

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of The Study

In the study of media communications, there has been a continual discussion regarding the comparable strength of the media's influence on the public (Van Dijk, n.d.). In his previous research entitled *Power and the news media* states; 'Media power usually refers to symbolic and persuasive, in terms that the media can predominantly influence their consumer and readers opinions' by comprehending a particular in structuring their discourses and how they relate to institutional structure (Al-Rawi, 2019). Through the middle of the second half of the twentieth century, news consuming practices were largely consistent across the legacy news media such from print (newspaper), audio (radio), and by audio visual (television) of the time (Boczkowski, P., Mitchelstein, E., & Matassi, M. 2017). The majority believe that the move forward into an increasingly digital and high-choice media culture in the twentieth century will lead to a drop in casual consumption and a growth in selective consumption, whereas the ones who actively search for news are going to be consuming it (Bennet and iyengar. 2008 as cited from Fletcher& Nielsen, 2018). Mitchell (2015) stated that selective consumption by social media is becoming increasingly popular, this has been shown through a growing number of consumers who have access to news using social media. According to the following statements, there has been an enormous rise in worldwide usage of social media (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018), In 2015, approximately 87% of the internet users of Americans reported using more than one form of social media during that week (Newman et al., 2015 as cited from Fletcher& Nielsen, 2018). Facebook (Zuckerberg, 2015), YouTube, and Twitter are the largest and most popular platforms with close to 1 billion and 300 million active users around the world (Newman et al., 2015 as cited from Fletcher& Nielsen, 2018).

In addition, their standing increased and their capabilities has grown, the majority of their users turned to every network as sources of headlines, along with significant variation across connections and countries (Newman et al., 2015). In validating the accuracy of news sources the audience needs to find a reliable site, Soompi.com is one of online news portals based in the United States but focuses on Korean pop culture by holding an influential position as the most popular K-pop news website (Tanya et al., n.d.) Soompi was founded in 1998 and now serves as the most trusted source for the most up-to-date current information on Korean celebrities (Ardiyani et al., n.d. 2021). Right now, rumours and gossip about K-pop matters and K-drama celebrities can be found across traditional and digital sources. Consequently, digital media has become the primary source for K-pop news and scandal. Sometimes a news article carries ambiguous information (Ardiyani. et. al., 2021).

Gossip culture began in the second half of the 20th century, in this term gossip or rumours as a communication tool to preserve the implement change for consciousness and to develop the social values (Feeley, 2012) The gossip can be considered as an indirect type of hostility or similar to mocking which portrays the subject in an unpleasant way (Ellwardt, et. al, 2011). The gossip is usually done by spoken words or now it may be present using other written words by media electronic or social media. The desire for gossip could be caused by culture and has been accepted that gossip occurs in society. The gossip effect has positive as well as negative impact as Jennifer Cole and Hannah Seriener (2013) stated in their research about gossip behaviour, gossip is important and necessary for shaping a well-being for some groups but on other hand, gossip gives negative impact as a social consequence because of the gossip rumours.

For K-pop celebrities as a representative of society this has led to a number of normative limitations which can give cause for rumour and gossip, including bullying, harassment, plagiarism, narcotics, burning sun, dating, and cultural appropriation (Luu, 2022). The term of Cultural Appropriation is commonly familiar in the K-pop industry. Lenard & Balint (2020) assume cultural

appropriation as those who appear to be adopting the cultural practise of a group of which they are not a member are deemed to be engaging in cultural appropriation. Per Ziff et al. (1997) as cited from Mayra, who researched the topic, define cultural appropriation as "the application of property rights, cultural expression, or artefact to something like a foreign culture." and fashion as one of the cultural expressions which proved as a way of expressing oneself and a significant aspect of ethnic identity (Monroy et al., 2018).

These days, whenever a public figure is caught into scandal or controversy, they will be dealing with cancelling (Trigo, L. A, 2020). The most controversial case of cultural appropriation done by Katy Perry on American Music Award stages when performing 'Unconditionally song' by wearing Japanese ethical attributes, not only wearing that traditional dress Perry also modified the Japan traditional dress, by removing its minimising the neckline (Pennington, 2016) . The reason why Perry received criticism for dressing in traditional Japanese dress without presenting their inherent morals Pennington, R. (2016). The Katy Perry cultural appropriation case, it is not the first case in the west, According to Hong, C., Cho, H., & Kinney, D. (2022) in the beginning of the nineteenth century, is the very first open case of cultural appropriation in western. This case evolved the manner of blackface displays which commonly portrayed African American perceptions as comedy. Towards the applause and humour of the white audience, white actors would put on blackface and parody the utterances and behaviours of oppressed African Americans, portraying people as sluggish, poorly educated, and ugly. Following 1840, entertainers' industry mocking and ridiculing the African American. Over this time, the figures of 'joyful slaves' were created and developed in destructive and toxic stereotypes, unluckily, the adverse consequences of the media's influence on stereotyping exist until each day.

Despite racist portrayals of different ethnicities have decreased in today's society, occasions for cultural appropriation which happen repeatedly cannot be ignored (Hong et al., n.d. 2022). In this context, South Korea stands at a curious point. The heritage of South Korea is shaped through the Western and Eastern

superpowers. The fast industrial growth of South Korea has positioned its economy at the centre of global finances. According to Korea Creative Content Agency or KOCCA records there were 44.1 times increased from US\$ 188.9 million in 1998 to US\$ 8.3 billion over 2018 Dal Yong (2020). The study of Korean popular culture indicates that South Korea has been greatly influenced by Western culture as well as accepts numerous of the affiliated presumptions. Korea was not impervious to cases of cultural appropriation until the rise of K-Pop. There was a lengthy record of racism in Korean entertainment; there are examples of obvious discrimination and cultural appropriation in Korean entertainment.

Current condemnation towards cultural appropriation have made no impact on the prosperity of the Korean Wave, Since the K-pop fanbase becomes ever more varied, K-pop receives encouragement from around the world (Hong, et. all. 2022). As Mayra Monroy (2018) has conducted research on cultural appropriation in social media, this study indicated that the tone of cultural appropriation on Twitter was negative, and that cultural appropriation has a negative influence on culture and quantifies the harm caused to the minority culture. And in 2020, Grace Tantra showed that entitled: Defending K-pop Idols Online: The Fanbase's Underlying Issue of Ignorance, this research concluded that There are many underlying flaws in K-pop fandom that need to be addressed. Following the previous research about cultural appropriation, there are power relations between the netizens in supporting their idols towards the issues of cultural appropriation.

In the middle of 2020, the researchers found some cases of cultural appropriation in K-pop idols from news media of Soompi and Pannchoa. The first case is in July 2020 done by ATEEZ. ATEEZ is one of the male groups in South Korea. This group debuted in 2018 under the KQ Entertainment, ATEEZ consisting of 8 members HongJoong, Seonghwa, Yunho, Yeosang, San, Mingi, Wooyoung, and Jongho. Their first mini album entitled 'Treasure Ep.1: All to Zero'. Two years after their debut, they were exposed to a cultural appropriation scandal in their new teaser image for their upcoming album ZERO: FEVER Part

1. This information was obtained from Soompi, which published KQ Entertainment's statement letter to the cultural appropriation scandal. Thus speculations raised after KQ released that new upcoming album images on 14 July, and regarding to Hongjoong's hairstyle resembles cornrow hair, which is claimed to be one of Black Lives Matter's (BLM) identities (J.Lim, 2020).

Another case of cultural appropriation in K-pop idols is done in February 2022 done by Enhypen. Enhypen is one of South Korea's male groups. Enhypen debuted in 2020 under the Belift Entertainment, Enhypen consist of 7 members after following the survival show named (I-LAND) thus members are Heeseung, Jay, Jake, Sunghoon, Suno, Jungwoo and Ni-ki. Their first mini album entitled 'BORDER: DAY ONE'. Two years after their debut showcase, they face up to cultural appropriation and religious intolerance, the case blown up in late night posted on Feb 1st, 2022 Pannchoa dared a thread on twitter with the caption *International Enhypen fans asking Jake to apologize over Allah's necklace*. This thread is about Jake's culturally problematic stuff over the Allah's necklace (Admin Pannchoa, 2022).

From both cultural appropriation cases, the international netizens giving different responses between Jake 'necklace case' and Hongjoong 'cornrows case'. According to Fairclough, there is a kind of dialectical connection between netizens discourse when twisting the comments which shaping the social structure of power relation, and Foucault claims discourse reflect the ambiguity. Fairclough and Foucault highlighted the significance of discursive practice which requires more than form of words to express meaning but also constructing meaning. In this sense, discursive practise operates as a sort of governmental brokering and netizen discourse as the virtual representations and formation of community debate. Xu (2012) argued the privacy of the Internet binds every individual, whether individuals with positions of authority to members of the wider community, to carrying the community of internet user. Active users who want to maintain their verbal authority could break aside from their earlier position as a passive audience member. At Soompi and Pannchoa as the media which holds the

spread of dominant or powerful communities' opinions, the oversight of other groups, and the construction of community collaboration. Forming a discourse across a community indicates the function of the media in shaping the discourse through disseminated stuff (Haramain et al., n.d.). Discourse governs how matters are able to examine continually and defines how ideas get implemented in the world of society, due to the fact that discourse has power and effect in society which shapes our knowledge of existence alongside our views about our identities.

Accordingly, this study analyses the selected comments from netizens in both Soompi and Pannchoa that inform about cultural appropriations. Using Transitivity System of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Michael Halliday to analyse the Ideational metafunction and to figure out the netizens comments in constructing their thoughts regarding cultural issues and Appraisal Theory as form study of SFL by Martin and White to analysing interpersonal metafunction in specifically to find out how the netizens position in evaluating through the cultural appropriation issues. Both Transitivity System and the three domains of appraisal as the way of textual analysis. In this instance, the patterns of netizen comments could be interpreted as a social semiotic system in this study to see how emoji influence in meaning-making in netizens comments. In seeing how power relations play in the comments posted by netizens toward ATEEZ and Enhypen, the demonstrating role of power that was able to be portrayed in the media the researcher also used Power Relation by Foucault.

The previous study of cultural appropriation has been conducted. Mayra Monroy (2018) has analysed the impact of cultural appropriation on costume aesthetics, fashion trends, and cultural appreciation by using the topic of cultural appropriation is portrayed in social media through an analysis of the tones and themes of 2017's tweeted content, news outlets around the world through an analysis of newspaper coverage from the years 2000 to 2017, and the timeframe as well as if the coverage could be categorised in three themes; positive, negative and neutral news coverage.

Following previous study by (Tantra & Hendricks, 2020) showed the different aspects of K-pop fandoms that influence willful ignorance within the community by looking at the psychology behind fans' mind as they interact with their favourite celebrities, celebrities influence and social media platforms towards the cases of toxic defensive behaviour in the K-pop community.

Previous study by Rosemary Pennington (2016) analyses how Orientalist thinking manifests in Katy Perry's music video. Using the textual analysis that focused on the underlying ideological and cultural structure of the text, she investigated three controversial instances of cultural appropriation carried out by Katy Perry, the first one related to the performance decision she earns, the second to the perpetuation of racist stereotypes in music videos and live performances, and the third to the destruction of a necklace bearing the name 'Allah' in her Dark Horse video. The author's findings reveal a framing of Egypt as a mute dislike created for consumption and a narrative depicting masculines of colour as a risk to Perry's liberated, Western, female pharaoh.

The gap between the previous study and this study is that the recent study tries to analyse the netizens' different outputs in respondings the cultural appropriation and the portrait of power relation from the netizens comments in respondings the cultural appropriation between K-pop idols. Thus, this study focuses on analysing the comments from Soompi.com articles and Pannchoa thread on twitter.

Using the controversy of Cultural Appropriation from ATEEZ and Enhypen, this study expects to give contributions to media and cultural studies of power relation from netizens comments in the case of cultural appropriation in media entertainment.

## 1.2 Research Question

1. How did netizens' comments position in responding to the Enhypen and ATEEZ Cultural Appropriation case?

2. How did the netizens' comments influence the power relation when responding to the Cultural Appropriation case?

### 1.3 Purpose of The Study

This study aims to:

1. Analyse the position of the netizen's comments (whether they are pro or contra) towards the issue of Cultural Appropriation done by Enhypen and ATEEZ.
2. Analyse the netizens' comments influence the power relation when responding to the Cultural Appropriation case.

### 1.4 Scope of the study

The study focuses on analysing Enhypen and ATEEZ cultural appropriation, more specific the position of netizens comments in responding the cultural issues through 115 selected comments from news article on Soompi and Pannchoa

1. *KQ Entertainment Addresses Concerns Raised Regarding Recent ATEEZ Teaser Image* published by J.Lim on Soompi.com with 51 selected comments
2. *International Enhypen fans asking Jake to apologize over Allah's necklace* published by Pannchoa Admin on Pannchoa with 64 selected comments

### 1.5 Limitation

This study only focuses on the netizens' comments position toward cultural appropriation issues on the comment sections from Soompi and Pannchoa. Additional research must be conducted by examining the Transitivity System, Appraisal Theory, Semiotics, and Power Relation Theory

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to lead to the growing field of gossip culture studies across media and cultural linguistics in the digital media. Specifically in the cultural



appropriation case on mass media. This study will also serve as a resource for future studies that focuses on identifying how the netizens' comments position in portrayal of power relation regarding the cultural appropriation case.

