

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 English as an International Language**

The expansion of English in globalization formed the status of English in the world, as an international language. English, however, can be considered an instrument for English speakers to express their cultural identities to other speakers from different backgrounds (Sharifian, 2011 as cited in Marlina & Giri, 2014), a tool that enables speakers to communicate globally (Tajeddin et al., 2021), and as the subject in educational systems or English Language Teaching around the world (Rahman & Saputra, 2021, Ngu et al., 2021). There are various terms used for English in different fields and some confusion of the use of the terms commonly happens. Those terms, as mentioned by Marlina and Giri (2014), are English as an International Language (EIL), English as Lingua Franca (ELF), and World Englishes (WE). Ke (2019) also added the term English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as one of the similar terms defining the status of English.

In the context of English as an International Language (EIL), various definitions and perceptions existed by different researchers: a variety of English' (Tomlinson, 2003 & Widdowson, 1997, as cited in Marlina & Giri, 2014), the uses of English in international contexts (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2010 as cited in Marlina & Giri, 2014), the language used by two people with different L1 (Ke, 2019), and a language of international and intercultural communication (Sharifian, 2009 as cited in Marlina & Giri, 2014). Marlina and Giri (2014) also argued that "EIL, as a paradigm, recognizes the international function of English and its use in a variety of cultural and economic arenas by speakers of English from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds who do not speak each other's mother tongues" (p. 4).

As well as the existing number of bi/multilingual speakers of English has gradually increased to a larger number, different varieties of world

Englishes also appeared (Graddol, 2001; Kachru, 1986 as cited in Marlina & Giri, 2014). Kachru's (1986) three circles of English have explained everything about the distribution of World Englishes (WE) or the variety of English around the world aligns with the cultural aspects of each country (Marlina & Giri, 2014). The various roles of English in different regions, such as Asia, commonly happened, includes as the lingua franca, education and employment, official and semi-official language, as an aid for instructions, and as one of the subjects learned in schools (Haidar & Fang, 2019, & Sofyan, 2021). In the EFL classroom, students tend to still learn English as a school subject belonging to English native-speaker countries, even in colleges and universities (Timmis, 2002, as cited in Marlina & Giri, 2014).

## **2.2 K-Pop Culture**

Combined with “K” and “Pop”, K-Pop which stands for South Korean Pop Music has been rapidly spreading since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It reached the entire world along with the help of social networking sites and the inception of smartphones. The Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) as argued by Kim, (2015), is a phenomenon of the spread of Korean culture in Southeast Asia and China among people who have much interest in Korean music (K-Pop), dramas (K-drama), TV shows, fashion, food, and beauty. The spread of K-pop is considered the second stage of the Korean Wave domination around the world. Reteo (2015) explained, there are four stages to name the process: “*Hallyu* 0.1 (K-drama), *Hallyu* 2.0 (K-pop music), *Hallyu* 3.0 (K-culture), and *Hallyu* 4.0 (K-style)” (p.154). At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, K-pop music was propagated by K-artists or K-Idols such as Shinhwa, BoA, HOT as the first generation, Girls Generation, 2PM, Big Bang, Super Junior and SHINee as the second generation, and continued to rise with the next generation such as BTS, EXO, Twice, ENHYPEN, Stray Kids, Le Sserafim and New Jeans as the latest new K-Pop groups.

The success of K-Pop could not be separated from the role of their fans. Jin (2010), as stated in Jin and Ryoo (2014), states that as first influenced by Korean TV dramas in East Asia in the late 1990s, the Korean

Wave can be defined as a process of dissemination of Korean culture through social media platforms and integrated fan communities virtually. These fan communities are called ‘fandom’ which refers to a group or community of people who share the same interest and gather to support the same artist (Kang & Lee, 2019). Commonly, a fandom shares their own culture and positive energy towards each other to achieve their intention of supporting K-pop Idols. It can occur variously, such as suggesting some recommendations that can affect the company’s decision toward their Idols by trending some hashtags in social media and sending emails, voting for some annual awards, and raising their favorite Idols’ rank on the chart by listening to their music and buying their new released album. This notion is supported by an argument stated by Kim (2015), that “Idol fans who maintain loyalty to their stars pay to download digital music files and purchase albums despite the introduction of streaming services and the spread of illegal downloads” (p. 84).

A study about K-pop fandom behavior reveals that the loyalty of K-pop fandom leads to a level that they are included in idol group production by the K-pop idol companies. Kang (2007) in Kim (2015) reported that one of the big companies in the music industry in South Korea, S.M. Entertainment introduced the official fan club system and started to release multiple products (K-Pop merchandise) in the name of the K-Idols as they targeted their ‘loyal’ fans to earn larger numbers. Kang (2007) continues that the company tends to follow fans’ needs instead of reaching a larger audience. As a result, K-Idol fandom has been gaining more power in the Korean entertainment market for more than a decade.

Since the spread of the Korean Wave has reached around the world, these ‘loyal’ fans mentioned above in K-Pop fandom come from not only South Korea itself but also from across the world. As an effect of the Korean Wave, K-pop merchandise also gained more consumers from international fans (Delivered Korea, 2023).

### **2.3 K-Pop Group Order**

Delivered Korea (2023) defines group order in K-Pop as an activity of merch-buying where fans can add their orders to a shared cart or basket simultaneously. K-Pop group order is organized by the managers, usually consisting of the owner and admins. Their activities are usually searching for information about collectible goods that are sold by the idols' agency or fans, promoting the collectible goods while sharing it in a group order, communicating with warehouse and different exchange rate transaction service providers, communicating and having a transaction with seller from overseas, updating the order status to the customers, recapping orders, transactions, also accounting, and then pack also ship the collectible goods to buyers' addresses.

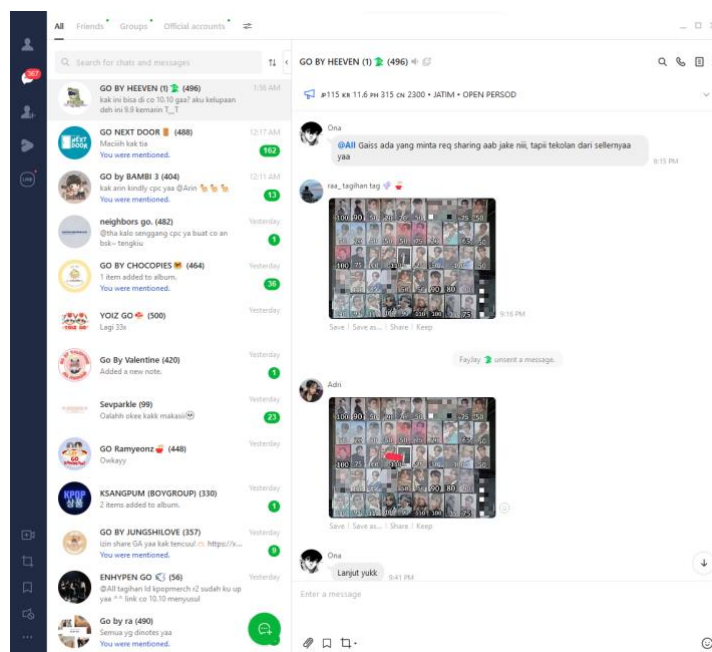


Figure 2.1 The practice of K-Pop group orders on LINE Messenger

K-Pop group order existed in a fandom community where people with the same interest in K-Pop are gathered on online platforms (Malik & Haidar, 2023). This community where the activities of group order take place is also commonly called 'sell, buy and trade' or abbreviated as SBT, a community where collectors of K-Pop collectible goods are gathered. The existence of GO helps customers who did not understand how to buy things

from overseas obtain a certain product they want, in this case, collectible goods of K-Pop. The benefits of buying K-Pop collectible goods from a group order are also mentioned by Delivered Korea (2023). First, on the additional reduced cost, there are cheaper shipping fees and discounts or promos that might be acquired since there are multiple items on the same order. Second, the buyers will only be responsible for sending the money to the group order managers since they will do everything regarding the order process until the local shipping. Third, since the buyers of a group order were gathered on a certain social media platform that was able to accommodate the information about the collectible goods, a social relation will also be required as the people are in a community where they share the same interest.

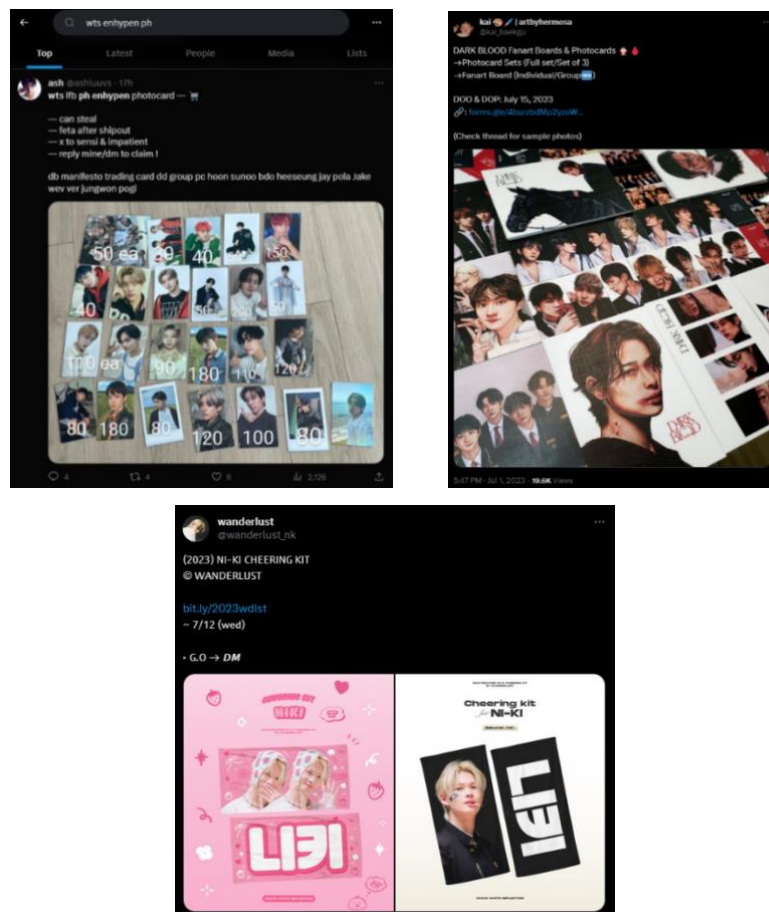


Figure 2.2 The searching process of K-Pop collectible goods

The practice of GO can occur between people from different places in the same country or even from different countries. The activity of group order started with the searching process of collectible goods by the admin in a certain social media, commonly using Twitter/X and Instagram using particular keywords i.e. “Want to Sell/WTS”, and “Want to Buy/ WTB” then adding the name of the idols and the country where the seller comes from, or add the specific goods as well. For example, “WTS ENHYPEN PH” for collectible goods from the Philippines, and “WTS ENHYPEN fanart”, also “WTS ENHYPEN cheering kit”. After that, its rate price is adjusted into the Indonesian marketplace and then shared with the media where the SBT community gathered.

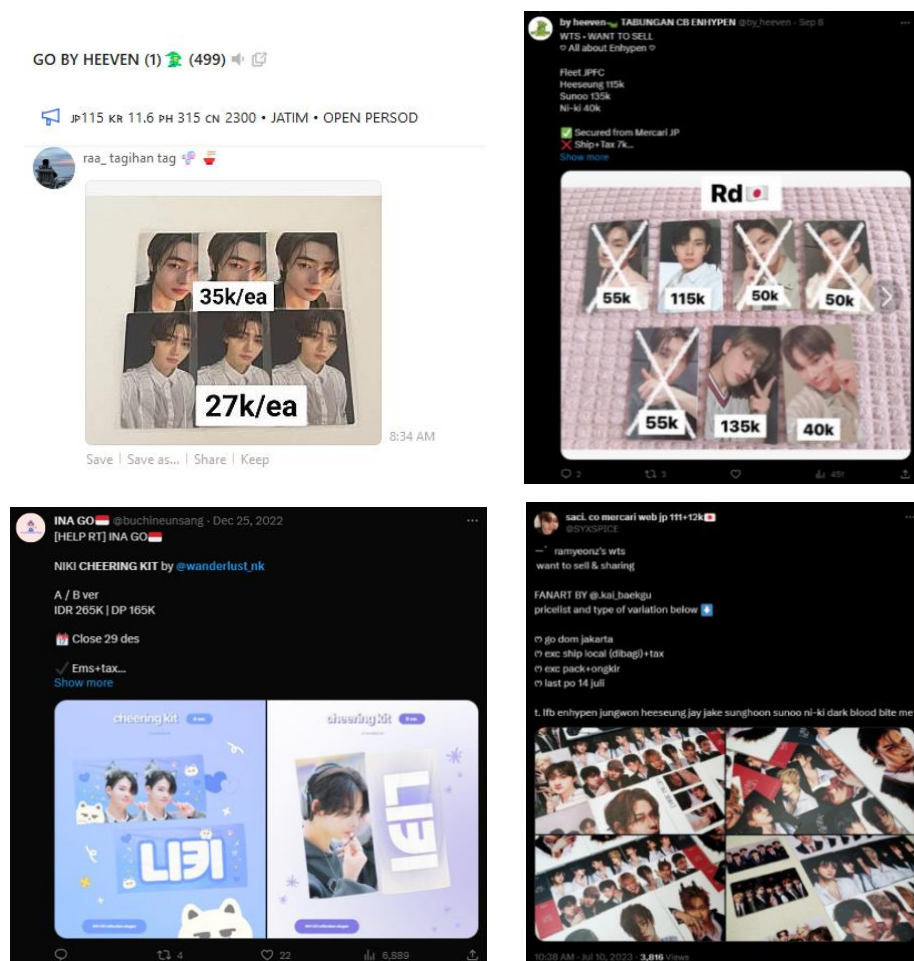


Figure 2.3 The promotion process of collectible goods shared

If buyers are interested in the collectible goods shared and agree with the price, GO managers then start to communicate with the sellers through direct messages using English, asking for the transaction details and the collectible goods' condition. If an agreement is established, the agreed amount of money is then transferred to the seller through the different exchange rate service provider. Furthermore, the seller should send the collectible goods purchased to a warehouse service provider in the same country and give the tracking number to the GO manager. Moreover, the GO managers wait for the shipping information from the warehouse until the package arrives in the Indonesia warehouse. After the process of overseas shipping is finished, the tax and shipping fees should be paid first before the packages are sent to the GO managers' address to be packed and sent again to the buyers' address.



Figure 2.4 The communication process between the GO managers  
and the international seller



## **2.4 Language and Context**

Armstrong and Ferguson (2010) mentioned that language has three functions, which are talking about something, developing and maintaining a relationship with someone, and how the language is used to express and form intentions into messages. The function of language for an individual to communicate should consider the different contexts based on the needs of different situations and circumstances. These different contexts also require different language features such as different kinds of vocabulary, grammatical constructions, and expressions to deliver (Armstrong & Ferguson, 2010). Based on Butt et al. (2000) in Armstrong and Ferguson (2010), the need for suitable language features in different contexts can be categorized into “genres”, for example, narrative, recount, exposition, procedure, protocol, report, explanation, and interview. For example, the language used in “formal” and “informal” situations must be different, as to consider who is the person or people as the partner of the conversation. Hymes (2009) also explained, that “Just as speech communities, historical periods, and persons differ in the degree to which they consider appropriate use of words and phrases to be context-specific, so also with stylistic features and structures.” (p. 165).

The role of language as a “meaning-making resource” as explained by Armstrong and Ferguson (2010) are one of the important elements in daily conversation since besides being used as an aid for exchanging information, language also appears to preserve social relationships in transactions and interactions. Along with that, language as a resource for discourse coherence means that the conversation needs to clarify the referred context the other person is trying to convey, to continue the conversation. The use of conjunctions, pronouns, and different intonation can contribute to helping the conversation’s partner understand more (Armstrong & Ferguson, 2010).

## **2.5 Study of the Relevant Research**

A study by Botez (2015) about accessing knowledge using the English language reveals that English has an important role in education and

economic fields especially for a successful career in Rumania. They mentioned that to have access to information and scientific research, it cannot be argued that studying the English language should be finished first, and studying English can be beneficial for personal growth. Besides, the requirements for jobs also included English language competence as one of the main criteria. This matter is related to “accelerating the synchronization with the global economy” (Botez, 2015, p. 102) since the English language has become an acceptable background for international business transactions.

Moreover, Collin (2018) mentioned that English Language Art (hereafter, ELA) also can be related to the economic field, since ELA can be used as a medium to gain literacy to secure and perform paid work in the future. One of the participants of this study who was an ELA teacher revealed that she encouraged her students to do research on their dream career and then investigate the job application letters to identify what are the specific desired English skills by the company. Later then, students can focus on developing their skills while learning ELA as well as gaining knowledge for their dream job.

Furthermore, English as a tool for international communication also has been studied by Shiau (2016), who investigated how English is used in online communication to maintain intercultural friendships among Taiwanese ESL students who study in the United States with their English native speaker friends. As for the result, the researcher found that there were some challenges faced by the participants when communicating using English related to the language barrier. First, they have a difficult time typing in English because of the particular difference in available letters used in keyboards since they were used to using Mandarin Chinese letters. Second, they are afraid to communicate through phone calls and think it is “too intrusive” and “embarrassing”. Textual communication becomes their alternative in maintaining intercultural friendship although they are more likely a slow-typer in writing English. Besides, the availability of stickers and photo-sharing features on social media platforms helps them to express their friendly

gestures and make communication less awkward despite the language barriers. On the other hand, a study by Lee (2015) revealed that the new language produced by internet communication is damaging the way the human brain processes information and knowledge from its actual meaning. The different ways of thinking by each person can cause a misinterpretation in communication. Moreover, 'manner' in textual communication is also an important thing to be considered to avoid misinterpretation since textual communication eliminates intonation as a language aspect of communication.

In addition, studies revealed that English has a quite important role in the rise and development of K-Pop culture. Aisyah (2017) investigated the Korean-English translation text process in one of the K-Pop group's official Twitter accounts to provide information about BTS to the fans which took place in social media communication. The results showed that since the content on social media is not always uploaded in English, the existence of fan-based translators (fans who actively translate every content and information about K-Pop Idol into other languages) has an important role in helping international fans gain information about the idols and overcome the language barriers.

To add another context, the existence of the English language in K-pop song lyrics is also widely used. English mixing language in K-Pop songs studied by Jin and Ryoo (2014). They explained that the use of English in K-pop lyrics was influenced by the adoption of the Western music genre since the mid-90s as well as it started targeting not only domestic audiences but also foreign audiences. The role of English in these K-pop contexts is one of the big factors in the spread and growth of K-pop culture internationally.

The use of English as an international language is discussed above in different kinds of contexts. The related contexts mentioned are in the education and economic fields as related to job application (Botez, 2015; Collin, 2018), international communication using social media (Shiau, 2016), and in K-Pop contexts (Aisyah, 2017; Jin & Ryoo, 2014). Therefore, since the use of the English language for communication is extensive as well as the

challenges, the researcher is interested in investigating another different context of using English as an international language, which is in a K-Pop group order context, since this field has not been much studied before.