

*Beat of Asia: Analyzing East Asia's Cultural Hierarchy and
the Negotiation of Hallyu Stars' Identity and Songs*

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Abstract

The study examines the nascent paradigm shift in transnational pop culture production in East Asia as Korean pop music is becoming the next epicentre for pop culture in Asia – a status long enjoyed by Japan. The popularity of K-Pop in Japan is said to be a major development since it is an example of how a cultural product from the periphery or a non-hegemonic culture can attain success in the center or the hegemonic culture. Thus, focusing on the K-Pop boom in Japan, the study aims to answer the following questions: How are the identities and songs of Hallyu stars negotiated as they take part in the complex transnational flow of culture? And given the strategies employed by Asian cultural industries in the transbordering activities of Hallyu stars, what can be said about the cultural hierarchy in the region, and on Japan-Korea relations? Framed under the Culturalist discourse on Hallyu and the concept of global flows and scapes, the study employs a political and socio-cultural approach in analyzing Korean female solo singer BoA's transbordering activities as a component of Hallyu in Japan. Findings show that the success of BoA within the region is contingent on the evolving political, economic, and socio-cultural postcolonial relations of Japan and South Korea. Furthermore, BoA's activities in Japan has heavily compromised her identity as a K-Pop artist, but this venture has also made her a Hallyu Star and an "Asian Star" back in Korea – a demonstration of Japan's continuing top position in Asia.

Keywords: Cultural Politics, Japan-Korea Relations, Popular Culture, Globalization, Hallyu

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Introduction

In the 2000s, the popularity of Korean popular culture, coined as the Korean Wave or *Hallyu*, became the focus of study in the academe as Asian audiences have widely consumed Korean television dramas, films, and pop music. For South Korea, the success of *Hallyu* within Asia was a “major development” from the one-way flow of East Asian cultural products coming from Japan in the past (KCIS, 2011, p.27). The breakthrough of Korean dramas, in particular, is said to have provided “a period of more balanced media and entertainment exchange in East Asia” (KCIS, 2011, p.27).

In line with this, Korean pop music (K-Pop) has emerged as the “next epicentre for pop culture in Asia – a status long enjoyed by Japan” (KCIS, 2011, p.31). K-Pop’s growing popularity is said to be an example of how a cultural product from the *periphery* (*non-hegemonic culture*) is able to succeed in the *center* (*hegemonic culture*) (Lee, 2013, p.211; Sablayan, 2013). In the center of pop culture in Asia, Japan has seen the influx of K-Pop artists promoting there for the past decade. However, Yoshitaka Mori (2008, p.129) argues that, these stars’ “impact was relatively limited in the Japanese market. Consequently, K-Pop is not always understood as part of the Korean Wave in the Japanese context. The Korean Wave in Japan is primarily the popular movement of Korean TV dramas.”

This study then problematizes the K-Pop boom and the Korean stars’ feat in Japan as components of *Hallyu* in the country, and aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) How are the identities of transbordering (*Hallyu*) stars and their songs negotiated as they take part in the complex transnational flow of culture?
- 2) Given the strategies employed by Asian cultural industries in the transbordering activities of *Hallyu* stars, what can be said about the cultural hierarchy in the region, and on Japan-Korea relations?

This study takes on the position that *Hallyu* stars promoting in Japan become an odourless cultural product, which shows no evidences of their cultural origin, and takes on the role of the Other to be accepted into the society. And when the *Hallyu* stars return to Korea, their artistic identities are reconstructed back as *Hallyu* stars and as “Asian” stars, wherein their Japanese songs and identities are also localized into Korean. Thus, the transnational cultural flow in the region involves constant localization of shared symbols in the media that creates a gateway for *Hallyu* in Japan and an “Asian” star in Korea.

The research questions aim to shed light on what strategies are employed in constructing the identities and music of Korean artists when they perform in the center of popular culture in Asia (Japan), and what blurs the line between J-Pop and K-Pop. This study also highlights the complex transnational flow of culture in the region, focusing on the flow coming from Korea to Japan, and then back to Korea to further show how ventures in Japan create a *Hallyu* and “Asian Star” back in Korea. Lastly, this study will also discern how Japan-Korea relations affect the mobility and artistry of *Hallyu* stars.

Literatures on K-Pop and Hallyu (Mori 2008, Iwabuchi 2008, Hyunjoong 2009, Sirivuvusak 2010, Lee 2010) often mention that K-Pop stars are localized into the Japanese music industry. However, these strategies of localization have not been discussed elaborately with concrete examples of CD releases. Also, as seen in Shin's (2009) study, literature on transbordering musicians from Korea to Japan only mention this localization strategy in passing, and the discussion of localization only stops on the flow from Korea to Japan. Lee (2013) also mentioned that "in the case of BoA, her Japan-released albums and Korea-released albums have been separated that songs included in her Japan albums have not been included in her Korean albums, and vice versa" (p.171)– which is not really the case, as this study will show.

Frameworks

The study will employ a trans-Asian perspective against the backdrop of *globalization*, which refers to the "transplanetary processes involving increasing liquidity and growing multidirectional flows as well as the structures they create" (Ritzer, 2010, p.2). An important process in globalization which this study will use is *localization*, and is defined as "the process of customizing a product for consumers in a target market" to "form the impression that it was designed by a native of their country" (Lingo Systems, 2002, p.4).

A key term in globalization, which this study will also utilize, is the idea of *flows* by Arjun Appadurai (1996). The idea of flows pertains to the "movement of people, things, information, and places due, in part, to the increasing porosity of global barriers" (Ritzer, 2010, p.7). From the five scapes that Appadurai (1996) had conceptualized, *ethnoscapes (flow of people)* and *mediascapes (flow of information and images)*, will be utilized to better understand the mobility and record-releases of *Hallyu* stars. Furthermore, this study will also use Shin Hyunjoong's (2009) term *transbordering musicians*, which refers to "migrant musicians who have crossed borders literally and figuratively (p.102)," with a particular focus on the flow between Korea and Japan.

Lastly, this study will also take on a *culturalist* approach in looking at the phenomenon of *Hallyu*. Keehyeung Lee (2008) has extensively discussed different discourses on *Hallyu*, with the *culturalist* approach as the third perspective. This approach challenges the essentialist view of Korean culture by acknowledging Korean cultural products as cultural hybrids that "emerged from the convergence of institutional, cultural, and political conditions and factors," stemming from the "the Americanization of Asian popular cultures in the post-World War II years and the surge of Japanese popular culture as a dominant cultural force and form in the region for decades (Lee, 2008, p.184-185)." According to Shin Hyunjun (as cited in Lee, 2008), Korean pop culture is situated in a cultural hierarchy wherein its status is "defined according to its relationship with others [American and Japanese pop culture]" (p. 185). Shin Hyunjun observes that when Korean stars promote in China and or Southeast Asia, they are often depicted in the media "as going out to conquer in Asia," which Shin criticizes, saying that, "this groundless pride in the superiority of Korean culture is defined not in terms of original creativity but rather through the establishment of hierarchical relations with hegemonic others" (Lee, 2008, p.185).

Methodology

A case study of BoA, a Korean female solo singer, will be the focus of the study.

BoA is chosen for this study for a number of reasons. First, her success as a pop singer in Asia is due to her transbordering activities in Korea and Japan, while also re-recording her songs into Mandarin Chinese and English. Second, she is the first Korean artist to top Japan's Oricon Charts and the only non-Japanese Asian artist to have three million-selling albums in Japan (KCIS, 2011, 32). Third, in South Korea she is referred to as *The Star of Asia/Asia's Star*, the Queen of Korean Pop Music, and the Pioneer of Hallyu (KCIS, 2011, p.32; Win Win, 2012). Fourth, BoA's successful foray in Japan led to more Koreans debuting in Japan, with other Korean agencies and labels emulating the strategy that her agency did, which Shin (2009) supports saying that, "Since the records by BoA have followed this formula, this practice has become firmly established in the Japanese music/entertainment industry. It has become confusing to call the songs sung by Korean singers K-pop and not J-pop" (p.107).

The study employs a political, socio-cultural, historical, and comparative approach in the textual analysis of BoA's music videos, CD cover arts, and songs that were released in both Korea and Japan. Documentary films, books, and journal articles are the secondary sources of data.

Hallyu Beginnings in Japan

From the 1960s to 1980s, Korean musicians in Japan were only limited to the genres *enka*, folk music, and protest music (Shin, 2009)(Ko, 2010, p.140). At this point, Korea-Japan diplomatic relations are almost non-existent brought about by colonial memories that are still ripe in Korea (Mori, 2008, p.129). It wasn't until 1998 when popular culture exchange began as South Korea lifted the ban on the entry of Japanese cultural products in the country called the *Ilbon munhwa kae-bang* policy (Shin, 2009, p.101). Another important event in the development of Korea-Japan relations was during the 2002 FIFA World Cup wherein Korea and Japan co-hosted the event albeit reluctantly (Mori, 2008, p.129). In organizing the World Cup, what first started out as a reluctant venture, "eventually resulted in creating unexpected mutual cheering for each national team and created a friendly atmosphere, particularly among young people" (Mori, 2008, p.129). Following the World Cup was the entry of Korean films and dramas in Japan and the subsequent phenomenal success of the Korean drama *Winter Sonata* (Mori, 2008,131). Since then, more consumption of Korean cultural products took place, including popular music.

The Hybrid and Transnational Korean Cultural Production Practice

The Korean cultural production model's origin can be traced back in the 1980's when the state was undergoing democratization, and the Korean media adopted a U.S. pluralist model (KCIS, 2011, p.18) (Shim, 2010, p. 122). By the 1990s, Korean filmmakers have been adapting Hollywood filmmaking styles and aesthetics, making Korean films much palatable to a broader Asian audience due to the region-wide influence of American cultural and media influence (Shim, 2010, p.124). Aside from the U.S. pluralist model, Korea also adapted Japan's "cultural production practice, co-production and concept trade, as well as localizing strategies," particularly the music

industry's "aidoru or idol system" due its "attractive market innovation" (Siriyuvasak, 2010, p.162-163).

As Korean cultural industries adapted the models of other states; ultimately, the Korean cultural practice's main strategy then includes "constructing an appearance and feeling of Asianness into the cultural content to present an Asian face in the image of the product," wherein language use and cultural proximity become essential factors "to present regional consumers with a sense of familiarity and pleasure" (Siriyuvasak, 2010, p.163). Thus, *Hallyu* singers become the product of content collaboration between two or more cultural corporations across the region. BoA is said to be a great example of this as she has reached "Asian Star" status due to her singing using second or third languages (Siriyuvasak, 2010, p.163).

However in the case of K-Pop artists promoting in Japan, the extent to which Korean artists are localized against the backdrop of a "genre-specific and location-specific characteristics of border-crossing Korean popular culture make it difficult to think of K-pop in Japan as a 'national media export'" (Shin, 2009, 107). In the case of transbordering musicians, a better focal point of study is the production aspect of the music industry, especially the collaboration of international artists and composers, rather than the finished product or song itself that will soon be confined to a single genre of a specific country (Shin, 2009, 107).

Korean cultural industries distribute their cultural products through "effective licensing schemes and localizes content distribution." (Siriyuvasak, 2010, p.162). Siriyuvasak (2010, p.162-163) also discusses the three mechanisms are employed in this distribution and localization strategy of Korean cultural industries: First, securing partnerships with East Asian transnational and/or regional companies for distribution of their products. Second, "Korean media industries invest directly with local media partners;" and consequently, Korean cultural industries become the focal point where these forged networks intersect within the region.

BoA's Debut

When BoA was signed by SM Entertainment in 1998 at the age of 11, she underwent vocal and dance training, Japanese and English language lessons, and "image-making to reach out to the world market." (History of BoA, 2003; Win Win, 2012; Pops in Seoul, 2013). She was then placed in a homestay program to improve her Japanese skills and to be immersed in Japanese culture, where she was also made "to learn youngster's slang and informal speech styles in Japan and listened to daily conversations" (Star History, 2007)(Win Win, 2012).

SM Entertainment also partnered with Japanese record label and agency giant AVEX. In 2002, BoA's debut album in Japan *LISTEN TO MY HEART* reached number one in the Oricon Chart and sold a million copies, making her the first Korean artist to do so. In the same year, BoA performed at the 2002 World Cup National Festival, and when she went back in Korea at the 2002 SBS Popular Song Awards, BoA was a Grand Award Winner, and was introduced as, "BoA became a global singer as she became the number one singer in Japan's Oricon Chart."

BoA's Records

To further see the extent of what Shin (2009) refers to as “genre-specific and location-specific characteristics of border-crossing activities” of *Hallyu* stars in Japan, BoA's records will be examined.

In 2000, BoA released her debut album *ID; Peace B*. The album contains 14 tracks and the creators of the songs are Koreans. In this case, BoA's Korean debut album is more catered to the domestic audience, and she was introduced as a K-Pop singer. For her name, BoA is spelled in the Roman alphabet, rather than 보아.

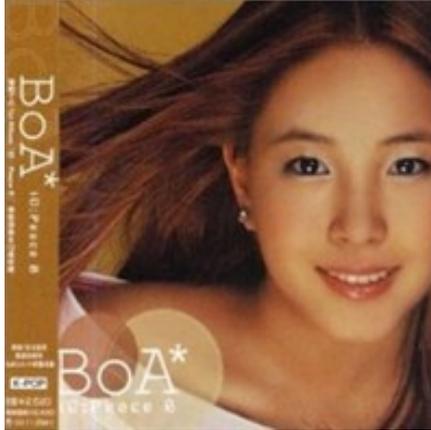


Figure 1: Covert Art of Korean Album *ID; Peace B*¹

Track Title	Lyricists	Composer
1. ID; Peace B	Yoo, Young-jin	Yoo, Young-jin
2. Come To Me	Kim, Hyung-seok	Kim, Hyung-seok
3. Chenyeom (Heart-Off)	Kim, Jong-sook	Bang, Shi-hyuk
4. Sara (Sara)	Park, Jung-ran	Kang, Won-seok
5. Bimil Iyagi (I'm Sorry)	Shin, Yoon-ah	Lee, Hyun-jung
6. Andwae, Nan Andwae (No Way)	Yoo, Young-jin	Bang, Shi-hyuk
7. Chama (Every Breath You Take)	Kim, Nam-hee	Hong, suk, Noh, Young-joo
8. Whatever	Seo, Yoong-geun	Seo, Yoong-geun
9. I'm Your Lady Tonight	Yang, Jae-seon	Kim, Hyung-seok
10. Eorin Yeonin (Young Lovers)	Kim, Jong-sook	Kim, Hyung-seok
11. Ibyeol-junbi (Letting You Go)	Park, Jin-young	Kim, Hyung-seok
12. Meon Hutnal Uri (Someday Somewhere)	Kim, Yeo-jin (Jennifer)	Lee, Hyun-jung

Table 1: Tracklist of *ID; Peace B*

¹ Song titles, names, and song lyrics in Korean have been edited from McCune Reischauer to Revised Romanization by Nina Aquiza, Leni Dela Cruz, and Thea Alberto-Masakayan

Then, BoA's first mini-album *Don't Start Now* was released on 7 March 2001 in Korea. Looking at the tracklist below, we can see that foreign musicians have also contributed in the creation of the album. There are Chinese and English versions of her original Korean songs (i.e. "ID; Peace B" and "Sara") to cater to a wider audience, but not enough to penetrate the Japanese market. The Chinese songs have a "Chinese version" label, indicating that it came from an existing Korean song. However, some of the songs composed by Japanese musicians, whose lyrics were originally written in Japanese, have been translated into Korean (in bold letters).

Title Track	Lyricist	Composer
Don't start now	Yoo, Young-jin	Peter Rafelson Jeff Vincent
AGAIN	Park, Jeong-ran	Kang, Won-seok
DESTINY	Original lyrics by mihara maki Korean lyrics by Kim, ki beom / Yu Youn wook	Harada Ken
Love letter	Kim, Jong-sook	Jung, Jae-yoon
Love hurts	Seo, Yoong-geun	Seo, Yoong-geun
POWER	Original lyrics by Mihara maki Korean lyrics by Kim, Kibum/ Yoo, Yeon-wook	Harada Ken
Let U Go	Original lyrics by Mihara Maki Korean lyrics by Kim, Ki- bum/ Yoo, Yeon-wook	Harada Ken
Don't Start Now (English version)	Peter Rafelson Jeff Vincent	Peter Rafelson Jeff Vincent
ID; Peace B (English version)	Brian, Jeena Kim, Esther	Yoo, Young-jin
Sara (Sara) (English version)	Jeena Kim	Kang, Won-seok
Dreams Come True	Original lyrics by Mihara Maki Korean lyrics by Kim, Ki- bum/ Yoo, Yeon-wook	Harada Ken
Bimil Iyagi (I'm Sorry) (Chinese version)	Sijie, Fairy	Lee, Hyun-jung
ID; Peace B (Chinese version)	Sijie, Fairy	Yoo, Young-jin
Sara (Sara) (Chinese version)	Sijie, Fairy	Kang, Won-seok

Table 2: Tracklist of Don't Start Now

On 30 May 2001, BoA released her debut single in Japan “ID; Peace B”, which translated into Japanese. “Dreams Come True,” which first appeared in her mini-album in Korea was also translated in Japanese. There was neither code-switching nor any mention of a Korean word in the songs. Furthermore, the fifth track in the single is the English version of “ID; Peace B” only; not the Korean or Chinese versions. For the title track itself, despite being originally a Korean song, there was no label that it was a “Japanese version.” There was no indication that the single was a Korean record in the first place.



Figure 2. Cover Art of Japan single “ID;Peace B”

Tracklist:

1. ID; Peace B
2. Dreams Come True
3. ID; Peace B (Instrumental)
4. Dreams Come True (Instrumental)
5. ID; Peace B (English Version)



Figure 3: “ID;Peace B” MV (Korean)



Figure 4: “ID;Peace B” PV (Japanese)

A different music video was also created to promote “ID; Peace B.” One thing that can be seen in the Japanese version is the scene where BoA is in a classroom, and the Japanese lyrics was written on the screen. Without knowing about BoA’s background, she can be misperceived as a Japanese native.



Figure 5: “ID;Peace B’s” PV Features Japanese lyrics

Furthermore, the direct English translations of the Korean and Japanese versions of “ID; Peace B” are different. For the Japanese version, the translation is:

今 始まる Peace B is my network ID	Ima hajimaru Peace B is my network ID	It’s starting now, Peace B is my network ID
震えてる心 勇 気に変えて	Furueteru kokoro yuuki ni kaete	I’m gonna turn my trembling heart into courage
夢ひろがる Connecting is my never land	Yume hirogaru connecting is my never land	My dreams are broadening, connecting is my Neverland
チカチカチュー 笑顔あげるか ら	Chikachikachuu egao wo ageru kara	Chikachikachuu, and give you a smile

Table 3: English Translation of ID;Peace B (Japanese Version)

The translated Korean version is:

난 내 세상있죠 Peace B is my network ID	Nan nae sesangijyo Peace B is my network ID	I have my world Peace B is my network ID
우린 달라요 갈 수 없는 세계는 없죠	Urin dallayo Gal su eobnun segyenun eobjyo	We are different There is no world we can't explore
하나로 담긴 세상 connecting in my neverland	Hanaro damgin sesang Connecting in my neverland	The world to be filled as one
추카추카추! 이젠 멈출 수가	추카추카추! 이젠 멈출 수가	Connecting in my never land

없어요	Chuka chuka chu! Ijen meomchul suga eobseoyo	Choo ka choo ka choo Now we won't stop
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Table 4: English Translation of “ID; Peace B” Korean Version

Having the same titles and music, but having been given different meanings through the use of different languages, “ID; Peace B” becomes both a J-Pop and K-Pop song at the same time.

In BoA’s succeeding releases in Japan, there will occasionally be English versions included in the singles, but never the Korean and Chinese versions. In BoA’s Korean CDs, on the other hand, the Korean album can have Chinese and English versions, but never the Japanese versions. Just from how the songs have been translated and released in Japan and Korea, an unwritten rule is apparent. In Japan’s case, only English and Japanese are the acceptable languages in their music industry – the languages of the centers of popular culture in the regional and global level. In Korea’s case, Korean singers do not sing in Japanese, but Chinese is fine.

In 2002, BoA released her debut album in Japan, *LISTEN TO MY HEART*, together with the CD single “Every Heart ～ミンナノキモチ～”. The latter was worth to mention because it was used as a theme song of the *anime* series *InuYasha*, and also appeared in the *anime*’s soundtrack releases, wherein BoA can be assumed by *anime* fans as a Japanese singer.



Figure 6: *LISTEN TO MY HEART*’s Cover Art album encapsulates BoA’s pan-Asian features



Figures 7 and 8: Screencaps of the “LISTEN TO MY HEART” PV

The tracklist also indicates that the album is a Japanese record, especially with some of the song titles being written in kana and kanji.

Track Title	Lyricist	Composer
1. LISTEN TO MY HEART*	Natsumi Watanabe	Kazuhiro Hara
2. POWER	Maki Mihara	Ken Harada
3. Every Heart ~ ミンナノキモチ~*	Natsumi Watanabe	BOUNCEBACK
4. Don't start now*	Yoo, Young-jin Yuko Ebine (Japanese lyrics)	Peter Rafelson Jeff Vincent
5. 気持ちはつたわる* (Kimochi wa Tsutawaru)	Chinfa Kang	BOUNCEBACK
6. Share your heart (with me)	Yuko Ebine	Tetsuya Muramatsu
7. Dreams come true	Maki Mihara	Ken Harada
8. Amazing Kiss*	BOUNCEBACK	BOUNCEBACK
9. happiness	maho fukami	maho fukami
10. ID; Peace B*	Yoo, Young jin Mai Matsumuro (Japanese lyrics)	Yoo, Young jin
11. Nobody but you	Natsume Watanabe	Kosuke Morimoto
12. Nothing's gonna change	BoA, Natsumi Watanabe	BoA
13. Bonus Track: LISTEN TO MY HEART (Hex Hector Main Mix: English version)		Remix Produced by Hex Hector for Ground Control Productions
14. the meaning of peace	Tetsuya Komuro	Tetsuya Komuro

Table 5: Tracklist of *LISTEN TO MY HEART*

In *LISTEN TO MY HEART*, all the songs released as singles (with the symbol *), except for “ID; Peace B” and “Don't start now”, were originally created as Japanese songs. In this album, three songs have been translated to Japanese from BoA's previous Korean albums (in bold letters). Again, there was no “Japanese version” label.

BoA then returned to Korea and released her second studio album *NO. 1* on April 14, 2002, which became her breakthrough record there.

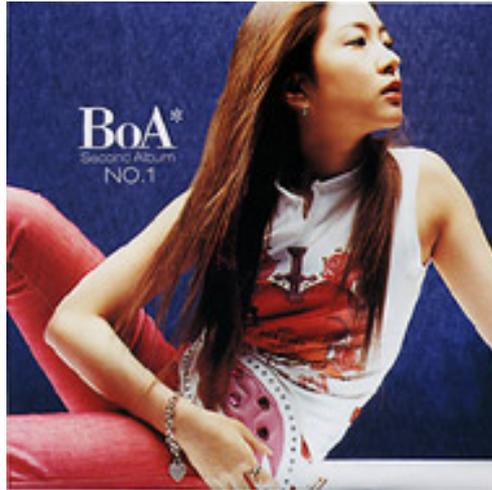


Figure 9. *NO.1's* Cover Art features BoA's consistent image and style she has been sporting in Korea and Japan

Track Title	Lyricist	Composer
1. NO.1	Kim, Yeong-ah	Ziggy
2. My Sweetie	Yoo, Young-jin	Yoo, Young-jin
3. 늘.. (waiting..)	Kangta	Kangta
4. Tragic	Ahn Ik-su	Ahn Ik-su
5. Shy Love	Bae, Hwa-yeong	Go, Yeong-jo
6. Day	Son, Nak-hee	Son, Nak-hee
7. dear my love..	BoA	BoA
8. 난 (Beat it!)	Kangta	Kangta
9. P.O.L (Power Of Love)	Nam, So-yeong	S.Y.M
10. My Genie	Im, Soo-cheol	Kang, Won-seok
11. Pain-Love	Yoo, Chan-mo	Yoo, Chan-mo
12. Happiness Lies	Park, Jeong-ran	Dennis Verrios/Ben Bellamacina/Jemma Joyce/Jamie Hardwick/Bruce Elliot-Smith
13. Realize (stay with me)	BoA	BoA
14. Azalea	Kim, Mi-seon	Kim, Mi-seon
15. Bonus Track: Listen to my Heart	Korean lyrics by Jo, Yoon-kyung Original author: Natsume Watanabe	Original composer: Kazuhiro Hara

Table 6: Tracklist of NO.1

Looking at the tracklist, we can see that a lot of (foreign) composers contributed to the album. Only “*Listen to my Heart*” came from her Japan record, but was translated into Korean. In this case, a “Korean version” label wasn’t considered, which can be misperceived that it was originally a Korean song.

The MV of the title track “NO.1” is also notable because it features BoA performing with the Tokyo Tower as the backdrop, followed by her dance footage being shown all over Shibuya, and a bevy of paparazzi at her heels. This particular video, which targets the domestic (Korean) audience, highlights BoA’s success in Japan and also possibly K-Pop’s success since the song is Korean.



Figure 10: “NO.1’s” MV shows BoA performing with the Tokyo Tower as a backdrop



Figures 11 and 12: Screenshots of BoA’s “NO.1” MV showing her dance footage in Shibuya



Figure 14. Cover Art of *Miracle*

Tracklist:

기적(Miracle)
Every Heart
Valenti
Feelings Deep Inside (마음은 전해진다)
Share Your Heart (With Me)
Happiness
Snow White
Nobody But You
Next Step
Nothing's Gonna Change
Bonus Track: Listen to my Heart

Another record worth to mention is the Korean mini-album *Miracle*, for *Miracle*'s tracks are originally from BoA's Japanese records, which have all been translated to Korean, though there were minor changes to the titles. For example, “奇跡” (Kiseki/Miracle) as it appeared in her Japanese release became “기적 (Miracle),” transliterated as “Ki joek (Miracle).” “Every Heart” also lost the “～ミンナノキモチ～” katakana title in this album. Also, her Japanese single “気持ちはずたわる (Kimochi wa Tsutawaru)” was also translated to English and Korean, respectively, as “Feelings Deep Inside (마음은 전해진다),” transliterated as “Feelings Deep Inside (Ma-eum eun joehaejinda).” Another strategy in the tracklisting is seen here - when the songs written in Japanese characters are translated and released in Korea, Japanese characters are omitted, and are sometimes replaced with its English translation and/or Korean characters. Also at this point, a number of BoA's Korean songs are Koreanized versions of her Japanese releases. As the songs were officially released in albums with its own cover arts and live performances, they have become both J-Pop and K-Pop in their own right.

To promote *Miracle*, a music video for the Korean version of “VALENTI” was released. The MV of the Korean version of “VALENTI” is exactly the same as the Japanese version's. To make it a Korean song, the lyrics were translated to Korean and the length of the introductory beat and the instrumental part at the bridge of the song was shorter than the Japanese version.



Figure 15: MV of “VALENTI” (Korean) Figure 16: PV of “VALENTI” (Japanese)

Furthermore, the Korean media (Pops in Seoul, 2013) introduces “VALENTI” as BoA's hit single in Japan, but what BoA performs in Korea is the Korean version, which is technically not the hit song in Japan per se.

BoA went back to Japan and released her second and best-selling studio album in Japan *VALENTI*. The album is created mostly by Japanese musicians and only “NO.1” came from her Korean album. Despite being a big hit in Korea, “NO.1” was still translated to Japanese.

At this point, the extent and the frequency of these song appearances are so high that it has become confusing which version of the song has been released first in what country. BoA’s original songs in Korea often appear as b-side tracks in her Japanese CD singles, remix albums, or studio albums, while her original Japanese songs also appear in her Korean singles and mini-albums. With this strategy, BoA’s records pave the way for her J-Pop fans to be introduced to her Korean songs and in K-Pop in general, and vice versa. In this light, BoA can really be called *Asia’s Star* as she becomes the model of and gateway to J-Pop and K-Pop. However, by having same song titles, the Korean media facilitate the notion that her success in Japan is mistakenly attributed to the success of her K-Pop songs there.

Another strategy observed is that when original Korean songs are released in Japan, they will have different music videos. It shows that when a record is to be promoted in Japan, the music video has to be an original production and not merely a copied version from its Korean counterpart. On the other hand, when original Japanese songs are translated and released in Korea, no changes are made in the music video. In this strategy, the Korean industry purposefully uses Japan’s product and adds its own meanings (through the replacement of a Koreanized song) to claim it as its own. From these different styles of music video productions and song releases, we can see how cultural industries in Japan and Korea re-create the songs and images of BoA in both countries in a way that she becomes both a J-Pop and K-Pop star at the same time, which can confuse audiences as they search for her songs and videos online as both versions appear in search engines without indication that it’s a Japanese or Korean version.

In 2012, BoA released her 7th studio album in Korea entitled *Only One*. Its title track “Only One” topped all music charts on the day of its release. And again it was translated and released in Japan as a single, with a different music video. However, the single failed to chart in the top 10 of the Oricon Chart – at a time when K-Pop was said to be the hype in Japan.

Conclusion

The transbordering activities of BoA in Japan reveal the extent of the adjustments and negotiation that had to be made in the image of the Korean artist, her songs, CD tracklists, CD cover arts, and music videos. As this study presented, BoA has undergone extensive preparation to localize her in the Japanese music industry and Japanese society. This has heavily compromised her identity as a K-Pop artist in Japan, but at the same time, this venture has made her, as the media have depicted, a *Hallyu Star* and an *Asian Star* back in Korea. Despite the dilution of her Korean origins in her J-Pop songs, BoA’s frequent transbordering activities has served as a gateway for her J-Pop fans to be introduced to her K-Pop songs, while her K-Pop fans are also introduced to her J-Pop songs.

BoA's debut in Korea and Japan was also serendipitous as it coincided with developments in the postcolonial relationship between the two countries. When she was recruited by SM Entertainment in 1998, South Korea had just lifted the ban on the entry of Japanese cultural products in the country. In 2002, when she had topped both charts in Japan and Korea, the two countries co-hosted the 2002 FIFA World Cup, which facilitated more cultural exchange between the two countries. In 2003-2004, the Korean drama *Winter Sonata* swept Japan by storm. During that time, BoA has also been topping the charts in both Korea and Japan, which is why she has often been considered as part of *Hallyu*. In other words, BoA's activities and success as a transbordering/*Hallyu* artist is also contingent on the evolving political, economic, and socio-cultural relations of Korea and Japan. This claim and the hybridized nature of the Korean cultural production practice go against the dominant discourses in *Hallyu* characterized as "predominantly essentialistic, homogenized" and has a "reductionist sense of culture, which is highly problematic and at best one-dimensional" (Lee, 2008, p.182).

Furthermore, at present, *Hallyu* stars still employ the strategies mentioned in the discussion, such as releasing original songs in Japanese, translating Korean songs to Japanese, creating new music videos for the translated song, and performing Japanese songs in Japan, while also translating Japanese songs into Korean when the songs are released in Korea. This shows that despite the claim that a paradigm shift is happening, wherein K-Pop has become "the epicentre of pop culture in Asia," a *Hallyu* star's commercial success in Japan is still the legitimizing factor for their "Asian" and global star status. This is evident in BoA's case, wherein despite topping the Oricon Chart with her Japanese songs, the Korean media still refer to these songs as the success of K-Pop or *Hallyu*. Thus, in the cultural hierarchy in Asia, Japan is still the standard in the region. The researcher then locates Korea and K-Pop music in the middle, while China and other Southeast Asian countries are below. This is justified by the extensive localization and adjustments that K-Pop artists do to become J-Pop artists, while they promote and maintain their K-Pop songs and artistry while promoting in China and other Southeast Asian countries.

It is also said that the Korean Wave's peak has already passed. In the post-Korean Wave and with the tension arising between Japan and South Korea brought about by territorial disputes and lingering colonial memories, it is interesting to focus on how it will still affect and will be affected by the transbordering activities of BoA and other *Hallyu* stars.

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