propaganda*

Frith (1989, p. 81) claims that "songs are, in this account, a form of propaganda". In line with his thought, K-pop is viewed as a form of propaganda that South Korea uses to incite the minds of North Koreans. It is disputed that radio broadcasting K-pop into North Korea announces a new type of war, assuming that K-pop contains South Korea's own political ideologies:

The South broadcasts Voice of Freedom radio, one of three stations that transmits to the DPRK, and one of the oldest. "It usually broadcasts about ethnic homogeneity, the superiority of the South Korean system, and various types of K-pop," said an insider, speaking on condition of anonymity. (Choi, 2015)

Buddhism, weather advice and music feature among programmes that sparked latest escalation of tensions between Seoul and Pyongyang. (Choi, 2015)

The chain of equivalence is formed between the 'superiority of the South Korean system' and K-pop. Even though the speaker is not known, due to anonymity reason, the author still

attempts to express the insights gained from this anonymous person. Combined with religion, K-pop is believed to have caused an ‘escalation of tensions’ between South and North Korea. The author does not mention what kind of K-pop music sparks the tensions, so it is generally received that ‘various types of K-pop’ can bring controversy to North Korea.

Mukasa (2011) also makes an attempt to identify K-pop as propaganda. In this case, although the words have been borrowed from the defense ministry official, the author himself speaks out and argues K-pop songs are South Korea’s propaganda songs:

We have selected a diverse range of the most recent popular hits to make it interesting,” a defence ministry official said in a briefing for local reporters. Here is a guide to the propaganda playlist Seoul began blasting across the border on Friday in response to Pyongyang’s nuclear test earlier this week: (Mukasa, 2011)

The given texts introduce the scene where the officials have carefully selected favorable K-pop songs to effectively react against ‘Pyongyang’s nuclear test’. The author invents a strong title: “Bang bang bang! The K-pop songs being blasted into North Korea” and the term ‘Bang bang bang’ reminds one of a gun-shooting, but is also a sign of musical rhythm and even hints towards the K-Pop group Big Bang (The Guardian, 2016a). In this title, the conceptual metaphor has been used to show how South Korea wields power via its ‘most recent popular hits’ while North Korea is simply building its military force. Detailed descriptions follow below:

One of the most viewed K-pop videos last year, boy band Big Bang’s dance hit offers a cheery cross-border chorus of: “Like you’ve been shot/Bang Bang Bang”. South Korea uses propaganda to boast of its democracy and culture, but the defence ministry says K-pop songs will also pique interests of the listeners in the North. (The Guardian, 2016a)

In this passage, the author reveals his own view and says South Korea ‘uses propaganda to boast of its democracy and culture’. It then admits the opinion of the defense ministry is different from the author’s point of view as the ministry claims K-pop is merely to ‘pique interests’ of the North Korean people. From the author’s perspective, K-pop does more than just stimulate the interests of people; it is used to show off South Korea’s ideology which includes advanced culture and democracy. This is in line with another author’s remarks who sees Korean cultural products as “cultural Trojan horses, sneaking visions of the South into

the tightly controlled North” (Lee, 2015).

K-pop is seen as a “unique homegrown weapon” that South Korea uses against North Korea (The Guardian, 2016a). The author marks: “Following a nuclear test in January, Pyongyang declared it had been driven to “the brink of war” by a barrage of pop music being pumped across the demilitarised zone by a fleet of loudspeakers installed by South Koreans” (Cummings, 2016). Here, ‘a fleet of loudspeakers’ has been installed after North Korea’s nuclear test. Therefore, Korean popular songs are not just played without a particular reason, but South Korean officials intend to use them to “control the hearts and minds of its citizens” (Cummings, 2016). The journalist then assumes ‘the brink of war’ has been declared due to an influx of South Korean music. The passive verb ‘being pumped’ emphasizes the deliberate efforts of South Korea’s government which deploys K-pop for political and diplomatic reasons. In conclusion, *The Guardian* interprets: “In response to Pyongyang’s nuclear test, South Korea is broadcasting propaganda across the border – including its favorite pop hits” (The Guardian, 2016a).

A similar idea is suggested by *The Sun*, but its author uses a term ‘psychological warfare’: “A particular favorite was their 2009 hit single Tell Me Your Wish, which was played on repeat as a brutal form of psychological warfare” (Michael, 2017). The passive verb tense ‘was played on repeat’ demonstrates that South Korea is constantly making attempts to influence North Korea. Thus, the author views Korea’s decision to turn on K-pop songs on their loud speakers as ‘psychological warfare’ toward the North. *The Sun* defines K-pop as “Creepy X-Files-style music” which is “played over loudspeakers to wake up North Koreans” (Michael, 2017). Michael (2017) strongly asserts K-pop is South Korea’s “political propaganda”, and such a view excludes the opinion of others. *The Sun* maintains its watchful attitude not to be influenced by the propaganda and it tries to warn its audience by justifying that K-pop is a ‘brutal form’ of South Korea’s political tactics.

The Sun supposes South Korea takes advantage of their good looking female stars. Yet, it is significant to have an understanding on how *The Guardian* describes North Korea, as it provides knowledge on gender use: “Patriotic songs celebrating the “exploding mental strength of our million citizens” are a regular fixture of state-run radio and TV, with Kim

even announcing his own theme tune in 2012 and founding his own all-female pop group” (Cummings, 2016). This sentence can be seen to argue that South Korea and North Korea are both similar for using their songs to influence the ‘mental strength’ of their citizens. In the same texts, North Korea’s president is reported to be ‘founding his own all-female pop group’, implying the female exploitation in its political setting. Such gender usage is hinted in *The Sun*, but this time it involves a case of South Korea:

The eight-member girl band – whose music is said to be a mix of bubblegum pop and electropop – may not sound like a weapon of war. But that is exactly what the South Korean army turned them into when they blasted their hits across the border into the North. (Michael, 2017)

Seoul then used them to blast out Girl’s Generation’s songs at all times of the day and night. (Michael, 2017)

This is the South Korean girl band that nearly started World War III when their songs were blasted across the border with the North on giant speakers. (Michael, 2017)

The seemingly innocent Korean girl bands carry their military mission toward North Korean soldiers. Interestingly, it does not seem like it is the girl band’s own intention to sing toward North Korea. The author uses metonym to emphasize that it is Korean government that uses their females for their political aims. Thus, the girls’ sweet ‘bubblegum pop’ is equated with ‘a weapon of a war’. Such a line of thought coincides with Sheila Whiteley’s criticism who claims “women are abused on the basis of gender” by popular music (Whiteley, 2011, p. 157).

5. Music that brings Soft Power

1) Changing the national image

In *The Guardian*, K-pop is introduced as a good example of the South Korea’s soft power. The American political scientist Joseph Nye stresses “a country’s soft power rests on its

resources of culture, values, and policies” and defines soft power as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment” (Nye, 2008, p. 94). The author indicates the South Korean government uses K-pop for its diplomatic efforts with a notion of “hallyu diplomacy”. In addition, the article quotes words from *The New Yorker* to give the opinions of ordinary people who have a stereotypical image of fancy lifestyles. All these quotations implicate the author is neutrally standing and listening to the opinions of other people:

In exceptional cases, soft power can rebrand a nation. Since the late 90s, a new wave of South Korean culture, called hallyu, has transformed the country's standing in Asia to such an extent that the foreign ministry talks of "hallyu diplomacy". Exported TV dramas such as *Jumong*, and K-pop hits such as *Gangnam Style* have done more for the country's soft power than any number of heavy-handed marketing campaigns. According to the *New Yorker*: "Hallyu has erased South Korea's regional reputation as a brutish emerging industrial nation where everything smelled of garlic and kimchi, and replaced it with images of prosperous, cosmopolitan life." (Lynskey, 2013)

K-pop is taken as a case that can ‘rebrand a nation’. The author uses the active verb tense ‘erase’ to indicate K-pop has constructed the new reputation for South Korea which is now characterized by ‘images of prosperous, cosmopolitan life’. The concept of ‘city branding’ helps to understand South Korea’s improved reputation. City branding used to be linked to the flight from an industrial past (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996), but is now associated with enhancing the urban landscape with globally branded arts and entertainment destinations (Hannigan, 1998). K-pop is seen as an example of city branding, which aids South Korea to gain the sophisticated images of the urban landscape.

In addition, the author uses K-pop to “warn against British complacency” (Lynskey, 2013). The title of the article claims “Britain's soft power is greater than *Gangnam Style* – so appreciate it”, and its subtitle alarms: “while Asian nations pour cash into promoting culture, the UK is slashing budgets. We shouldn't take our position for granted” (Lynskey, 2013). On one hand, this statement implies Korean pop culture is not necessarily better than the UK’s music culture, but cutting the budgets that support cultural development may cause the UK to fall behind Asian nations like Korea in terms of cultural capital. The author views that the

reason for K-pop's soft power is due to South Korea's considerable amount of investment. To summarize, the author assumes Korea is making the best use out of its culture, and believes "Asia's obsession with extending" one's culture can change the reputation of the country through its soft power and extend their influence on the global stage, perhaps even beyond that of the UK.

At the same time, the national pride and sense of superiority are found in the description that claims Britain's soft power is greater than Korea's soft power. De Figueiredo and Elkins (2003) have analyzed the effects of national pride, and found out national pride has an ideological basis in Europe. This finding helps one to understand the basic concept of Orientalism where the discursive construction of the Oriental subtends the "idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures", (Said, 1978, p. 7).

Another aspect that is worth mentioning is ticket prices for K-pop concerts, because it is a good indicator of K-pop's soft power in a practical sense. The article describes: "Tickets to K-pop Party started at \$70, but \$120 got you a "high touch" and people don't seem to mind much about the ticket price and they "started queuing outside Carriageworks in the morning for a start time of 7pm" (Hunt, 2016). Mukasa (2011) puts: "This past year has already seen several major K-pop events in the west [...] selling thousands of tickets for shows in Paris, Los Angeles and New York. [...] with fans paying up to £65 a ticket" (Mukasa, 2011). Both authors view K-pop expensive, but worthwhile for many audiences. There is no coercion or exerted force to cause such acceptance, but it audiences become naturally blinded by the cultural power of K-Pop and will spend their money on K-pop concerts without careful consideration.

As a result, K-pop is known to bring tangible fortunes to South Korea: "K-pop is a multibillion-dollar cultural phenomenon in east and south-east Asia, grossing by Billboard estimates as much as \$4.8bn in the first half of 2012 alone" (Hunt, 2016). It seems that K-pop is a cross-national phenomenon, whose profits reach the multi-billion dollar mark. Still, the texts only include 'east and south-east Asia', implying K-pop still needs some time to see the

significant economic profits in Europe or Americas.

Another columnist views Korean pop culture's capitalization as mainly created from the major Korean Entertainment companies that are in control of nurturing the top K-pop stars:

As well as clocking up big numbers band member-wise, the K-pop industry is worth billions. The biggest labels are currently SM Entertainment – who kicked off K-pop in the 1990s and have a market capitalisation of \$660mn. They're home to SHINee and Girl's Generation. There's also YG Entertainment, who take care of Psy, Big Bang and 1TYM. Groups are often put together when their members are young: G-Dragon and Taeyang both started receiving training from their label YG Entertainment at the age of 11. The journey can be long: Jokwon of 2AM was a trainee at JYP Entertainment for seven years before his debut. (Gani, 2014)

Gani (2014) sees K-pop is 'worth billions', and posits the presence of a capitalist monopoly controlled by Korea's big entertainment companies. The way of describing in this article identifies K-pop stars as the powerless group who are thoroughly managed to satisfy commercial interests. Thus, entertainment companies are articulated as the incubator that 'takes care of' the potentially promising K-pop stars in the pursuit of long-term profits. In addition, the analytic concept of nominalization: 'groups were often put together when their members are young' demonstrates that K-pop stars are passive young people, who are arranged by top managers who do not respect the stars' own voice. Such an analysis is supported by the research finding of Leung (2012, p. 30) who criticizes the "rampant international problem of piracy" in Korean entertainment companies. This treatment of young talent indicates that K-Pop does not seek, primarily, to promote the artistic flourishing of aspiring young artists, but rather seeks to manage, maintain and mass-produce K-Pop and K-Pop stars as to secure two forms of capital. Therefore, the top-down management style of K-Pop is effective at producing tangible capital for for select corporations, and Korea's soft power is seen to be 'made' by managerial efforts.

2) Power coming from differences

The stereotypical imagery of Korean men is formulated based on observation of the K-pop

star. The author believes: “Psy, rather than breaking the K-pop mould, had reinforced stereotypes of socially challenged, middle-aged east Asian men” (McCurry, 2012). According to Frith (1989, p. 79), “the words of pop songs express general social attitudes” in that they “articulate the problems caused by social change”. In this vein, Psy has transformed imagery of the average East Asian men, and reflects the social change that takes place in Korean society.

The author finds some exotic things about K-pop. First, the Korean band’s name and the number of its member seem to be a surprise to the author:

K-pop groups are fond of names full of acronyms – take 2NE1 (New Evolution of the 21st Century), B.A.P (Best Absolute Perfect) and BTOB (Born to Beat). They stand apart from the rest of the world’s pop groups for many reasons, but one of the key differences is that there are so many members in each group. (Gani, 2014)

According to the texts, groups with names full of acronyms are unusual outside Korea, so the author finds Korean band names very interesting. The author then unveils all the full meanings of these acronyms which demonstrate a serious interest in K-pop band members. The author interprets the reasons for K-pop stars to stand-out comes from the ‘differences’ they have. Here, the terms ‘many reasons’ and ‘key differences’ are articulated under the chain of equivalence, and they hint that there are many differences between K-pop bands and Western bands. One of the key differences is said to involve ‘many members in each group’ in Korean band. From the author’s perspective, having such a large number of members in one K-pop group is received as a shock, and the author believes such attributes makes K-pop ‘stand apart from the rest of the world’s pop groups’.

For this reason, Gani (2014) regards maintaining Koreanness is crucial to sustain Korea’s popular culture. The author first questions whether K-pop’s increased activities at global festival sites are really welcomed by K-pop fans. The author assumes part of the fun of listening to K-pop comes from one’s challenge to understand its unique style:

K-pop looks set to become more important with increased exposure at events like SXSW. But will the genre be forced to accommodate its growing English-speaking fan-base? I suspect that will leave loyal fans, who have enjoyed indulging in the quirky and alternative side of things, feeling a bit bitter.” (Gani, 2014)

Where else can you see owls, choreographed Streetfighter moves and bopping furry monsters? There's a huge fusion of genres going on in most K-pop videos, but part of the fun is surrendering to the fact that you may never properly understand them. (Gani, 2014)

The author assumes that European audiences love to experience the “alternative side of things” when they listen to K-pop, experiencing things that are not found in their everyday music. Thus, the author views forcing K-pop to ‘accommodate its English-speaking fan-base’ may take away K-pop’s original identity. It is implied that the exotic culture behind K-pop scenes cannot always be understood by foreign audiences, but such a difficulty can be ‘part of the fun’ for listeners. As a result, another columnist suggests: “Bored by Cowell pop? Try K-pop” (Mukasa, 2011). The analysis reveals that K-pop contains something quite different from what people are used to hearing, so K-pop can be a fresh alternative for those who are bored of their music at home.

The Sun is similar in that it deems maintaining the uniqueness of one’s culture as crucially important. In this case, however; the author has a defensive attitude, and wishes to maintain UK culture. The article argues that the two Honey G’s - one a South Korean band the other a rapper on the UK television show X Factor - cannot be equated, and the author talks with pride when reporting of the UK rappers continuation of her cultural roots:

Throughout the history of the show, acts have had to change their name if someone else uses it... until now. (Gritt, 2016)

A show insider told *The Sun* online: “Honey G’s a rapper and these guys make K-Pop – there’s no way they could be confused.” (Gritt, 2016)

It is said that no matter how famous K-pop stars are, “Their (K-pop bands’) existence hasn’t affected Honey G – real name Anna Guilford – who has been allowed to continue to use the moniker “(Gritt, 2016). Though the article appears to talk about the singers’ identical names only, the analysis shows that there is more than the name at stake. It suggests each singer’s musical genre is different so that UK music can go against the ‘history of the show’ which is a “surprising move from producers, who earlier this series forced Brooks Way to

change their name from The Brooks due to copyright infringement” (Gritt, 2016). Both *The Guardian* and *The Sun* interpret K-pop and UK music are functionally different.

IV. Conclusion

This research has aimed to understand the portrayal of K-pop in the United States and the United Kingdom. It is significant to accept that the research into the music industry requires an 'interpretative approach to the production of culture' (Jensen, 1984). As Line Grenier has argued, music should be considered as essentially “the result of a constant process of iteration between various actors who, through their respective practices, construct music as socially and culturally meaningful realities” (Grenier, 1990, p. 231). In other words, the discourse on K-pop and perception on K-pop are constructed based on various actors' socio-cultural practices. For this reason, some results derived from the discourse analysis have been linked with the US and the UK's socio-cultural practices or ideologies.

One of the key differences between US and UK discourse is that the US newspapers tend to claim that K-pop is the US' product while the UK newspapers focus on differences between K-pop and music groups in the UK. In the US newspapers, K-pop is introduced as Korea's “long live imports” which has been heavily influenced by US music genres and concepts such as the boyband are said to be first produced by the “American pop machine” (Caramanica, 2015). Consequently, the American author Caramanica (2015) concludes K-pop could be “just as easily be billed as American pop”, and nationalism becomes the marker of certainty in this discourse. According to Hall (1993, p. 357), nationalism “affirms monoculturalism and restores the racially coded image of 'Americanness' as a national identity” (Hall, 1993, p. 357). From the US perspective, K-pop is a sign of ‘Americanness’ that reflects American cultural influence.

The national pride can be found when the author ridicules Psy in the US newspapers. According to Leonie Huddy and Nadia Khatib, “patriotism is commonly tinged with political

ideology in the United States” (Huddy & Khatib, 2007, p. 63). By definition, the patriotism is a “degree of love for and pride in one’s nation” and “support for patriotism is stronger among conservatives than liberals” (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989, p. 271; Conover & Feldman 1987). To support this, when *Fox News* makes criticism on Psy’s song, its author tends to increase people’s awareness on the US military power: “There are tens of thousands who are protecting the South Koreans right now from the North Koreans” (Fox News, 2012d). Therefore, the US is depicted as a colonial bodyguard of South Korea and it helps one to feel the sense of national pride as an American.

Some ideologies may be useful to enhance the understanding of the US and UK discourse on K-pop. First, there is a notion of exceptionalism behind the portrayal of K-pop as US-initiated songs. According to the Australian historian Ian Tyrrell (2009), the United States is often seen as a model which should be emulated by the rest of the world and American exceptionalism endows special character of the US as a unique nation based on democratic ideals and individual liberty. This stance legitimizes a belief that K-pop emulates US’ music genres, and it raises critical questions on whether Korea’s entertainment industry and Korea’s military obligation are allowing one’s liberty. Second, at the heart of using K-pop for business practices lies the foundational notion of capitalism. The American scholar Christopher Conte (2003) describes US as shaped by a capitalist economy- the term first coined by 19th-century social theorist Karl Marx to describe the acquisition of the large amounts of capital by a few. In the capitalist economy, power is concentrated in the small group of wealthy people who aim to maximize profits. This ideology makes sense of demonstrating K-pop as a good marketing tactic, and it allows us to understand the article’s focus and depiction of the single figure Psy as the American upper class.

The UK newspapers find K-pop unique, and see Korean popular culture is characterized by unusual fashion style and a large number of the band members that are not found in the UK. The consideration of K-pop as a different musical genre in UK can be supported by exoticism and orientalism. The word exoticism refers to “things coming from outside that are full of strangeness and unfamiliarity” and it means “a quality of being unusual and attractive” (van der Grijp, 2009, p. 10; Segalen, 2001, p. 18). Orientalism is “an elaboration not only of a

basic geographic distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of ‘interests’” (Said, 1978, p. 12). The UK authors find it interesting to see the unique style of K-pop stars and assume K-pop audiences search for the “alternative side of things” when they listen to K-pop. It is because of the differences that “K-pop stands apart” from any other music genres (Gani, 2014). This is in line with the music scholar Tony Mitchell’s comment on “world music’s inherent invitation to the listener to become lost in an imagined exotic adventure” (Mitchell, 1993, p. 317). This study is limited to the Western discourse, but further research will include the K-pop discourse in the Oriental contexts, which can be used for the comparison with the Western discourse.

According to the perspective of US newspapers, the reason for K-pop turning into a global genre is “mainly because of the broad use of social media”, thus the spread of K-pop is marked by the citizens’ voluntary participation (Choe, 2012). Henry Tajfel (1981), Polish social psychologist, has defined ‘social identity’ as a psychological sense of group attachment and one’s objective membership in the group. Thus, social network channels may not only be useful in sharing information but it may also construct social identities for the K-pop lovers. In the UK, a part of K-pop becoming popular is believed to be the result of the UK’s own choice for liking certain K-pop stars. With this regard, Korean pop star CL is selected and introduced with such details in the UK news article which is not the case of the US, and British figures such as New England boss Sam Allardyce and former Labour politician Ed Balls inform the UK citizens about Psy by following the Gangnam style dance. As suggested by Said (1978, p. 7), the discursive construction of the Oriental subtends the “idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying ‘us’ Europeans as against all those non-Europeans” (Said, 1978, p. 7). In this regard, the UK authors seem to share ‘our’ preferences of the certain K-pop stars rather than attempting to know about what ‘other’ people like about K-pop. The future research on how UK people perceive Koreans including K-pop stars will yield some interesting insights to see the UK’s construction of the Orient.

Moreover, UK authors articulate that K-pop needs consistent management of Western artists in order to go global so that K-pop cannot really reach the West unless Korean singers are helped by the Western pop artists. For this reason, a manager like Scooter Braun is “the

man responsible for breaking Gangnam Style” and there is a need for Korean singers to be taken care of and managed by “the same agency that looks after Mariah Carey, Kanye West and Justin Bieber” (Cragg, 2015; McCurry, 2012). Finally, the UK journalist clarifies K-pop stars should be available enough to collaborate with Western pop artists so that “Scott and producers such as Diplo [...] brings the delirious Technicolor of Korean pop to the wider world” (Cragg, 2015). In this case, the UK’s national pride can be supported by the historical epoch of the British Empire. During the eighteenth century the British took over the position of most powerful country in the world from Spain, and Great Britain had colonies in all continents and the most powerful navy in the world. The industrial revolution started in Great Britain, and after the Second World War the British again were victorious which gave them great self-confidence and a self-perceived empire status. In brief, the UK shaped the history of the world for over three centuries, and consequently it comes as no surprise that a large part of the British population feels somewhat superior to other countries (Perisic, 2010). Later in the twentieth century, the worldwide success of British bands like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Deep Purple, Queen and many others further reinforced the British sense of cultural superiority. Hence, the UK article maintains that the soft power of the UK is greater than that of South Korea: “Britain's soft power is greater than Gangnam Style – so appreciate it”, and this notion reflects “idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Lynskey, 2013; Said, 1978, p. 7). The further research may be carried out to see how the UK citizens formulate the national image of South Korea as they listen to K-pop.

In the US articles, K-pop is described as a good source for making money, and this insight supports Chung (2003)’s study on status of South Korean pop stars. According to her study, Korean stars are ‘cultural products’ of postindustrial capitalist society that awards wealth and fame. In addition, as Simon Frith has mentioned, “the use of music in advertisements, motion pictures and television series offers another domain in which considerable revenues are generated for the music industry” (Frith, 1988, p. 90). Therefore, it is no surprise that some authors view K-pop as a smart way to create more revenues. One’s attempt to use popular music for commercial purposes have already been in the area of people’s interests, thus it makes sense to see that K-pop stars are “the faces for top South Korean brands in television

commercials” (Choe, 2013). The author also implies that K-pop is a primary factor in attracting tourists into Korea so it reports that Korea has experienced “strongest year ever in foreign tourism visits, thanks to the hit "Gangnam Style"” (Fox News, 2013a). As Pistrick and Isnart say, “space becomes a place through human experience but also through our memory and imagination“(Pistrick & Isnar, 2013, p. 505). In other words, it is through Psy’ song that Gangnam region turns into a unique place in people’s imagination. Since “place becomes a center of meaning constructed by experience”, one’s experience associated with K-pop is likely to construct new meanings about Korea (Tuan 1975, p. 152).

Meanwhile, the UK sees South Korea uses K-pop for their political interests. Its author depicts how Korean politicians use K-pop to enhance their self-image: “It (K-pop) also, inevitably, inspired a host of online parodies and memes, and political parties reportedly sought to use it in their campaigns during upcoming general elections” (The Guardian, 2016a). It is assumed that K-pop soothes the strict imagery of politicians, gives them familiar personalities, and helps them to approach the public with some winning advantages. K-pop is also considered an effective propaganda tool when it is used against North Korea: “propaganda playlist”, “cultural Trojan horses”, and “creepy X-Files-style music” (Mukasa, 2011; Lee, 2015; Michael, 2017). The UK author expresses: “South Korea uses propaganda to boast of its democracy and culture”, treating K-pop as a “weapon” to transmit its political ideologies and to manipulate people’s way of thinking (The Guardian, 2016a). According to Frith (1989, p. 79), “songs reflect the beliefs and values of their listeners" in that such different perspectives reflect the contrasting beliefs about South Korea. Within the US perspective, South Korea is a different country from North Korea in both ideological and political aspects. Unlike the communist North, South Korea cultural policy lets “other pop culture flooded in”, and K-pop is even “stealing attention from inter-Korean tensions” (Fox News, 2013b; Fox News, 2015 b). The UK journalist shares the contrasting attitudes on this point. Cummings (2016) sees South Korea is not very different from North Korea in terms of the main interests for using their popular music, and argues that South Korea uses K-pop for “to control the hearts and minds of its citizens” (Cummings, 2016).

When analyzing the texts, discerning the author can be a critical issue since each article

often reflects the columnist's own interpretation. For this reason, a transparency of the author's name reflects the different attitudes of each press. While democratically inclined news sources tend to clarify who the speakers are, authors of the *Fox News* were anonymous. In other words, *Fox News* and *The Sun* are prone to discuss K-pop by using their own voices. On the other hand, the liberal papers such as *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* clearly mention the interviewees and their journalists talk about K-pop as if they were K-pop audiences.

Though the portrayal of K-pop varies depending on the news outlets, some similarities are found between the US and UK's receptions of K-pop. The most notable finding involves the depiction of K-pop as a complete show with multifaceted talents, and the tone for describing K-pop performances is with some wonderment. Korean pop singers are identified as perfectionists who are good in visuals, dancing, and fan services. According to Philip Auslander, "the experience of recorded music as performance derives not only from our direct somatic experience of the sound but also from the visual culture that surrounds popular music" (Auslander, 2004, p. 5). Therefore, appreciation of visual aspects in K-pop can be interpreted as a means of enhancing one's personal experience with music. US authors claim that the K-pop concert is an "ecstatic show" which is "a fusion of synthesized music, video art, fashionable outfits and teasing sexuality mixed with doe-eyed innocence" (Caramanica, 2015; Choe, 2012). Similarly, UK authors explain "K-pop is not only music, but a complete show" which combines "architectural hairstyles, high-energy dance moves, rapping and vocal harmonies" (Mukasa, 2011; Hunt, 2016). There is an agreement on perceiving the K-pop concert as demonstration of Korean stars' multi-talents. However, to better analyze the motivation of the US and the UK audience group, the prospective research is advised to investigate which elements (i.e. visuals, dance, lyric of the music) are considered to be the most important factor when they watch K-pop music videos.

There is a tendency to believe that K-pop's completeness is due to ones' hardworking attitudes. The US journalist writes about Korean entertainment companies' early investment in their teens, and reports about young people's long hours of training to become K-pop stars: ""But I go to a K-pop school seven evenings a week. After coming home past 10, I study K-

pop video on YouTube for hours"" (Choe, 2013). Choe (2013) not only includes mature K-pop stars, but it is also interested in upcoming K-pop stars. Finally, the singer Psy's success is seen as the fruit of Psy's enduring patience gained after "toiling in the music industry for 12 years" (Fox News, 2012a). Likewise, the UK reporter Hunt (2016) postulates K-pop performance "looks like hard work" which involves people's "painstaking" efforts. When talking about the efforts that Korean stars make, the texts tend to reflect the columnists' opinions. And this idea inspires 'American Dream' into the South Korean society where anyone can be successful with their "hard-driving ethic" (Rich, 2016). In this flow, K-pop is perceived as the man-made cultural product, the one that has been sculptured by people's efforts. In American newspapers, the author describes "K-pop critics contend that South Korea is producing cookie cutter performances" and delivers the words of the Korean participants in Superstar K tournament who reports: "They (K-pop singers) all sing, dance and perform well, like well-made machines" (Choe, 2013). The UK newspapers also describe Korean popular songs as characterized by the "bootcamp levels of precision-tooled choreography", and K-pop's stars are said to be "impeccably sculptured" (Cragg, 2015; McCurry, 2012). Yet, this opinion is confined to authors' opinion and their own analysis. Further research needs to be carried out to find out whether music experts also treat K-pop as the man-made culture product without authentic characters.

Another point the US and UK agree on is the reception of K-pop as "a fusion of many genres" which consists of the "meaningful flecks of club music, R&B and hip-hop" and "a fusion of many genres" (Mukasa, 2011; Caramanica, 2015). K-pop is portrayed as the combined musical genres which result from the collaboration with their pop artists. Just as K-pop's identity as the result of hard work has been discussed with the opinion of the Korean citizens, K-pops' identity as the fusion form of music is also supported by the Korean K-pop expert who runs the biggest K-pop blog. By doing so, the authors attempt to draw support from a third person perspective to validate their opinions.

In addition, from the viewpoint of both the US and UK, Korean popular culture is still at the stage of development. The US author accepts K-pop as a "sign of musical evolution" and the UK author feels that "there a lot more work to be done, so K-pop is just on the starting

line” (Caramanica, 2015; Mukasa, 2011). These remarks show us what the world music means to the West. Tony Mitchell (1993, p. 310) describes “the term ‘world music’ came into currency in the popular music industry in 1987 as a tag referring to popular music originating in countries outside the normal Anglo-American sources”. This notion of world music appreciates Anglo-American sources is the center in the music industry, and enables us to understand why US and UK regards K-pop has a lot of work to catch up the world standard.

Both US and UK authors are aware of the fact that their favorite stars do not always represent the average Korean citizen. The American author Choe (2013) suggests “Psy, they (K-pop critics) argue, is an anomaly” and the British author Cragg (2015) posits “she’s (CL’s) always felt like an anomaly. They assert that the K-pop idols who stand out in the world stage are the ‘anomaly’ to the Korean people. Even though K-pop stars do not represent the average Korean citizens, the authors still tend to learn about Korean society through K-pop. The understanding of South Korea and North Korea is sharpened by studying the reception of K-pop in those countries. The US newspapers depict South Korea as an open and fun-seeking society where the government poses no strict restrictions on the importation of foreign music, so that the country often lets “other pop culture flooded in” and its people are so indulgent with K-pop that they care less about North Korea: “South Korean Internet users were more interested Friday in PSY's new song than North Korea” (Fox News, 2013b). Meanwhile, it is assumed that North Korea has contrasting political climates to the South as it bans its citizens from any type of foreign cultural product and even carries out “draconian punishments” for watching K-pop videos (Webb, 2017).

The UK newspapers depict Korea as having upgraded its national image by promoting their K-pop. Therefore, K-pop is believed to have the soft power, which has “erased South Korea's regional reputation as a brutish emerging industrial nation where everything smelled of garlic and kimchi, and replaced it with images of prosperous, cosmopolitan life” (Lynskey, 2013). Such a change in Korea’s reputation implies K-pop plays a crucial role in establishing modern images about Korea, and it proves “discourses of place and landscape are always in a constant state of change” (Forbes, 2000, p.141). According to Tomlinson (1991, p. 90), globalization involves “the spread of the culture of modernity”. Thus, South Korea’s

modernized lifestyle and new regional reputation can be also understood as an outcome of globalization as well. To sum up, the authors' interest in Korean society motivates one to further investigate and analyze the impact of Psy's success on South Korea's national image.

Last not but least, the discussion on gender and sexual identity are prominent in mainstream in the discourse. First, the American author points out the gender inequality when it comes to the military obligation in Korea: "although military service may be unpopular in South Korea, the public expects all men to fulfill their civic duty and harshly judges those who do not. (Women are not required to serve)" (Rich, 2016). Another journalist deems Korean females are taking advantage of their sweetness to incite North Korean soldiers: "Included are songs by a young female singer, IU, whose sweet, girlish voice might be aimed at North Korean soldiers deployed near the border" (Fox News, 2016a). Similarly, the UK reporter Michael (2017) views the South Korean government uses their cute female K-pop stars for their political gain. As a result, South Korean girl bands "nearly started World War III" when their songs reached North Korea. According to Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity, gender is unstable and solidified at certain points by "a stylized repetition of acts" and is "instituted through the stylization of the body" (Butler, 1988, p. 519). In our case, instead of certain patterns of acts, the voice of Korean female stars is believed to contribute to forming their feminine characters.

So far, this paper has investigated the portrayal of K-pop in the United States and United Kingdom through a close reading of their national newspapers. The research finding was mainly derived from the treatment of K-pop through the written texts, which did not include the political relations between Korea and the US/UK. Thus, further research may build the understanding on South Korea's international relations with the US and UK to connect its discourse with Korea's political current circumstances with those countries. The newspapers are effective to appeal to a broad range of readers including non K-pop fans. However, it has limitation as it only reports the journalists' opinions. Thus, interviewing K-pop fans can be useful, and analysis of social networking sites such as Twitter and YouTube may provide some insights that have not been revealed by the newspapers. Additionally, as this research dealt with digital articles, further research may include printed sources. For this research, I

collected the newspapers from 2011, and they have mainly contributed to the knowledge formation on the Western discourses on K-pop. More comprehensive study would encompass the articles published before 2011, and comparison of the old texts with the recent article will show how the author's perspective on the K-pop has changed over time.

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