

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Evolution and change are constantly happening in the society we live in. There are trends to follow every year as a product of people's creativity. Trends that are produced and happen to attract the mass is what we call as popular culture. Generally, the term popular culture can be described as the common style or people's culture that dominates the society; it is any product that are commonly liked and widely accepted by society at a particular time. (Delaney, 2015, p. 6, 2015). Ray Browne in *Folklore to Populore*, as noted by Delaney, states that popular culture consists of the aspects of attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, customs, and tastes that define the people of any society. As it has become a big part of people's life, popular culture has the power to influence people and because of its commonality popular culture both reflects and influences people's everyday life (Delaney, 2015, p. 6). Arguably, popular culture is an integral element of the society because people are constantly exposed to it.

Popular culture comes in numerous forms such as music, film, television, radio, video games and so on. It has always been recognized that music takes a big portion in society because of its elements; the lyrics and melody. Song lyrics has the power to influence people meanwhile its melody could entertain people. Therefore, music takes a great portion in society whether as a mean of communication or a source of entertainment for its listener. Being said that, it can

be concluded that music is inseparable from society; people needs music. People's need of music then has stimulated the expansion of pop music. This is resulting in never ending production of music, new invention of genres as well as the introduction of new musicians every year. It does not stop there, this development also has another implication that follows; the rise of music streaming platform. Music streaming platform such as Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, and other similar platform combined with internet are the only component we need to listen to music. Compact disc and music player are not really relevant to use these days and no longer become a primary platform to enjoy music. The rise of music streaming platform has made it easier to access music and thus there is no barrier to enjoy music from all over the world.

Other than the advancement of technology in music, the language used in songs are also transforming; English is no longer the default language to enter the global market. K-Pop, which songs are majorly written in Korean are gaining its listener from the English-speaking countries. This conclude that music transcends language, there is no barrier when it comes to music; people would still listen to it regardless its language.

One of the reasons why K-Pop is appealing to the global market is because the hybridity in its music. K-Pop does not only offer the beautiful vocal but also the visual. K-Pop presents its product through catchy tunes accompanied with energetic, perfectly synchronized dance moves, a high-quality produced music video, and not to mention the incredibly amazing visual of the idols. Through creative and meticulous production, K-Pop has taken the music industry to a whole new level.

The kind of hybridity has brought fresh air to its audience who have never had this kind of musical experience. TIME Magazine once declared K-Pop as *South Korea's greatest export*, and Nikkei, a Japanese business journal consider this export as *The Next Samsung*. It is an inevitable occurrence that K-Pop has become an increasingly globalized phenomenon.

Although K-Pop has been targeted the US as its market, BTS is the only K-Pop group who successfully entered the market compared to other groups such as Big Bang and EXO who only reached minor success (Glasby, 2018). The biggest K-Pop group to date, BTS, has become a hot talk in the United States because of their music and their style that brings fresh air to their audience there. BTS does not only offer melodious voice, they bring powerful, and not to mention self-produced lyrics to the table. They protest about Korean education system and they do not consider political lyrics as taboo; they include their views about the social situation through their own perspective. Other than that, their lyrics are hugely revolved around young adult's problems; dreams, depression, friends, love-life, self-love and other topics that are the voice of youth. Not only that, BTS brings spectacular elements to the visualisation of their music by planning a mind-bending and thematic music video which invites tons of theories and interpretations from their audience. They also bring sharp dance moves to their music video as well as concert stage performance. Their socially conscious lyrics, prodigious stage performance and their authentic personality are combined together and become their greatest element to take over the music sensation across continental.

BTS has been breaking barriers in international scale. Their newest album titled *Map of The Soul: Persona* has gained number one position on *Billboard 200* chart. The mentioned album marked their third achievement to have three number one albums on the chart. This achievement has set BTS as the first group since The Beatles to have three number one albums in less than a year. On April 2019 BTS won a Top / Duo Group award presented by Billboard Music Awards and defeated much longer existed group such as Imagine Dragons, Panic! At The Disco, and Maroon 5. Their win sets a new record as the first K-Pop group ever to win this category at Billboard Music Awards. Billboard Music Awards is an event hosted annually by Billboard. Billboard is an American media brand which produces news, video, reviews, and events that centers on the music industry. Although this is BTS' first win in mentioned category, earlier in 2017 they have already taken things to a new level by winning Top Social Artist category for three years consecutively, dethroning Justin Bieber's six years streaks which sets another milestone for a South Korean group to be nominated and to win this award. Billboard Music Awards serves as Billboard's honor to appreciate musicians through their artistry, in form of music. Musician who eventually wins the award are those who have outstanding chart performance. The chart performance is tracked and processed by Billboard and their data partners tracking. They observe the music that are popular in the United States and the global market. The tracking measurement are based on album and digital songs sales, streaming, radio airplay, touring, and social engagement counts. The general awards that are nominated are top album, artist and singles in a number of different music genres.

BTS is arguably the biggest Asian representation in United States for the time being. They have been celebrating a number of “firsts” in the United States over the past few years. With their records of plenitude wins and their ability to break the language barrier in English speaking countries, BTS’ international recognition has gained them a new spotlight in terms of media coverage. As no Asian artist particularly K-Pop group ever did the same like BTS has done, the writer has witnessed that their phenomenal success has stolen the US’ media attentions. Forbes, an American business magazine with a focus on news and information about business, investing, technology, entrepreneurship, leadership and affluent lifestyles, described BTS as *the torchbearers of the Korean wave*. “The group’s ability to crossover on their own terms is part of what makes them such fitting recipients”, Forbes stated. Moreover, other prominent US’ media namely Pitchfork, Billboard, and Vulture recognized how the group maintains their “Koreanness” in the American market as well. Recently in 2019, TIME Magazine announced its *TIME 100: The Most Influential People*, a highly publicized annual event and awarded BTS’ in their list. The recipients of the award are recognized for changing the world which pretty much explains why it is honourable for those who are striving in the likes of business, entertainment, and politics scene to mention some. BTS is also featured in TIME’s *The Next Generation Leaders* who also made their presence as the cover of the magazine, a list made by TIME to appreciate the youngsters who have a huge influence on the world. Their role in changing the world is also proven when they are appointed as the ambassador of United Nations’ Generation Unlimited program. The program is aimed to empower the young

generation to get a better education, training, and employment by 2030. On September 24, BTS made an appearance at the United Nations General Assembly to launch the Generation Unlimited program.

This study is therefore conducted in order to see how the US media particularly Billboard and Rolling Stone favor this phenomenon. The two media are chosen because it has the biggest readers and are the leading music news media among other similar music news media in United States. To achieve the goal of this research, the writer is going to deploy the Appraisal Analysis by J. R Martin and P. R. R White. Appraisal Analysis is used to see an interpersonal aspect in a piece of writing by presenting three axes; attitude, engagement, and graduation. (Martin & White, 2005)

To support this study, the writer has found related journal articles which either has a similarity in issue or applied theory. The first study is *Identifying Interpersonal Stance in Threatening Discourse: An Appraisal Analysis*, a 2011 study written by Tammy Gales. Deploying Appraisal Analysis, the writer examines the ways in which interpersonal stance are manifested in a realized threat of violence. The analysis exposes that threatener applied a great number of rhetorical strategies to convey interpersonal meaning and take stances that both strengthen and weaken their apparent of commitment. As the subject of the study, Gales analysed a threatening letter written by Eric Robert Rudolph in 1997. Rudolph wrote and sent out threatening letters to media outlets under the name The Army of God (AG). The Army of God is a group of terrorist that holds a value that the use

of violence is acceptable to end abortion, according to National Abortion Federation. As reflected from the letter, The Army of God is threatening everyone who are involved with abortion practice. Gales examines the interpersonal stance in the letter through the Appraisal system of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. Glades concluded that there are variety of ways of encoding stance in the AG threat. First is epistemic stances that mostly reveal the author's level of commitment, investment, and certainty. Glades found out the author also used the modality *may* frequently which expresses probability in a low level. Second, Glades found out that the attitudinal stance of the author are conveyed through his alignment with the Army of God, giving biblical import to his cause. The letter also contains graduation in the form of repetition to support Rudolph, the author's, authorial stance.

The second study is a 2011 study titled *Appraising Through Someone Else's Words: The Evaluative Power of Quotations in News Reports* by Paula M. Jullian. The paper aims to explore the conveyance of appraisal and the indirect ideology establishment regarding the Nobel Prize Award for Liu Xiaobo. The corpus of the study are the body of the news report from 13 news networks which represent the Western view, Chinese perspective, and a neutral view towards the topic. Liu, during the time of the nomination was jailed in a Chinese prison, thus, the award obviously raised a great controversy because the Chinese government regarded Liu as a criminal meanwhile it is quite opposite in Western world; Liu is reckoned as a human rights' activist of the Chinese people. Based on this situation, Jullian intended to look the way news reports from both sides, China and Western world, reported this issue. Jullian argued that news report is loaded with journalists'

views and beliefs. These views and beliefs are often concealed with external voices or quotations from other source so the journalists would seem to appear as neutral. By undertaking some elements of Appraisal Theory, Jullian intended to find out the role of the external voices in online news reporting on the announcement. The findings suggest that both corpora showed quite different story. Although both are different, the reports are highly evaluative; the biggest amount of appraisal in both corpora were framed by external voices and are conveyed by paraphrasing and transcribing the external voices. Journalist from both China and Western are relied heavily on quotations to endorse or disendorse the issue based on their own stance. As the result of the study, Jullian finally found that the Chinese journalist use the external voice and quotations to support the Liu's imprisonment, meanwhile the Western media intended their writing to dispraise the Chinese system. From the overall valuations, Chinese journalist expect to arouse negative attitudes towards Liu Xiaobo and the Nobel Prize as opposed to Western journalist who wanted to stir up the public opinions negatively towards Chinese government.

The third study is a study conducted by Gabrina Pounds in 2010 titled *Attitude and Subjectivity in Italian and British Hard-news Reporting: The Construction of a Culture-specific 'Reporter' Voice*. The research found out that the data show that Italian and English articles systematically avoid some of the most explicit subjective expression such as authorial affect, mental state, certainty, obligation, denial and speculative cause and effect. they also approved that hard-news reporting is incompatible with explicit expression of authorial stance.

1.2 Research Question

How is BTS popularity in the U.S portrayed in U.S. Billboard and Rolling Stone based on Appraisal Analysis?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study is conducted to see how Billboard and Rolling Stone portray BTS' popularity in the United States by applying Appraisal Theory. By applying this theory, it can reveal the authors' attitude whether they have positive or negative tone towards BTS in the United States.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study limits on the analysis of BTS' popularity in United States based online news articles which are taken from Billboard and The Rolling Stone. The online news articles which have been collected as the corpus of this study are as follows: The study only focuses on how the selected articles reflect the authors' stances towards BTS' popularity in United States through the application of Appraisal Analysis.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes through this study the reader would gain new knowledge regarding Appraisal Analysis and how to apply it in a practical manner. Other than that, the writer hopes this study could raise awareness on the use of language in news article so we are not too biased by the way an author frames certain issue. In

other words, this study also serves as a reminder for everyone to be objective in observing what is really happening in reality and what is written in news article.

