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Three Adaptations of the Japanese Comic Book Boys Over Flowers in the Asian Cultural Community: Analyzing Fidelity and Modification from the Perspective of Globalization and Glocalization

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Abstract

A wide variety of cultural products have been adapted into a brand new text in the process of globalization. The three adaptations of the Japanese cartoon, Boys over Flower, in the following countries: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have very similar storylines. The three storylines, although similar, have several modifications due to the differing audiences and goals of each series. Based on the idea of globalization; fidelity in the adaptation can be understood as emphasizing the shared values and community spirit between cultures while modifications can be interpreted as organizational gatekeeping. This study analyzes how the narratives in the three adapted texts show fidelity and modification. In conclusion, fidelity could be interpreted as presenting the glocalized cultural values or socio-cultural popular memory in the Asian context while modification could be considered as being reflective of a wide variety of different socio-cultural contexts where the series were created

Keywords

Adaptation, Asian Cultural Community, Globalization, Glocalization, Narrative Analysis

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Three Adaptations of the Japanese Comic Book *Boys Over Flowers* in the Asian Cultural Community: Analyzing Fidelity and Modification from the Perspective of Globalization and Glocalization

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*A wide variety of cultural products have been adapted into a brand new text in the process of globalization. The three adaptations of the Japanese cartoon, *Boys over Flower*, in the following countries: Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have very similar storylines. The three storylines, although similar, have several modifications due to the differing audiences and goals of each series. Based on the idea of globalization; fidelity in the adaptation can be understood as emphasizing the shared values and community spirit between cultures while modifications can be interpreted as organizational gatekeeping. This study analyzes how the narratives in the three adapted texts show fidelity and modification. In conclusion, fidelity could be interpreted as presenting the glocalized cultural values or socio-cultural popular memory in the Asian context while modification could be considered as being reflective of a wide variety of different socio-cultural contexts where the series were created.*

Keywords: Adaptation, Asian Cultural Community, Globalization, Glocalization, Narrative Analysis

East Asia has been a cultural community for a long time. With the generation of the East Asian media market, the characteristics of cultural community became more evident. During the process of globalization, a wide variety of cultural products were adapted and readapted into a brand new text all around the world. The three adaptations of the Japanese cartoon *Boys over Flower* in Japan, Korea and Taiwan can be good examples of adaptations in a local area. When connecting these adaptations to globalization, fidelity in the adaptation can be understood as emphasizing the shared values and the constructed community spirit between cultures. On the contrary, the modifications in the adaptation can be interpreted as organizational gatekeeping according to the differences in cultural values or the structures of media industry. Therefore, this study will analyze how the narratives in the three adapted texts show fidelity and modification, which represent the shared values in the audience community as well as the differences in the cultural values and industrial structures of each country.

Literature review

The landscape of cultural exchange in East Asia

In the past, despite their close geographical proximity and cultural compatibility, East Asian countries have largely suppressed cultural exchanges for political reasons (Park, 2004). East Asian countries including China, Korea, and Japan began to promote intercultural exchanges relatively recently (Park, 2004). Since the 1980s, East Asia has experienced growing influences of regional media industries: media industries of Hong Kong in the 1980s, those of Japan in the 1990s, and those of Korea in the 2000s (Shim, 2006). In the

1980s, Hong Kong noir films and chivalry films reflected “orientalism” according to Said’s (1979) term, which refers to mystifying the Asian traditional cultures, most of which were lost by Asians throughout “westernization.” Japanese pop culture including idol stars, manga and animation especially thrived in the 1990s. Contrary to Hong Kong, Japanese cartoonists and animators eliminated their cultural distinctiveness to get popularity in the global market (Iwabuchi, 1998).

Since the late 1990s, the influences of Korean popular culture have been growing in East Asia (Shim, 2005). The circulation of popular culture in Asia is becoming much more active through this “Hallyu,” which means the “Korean wave.” Korean pop culture has borrowed and imitated the best essence of Western popular culture throughout the 1990s, thus many Korean artists and experts criticized those cultural phenomena as cultural imperialism engendered by globalization. However, young Korean artists and producers have tried to recreate them for the Korean audiences. Now, Korean cultural commodities are greatly different from American and other western countries’ products. Therefore, many researchers found that Asian audiences of Korean cultural product share Asian values. For example, Lin and Tong (2008) stated that Korean dramas reconstruct Asian traditional femininities to Asian female audiences. The Korean wave has been an ongoing topic in Asia for more than ten years. Now, it has arrived to a stabilized stage.

Some scholars had criticized the three countries’ cultural domination in the local area as another type of imperialism. For example, Lii (1998) stated “Hong Kong’s film industry has succeeded not only to resist foreign domination, but also to invade neighboring countries, thus creating a new type of imperialism” (p. 123). In addition, progressive intellectuals and cultural studies practitioners in South Korea criticize the mainstream opinions about how the Korean wave don’t have the proper cross-cultural sensibility and concern for inter-regional dialogue, and willfully commodify the culture (Lee, 2008). However, it cannot be denied that the landscape of East Asian cultural circulation could be shaped throughout the three big cultural influences.

Sharing cultural contents: Inter-textual adaptations in the global and local areas

Globalization exposed the people of the world to other cultures, especially American culture. During the process of globalization, a wide variety of cultural products have been adapted and readapted into new texts. Although adaptation is a critical aspect of TV - production and film-making across the national and cultural borders, mass media scholars have overlooked it for a long time (Ross Altarac, 2008).

Since cultural adaptation and globalization include several industrial characteristics, they cannot be free from commercialism and imperialism. Therefore, transformations according to the specific nation or generation’s taste are required by diverse productions-related organizations. For example, Stephen Frears’ *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988) was adapted from a French classic eighteenth-century novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, written by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos. The film was adapted into a modern style film, *Cruel Intentions* (1999). Unlike other modern film versions of the novel set in the France of that time (such as *Dangerous Liaisons* and *Valmont*), *Cruel Intentions* is set among the wealthy teenagers living in modern New York City. In Korea, the same novel was also adapted into a Korean historical film, *Untold Scandal* (2003). This film is set in late 18th century Korea. Those adapted films present diversities in their narratives and manipulated details according to the changing settings and target audiences.

Media adaptations occur in many locations in the world including East Asia. The adaptations in a local area require relatively modest changes and present different modes of adaptation from the globally adapted media products. Therefore, to explain cultural

adaptations in East Asia, well-known concepts such as cultural imperialism (Said, 1993) emphasizing the post-colonial aspect of cultural legacy or globalization focusing on the global level adaptation and westernization might not be the most appropriate concepts. Although cultural imperialism assumes unequal relationships based on political and economic power, relationships among East Asian countries are relatively more interactive than unequal. For example, Korea, a country that is not richer than Japan, could lead the media culture in East Asia including Japan in the 2000s.

It appears that this kind of phenomenon is related to the term “glocalization.” The term “glocal” and “glocalization” refers to aspects of business jargon used during the 1980s (Robertson, 1995). The idea of glocalization in its business sense is closely related to micro marketing (Robertson, 1995). Robertson (1995) stated that the concept of glocalization has involved the simultaneous interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local, or the universal and the particular. In terms of “micro marketing,” media content in East Asia shares their market. Also their shared market presents some aspects of global market as well as the characteristics of a local area. *White Tower*, a Japanese novel treating doctors’ stories, was adapted into a Korean drama, and then it was exported to Japan. Another example of a Korean historical drama, *Taewangsasingi*, was exported to Japan in 2007. As soon as the drama was aired, a comic book version of the drama was released in Japan.

Fidelity in adaptation and the imagined Asian community

Cultural circulation in East Asia for several decades gave Asian people an opportunity to recognize themselves as a community. Anderson (1983) argued that newspapers as a fiction create mass ceremony of consuming themselves, meaning newspapers as a fiction. Members of the community probably will never know one another face to face; however they can have similar interests. Therefore, the media can be understood as creating “imagined communities”, through targeting a mass audience or generalizing and addressing citizens as the public. Hartley (1987) states “Television does frequently transgress national boundaries – the idea of its essential nationality is as imagined, or fictional, as the idea of the nation itself” (p. 57). According to Hartley, TV creates a community of audience across the nations. With regard to scholars’ thoughts above, Lee (2004) argues that the Korean wave shows potential to empower broader regional cultural integrations carried by a sense of “imagined Asianism” beyond the cultural boundaries. Lin and Tong (2008) also state that Korean dramas seem to re-affirm the traditional discourses of femininities as well as provide a potential imaginary space for alternative (hybridized) modernities and femininities. Their perspective focuses on the ritual perspective of communication, which highlights shared meaning, popular memory, and reality construction of communication.

Most of the debates about film and literature adaptation in the early period were concerned primarily with whether the film shows “true fidelity” to the book (Cho, 2005). Despite innumerable exception to the rule, adaptation theorists have persisted in treating fidelity to the source material as a norm (Leicht, 2007). Martin Scorsese’s *The Age of Innocence* (1993) can be illustrated as a case of successful fidelity. Quinn (2007) said that Scorsese’s achievement depends on his skill for capturing the tone of Wharton’s text while also expressing her themes. In regards to the adaptation between cultures, it can be assumed that this representation of original “tone” is reflective of the commonly shared cultural values. That is to say, if an original text is adapted unchanged, the adapted text shows fidelity and might share the common culture with the original text. Therefore, fidelity of the adapted text can be a possible standard measuring the cultural implications a text is generating as a product in a cultural community.

Modification in adaptations and cultural/industrial differences

“Intertextuality, a term invented by Julia Kristeva, is used to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text echoes.” (Cho, 2005, p.5) In an intertextually adapted visual text, generated transformation involves different elements of the original literary text such as signs, structures and sequence of events, which produce a wide variety of possible combinations (Cho, 2005). Leicht (2007) argues that the question “Why does this particular adaptation aim to be faithful?” should be asked rather than the question “Why are so many adaptations unfaithful to perfectly good sources?” Leicht’s (2007) argument can be understood as a reflection of reality in that there are much more “unfaithful” adaptations than faithful ones. Those modification or transformation in adaptations occurs due to a wide variety of reasons.

In terms of media texts, from a macro perspective cultural adaptations need to be viewed as a process involving many gatekeepers including foreign TV acquisition buyers, broadcasting station management, postproduction houses, dubbing firm, and translators (Ross Altarac, 2008). Imported TV programs are routinely modified by overseas television markets according to local cultural norms and values when they cross national borders (Ross Altarac, 2008). McQuail (2005) also suggests, “The more the content filtered through the national media system, the more it is subject to selection and adapted, reframed, and recontextualized to fit local tastes, attitudes, and expectations” (p. 260).

In addition, the industrial structure in the production side is also greatly influential to the adaptation processes. Some adapted narratives are modified to be reflective of existing narrative conventions, which are formed by the interest of producers and investors. The casting of big stars and advertising products can also influence the narrative structures by shooting abroad or using a wide variety of product placements (PPL). For example, with the influence of global economic dynamics since the 1980s the Korean economy started to promote production and commodification of media and cultural content, including film, television programming, animation etc. (Shim, 2008). As the Korean wave progresses, the Korean government also has encouraged content producers to cultivate overseas markets by providing financial support (Shim, 2008). Therefore, the industrial structure of each country can play a key role as an important context in the adaptation process.

In the same vein, Iwabuchi (2002) illustrated Taiwan’s TV series *Meteor Garden* (Taiwanese version of *Boys over flowers*) as a creative localization of Japanese cultural influence. The story was reconstructed in Taiwanese high school settings, featuring Taiwanese idol groups, F4, and original theme songs (Iwabuchi, 2002). He concluded the hybrid composition of Japanese and Taiwanese cultural imaginations has brought about a new East Asian youth culture that resists rigid political regulations (Iwabuchi, 2002). Iwabuchi’s interpretation of the popularity of *Meteor Garden* in Asian countries emphasizes the cultural and institutional modifications according to the specific culture and socio-economic system on the basis of common ground.

The three *Boys over Flowers*: sharing cultural contents

Boys over Flowers (*Hana yori Dango*, by Yoko Kamio) was serialized in a bi-weekly anthology magazine, which was aimed at teenage girls. In 1996, it received the Shogakukan Manga Award, which has been one of the major annual manga awards sponsored by Shogakukan Publishing in Japan since 1955. *Hana Yori Dango* is the best-selling shojo manga in Japan of all time (54 million copies in 2005) (Wikipedia).” Due to its immense popularity, *Hana Yori Dango* has been legally adapted into TV series in Taiwan, Japan and Korea.

The cultural distinctiveness of a product is closely associated with the racial and bodily images of a country of origin. However, Japanese cartoonist and animators unconsciously choose to draw Caucasian types because Japanese animation industries always have considered the global market and the non-Japaneseness of characters' advantage in the export market (Iwabuchi, 1998). *Boys Over Flowers* (*Hana yori Dango*) also show eliminating cultural characteristics in its drawing, and cultural distinctiveness in its narratives.

The everlasting popularity of *Boys over Flowers*, however, ironically represents the similar emotional structure of Asian sympathy. In East Asia, intraregional media flows particularly among Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea are gradually becoming active and constant more than ever (Iwabuchi, 2005) and this phenomenon was most evident in the 1990s. Before the Korean Wave, there was a relatively small boom caused by the Taiwanese adaption of *Boys of flowers* in several Asian countries. A Taiwanese TV drama *Meteor Garden* (2001), the first adaptation of *Boys over Flowers*, was imported back to Japan and soon created a boom, which present "familiarity with Confucianism and ethnicity" in this area (Iwabuchi, 2005). The Taiwanese version was also popular especially in the South East Asian countries such as Indonesia and Philippines. Japanese version was also exported to many countries including South Korea and Taiwan, and Korean version (2009) also had been sold to many countries in advance before the series was produced and aired in Korea.

Since modification and fidelity in adapted texts can reveal shared cultural value and the cultural difference or industrial structure, the three TV adaptations in three East Asian countries might be good texts for the reflected cultural similarities and differences in the Asian glocal community. A narrative consists of sequence and consequence, through which events are organized and meanings are created. Especially, a narrative structure including plot, conflict, and resolution can reflect the shared values and cultural differences of the three countries by the meanings created in the events. Therefore, in this study I will analyze the structure of each adapted narrative to investigate the reflected cultural similarities and differences in the East Asian glocal community.

Research Questions

As a Korean PhD student studying communication in the US, I have been very interested in the global media and cultural studies. The myriad adaptations from the US culture to the Western or non-Western cultural products have been investigated a lot previously. They have addressed a question as to why the particular adaptation aims to be faithful or not. Therefore, this made me curious about the following question; "what would be the answer if the question is applied to the context of the glocal cultural product?" Then, this curiosity also led to my research questions.

1. How do the narratives of three adapted texts show
 - a. fidelity and
 - b. modification from the original manga?
2. How do those fidelity and modification represent or not
 - a. the shared cultural value and
 - b. the cultural difference or industrial structure by gatekeeping?

Method

Narrative analysis of a comic book series and three TV dramas

In this study, I analyze how the narratives of three adapted texts show fidelity and modification, which represent the value of audience community sharing the culture and the value of cultural difference and industrial structure. Therefore, I use the method of narrative analysis. What makes diverse texts a narrative is sequence and consequence, which mean events that are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). Therefore, narrative analysis is a method for analyzing the overall pattern of the stories or narratives or texts (Stokes, 2003). According to Stokes (2003), researchers' object in analyzing the entire text should be finding the structure of the story in narrative analysis.

Reissman (2005) discusses four different analytic approaches to narrative analysis: thematic analysis, structural analysis, dialogic/performance analysis, and visual analysis. Reissman (2005) explains structural analysis by employing Labov's (2003) conception of structural approach. Labov (1983) explains that the structural approach of narrative analysis focuses on the function of a clause in the overall narrative, which means the communicative work it accomplishes. His basic components of a narrative structure are as follows: the abstract (summary and/or point of the story); orientation (to time, place, characters and situation); complicating action (the event sequence, or plot, usually with a crisis and turning point); evaluation; resolution (the outcome of the plot); and a coda (ending the story and bringing action back to the present).

To examine each adaptation of *Boys over Flowers*, first of all, I investigated the narrative changes and constancy from the original manga series, and the cultural or institutional factors which changes or keeps the original narrative structure. Since I employ a structural approach of narrative analysis, analyzing the narratives I focused on the point of story, orientation including place and situation, plot, and the outcome of the plot. Especially, the resolution of conflict in each plot is directly related to the theme of each narrative, which can be reflective of cultural values. I tried to connect the fidelity and modification found in each narrative with the topics of globalization and glocalization. By the fidelity, I tried to find the structure of imagined Asianism in the adapted texts, and by the modification, I tried to discover the cultural differences in glocal community or the differing characteristics derived from the distinct media industries.

To examine fidelity and modification in each adaptation, I analyzed all twenty five episodes of adapted Korean version, twenty episodes of adapted Japanese version (season 1 & 2), and twenty seven episodes of adapted Taiwanese version (season 1) with the original comic book series because these seasons are adapted from the original manga series' narrative structure. Taiwanese drama began its broadcast 12 April 2001 on CTV. Japanese television drama series, broadcasted on TBS in 2005. South Korean television drama broadcasted by KBS2TV in 2009. As a teenager, I started to read the original manga 17 years ago. Now, as a Korean PhD student, who is fluent in Korean and English, I watched the Korean version and the other two Korean dubbed adaptations (Japanese and Taiwanese versions) several times to increase familiarity with the adapted texts. Then, I watched again Japanese and Taiwanese versions translated into English to capture narratives that are significant in analyzing fidelity and modification from the original manga series. While watching the dubbed and translated adaptations, I repeatedly checked the consistencies and changes in the narratives compared to the original magna series.

Results

Fidelity in adaptations and sharing cultural values and trends

Shojo manga is a manga genre marketed directly to female readers and audiences aged eight to twenty years (Skov & Moeran, 1995). In the East Asia, shojo manga genre has been popular for a long time. Transposing culturally odorless (Iwabuchi, 1998) Japanese shojo manga into the culturally-specific Taiwanese TV series (Lim, & Tania, 2005), Korean TV drama and Japanese TV series can be understood from the perspective of cultural consumption of Japanese shojo manga in Asian countries. Lent (2000) suggested that a symbiotic relationship has existed between Japanese manga and other mass media in Asia quoting the adaptations in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Considering those media products have been influenced by Japanese manga as well as have influenced Asian mass culture, consuming *Boys over Flowers* as cultural products in Asian countries can also be interpreted as expressing common cultural features of Asian countries in spite of its *culturally odorless* (Iwabuchi, 1998) Caucasian type drawing.

A shojo manga series *Boys over Flower* is a typical Cinderella story. In the narrative, Tsukushi, a working-class girl, attends an elite escalator school called Eitoku Academy established for children from high-society families. Tsukushi's name means "weed," which is similar to her character throughout this manga series. In the Eitoku Academy, there are rich kids, including the "Flower Four" (F4), a group of four wealthy and popular boys enjoying making students' lives miserable. However, Tsukasa, who is the leader of F4 and the richest member, suddenly falls in love with Tsukushi. This narrative can be understood as a typical Cinderella story, and the Japanese comic books sharing the similar narratives style to this series are collectively called shojo manga.

Although structurally the story of *Boys over flowers* shares a universal archetype constructing several classic fairy tales, at the same time, the popularity of this narrative in East Asia is grounded in an Asian context of mass culture called Shojo manga. In the Korean, Taiwanese and Japanese adaptations, these narrative characteristics as a shojo manga structure remain unmodified. Japanese adaptation shows the same narrative structure in detail as the manga in the beginning of the TV series. In Korea version, Geum Jan-di, the main female character, is a girl from a poor family although her father is not a laborer, but a laundry runner. She by chance got into a prestigious private high school and became surrounded by rich students including F4. In Taiwanese version, poor teenage girl Shan Cai goes to a university for rich people according to her parents' wishes. Arrogant students called also F4, who are the heirs of the most influential families in Taiwan, also dominate the university. In spite of those little differences, all of the three TV series describes the romantic relationships between poor heroine and the leader of F4. One example common in Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese adaptations is an episode in which the hero kidnaps the heroine and completely transforms her into a princess appearance with a dress and jewelry that worth 100,000 dollars to make the heroine like him. This common narrative reveals a characteristic of a typical shojo manga based on the archetypal Cinderella story. The heroine is very special to the hero who is super-rich and handsome. In the Korean adaptation, a middle-aged butler working in the hero's mansion says, "Everyone is very curious as this is the first time such a thing happened. It's the first time our young master has brought a girl home."

Throughout the manga series, the economic situation of the heroine's family is becoming worse due to various reasons. She encounters the romance through her efforts to make a better future for both herself and her family. These narratives are also commonly described in the three adaptations. Family-centered values in the narrative present the basic cultural commonalties among Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. In addition, the three

adaptations maintain the manga's narrative revealing the collectivistic culture. Although the heroine's school is dominated by F4, she refuses to become an admirer of the F4. Therefore, F4 put a red card in her locker, which declares their war against her. Then, her classmates started to ostracize her violently so that they do not offend the F4. This collective bullying is called *Izieme* in Japanese, which has been considered social illness in Japan. Although this kind of phenomenon is a critical social problem in the Japanese culture, the narrative of collective bullying as an episode in a collectivistic culture seems sharable in the Asian context. In those scenes in the three adaptations, anonymous majority except the main characters are described as evil and psychopathic. Due to these extreme portrayals, those shows had been criticized in the Korean contexts.

Another important point to be discussed in terms of the collective bullying is the consistent role of the heroine toward the collective bullying culture in the three adaptations. In spite of the differences in violence description, in the three adaptations commonly the F4 boys dominate the school and often harass other students. However, since the heroine came into their lives, their lives started to change radically. In the three TV series, the heroine is described as an oppositional figure to the F4's culture, therefore the hero, one of F4 member, starts to harass the heroine opposing to their power and control in the school. Then, the heroine kicks the hero in the face, and this becomes a critical moment for the hero to fall in love with the heroine constructing an archetypal Cinderella storyline.

Fidelity in adaptations and similar socio-economic system

South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan as economically developed countries in East Asian context share not only cultural values which were derived from Confucianism but also diverse socio-economic systems and collective memories. From the *Boys over Flowers* manga series, the three adaptations commonly borrowed the narratives, which embody such socio-economic systems, collective memory of economic development with family conglomerates, and hierarchical society based on socio-economic status.

Chaebol means a South Korean business conglomerate. Throughout the Korean history, Chaebols were supported by government and now often larger than many entire countries' economies, owning numerous international enterprises. Korean Chaebol is often compared to Japanese keiretsu business groupings, the successors to zaibatsu before the war. Throughout the fast economic development of Asian countries, the governmental support was a commonly accepted process. Therefore, economic development by family-owned global conglomerates as well as popular memory on those developmental processes can be shared by the audiences in many Asian countries. Chaebols have inherited their conglomerates to their heir. A narrative describing this situation was in the manga *Boys over Flowers*, and that was adapted to the three TV versions.

In the first episode of Korean adaptation, via employing a documentary style, a narrator explains the background of this TV series in detail. She introduces Shinhwa, the hero's family corporation as "a representative Chaebol of South Korea." Additional explanations are as follows;

If you are a citizen of South Korea, you know the two letters of Shinhwa before you know the president's name, and Shinhwa has created a kingdom and therefore is Korea's largest conglomerate. (...) The founder of this company instead of receiving a medal said, "Sir, please allow me to build a school where my grandchildren could attend." (...) This is the first school in the history of Korea that was supported by the president who believed that

economic advancement was more important than fair education, but even made special laws to accommodate the request for this school.

The class difference between the hero and the heroine is consistent in the three adaptations. In the Japanese adaptation, the hero, Tsukasa is described as the heir of Domyoji financial corporation in the first episode, and in the Taiwanese adaptation, the hero, Daoming Si is the heir of Daoming family that owns a big telecommunication corporation.

The young hero as the heir of world-leading conglomerate is preparing to be a CEO; this situation provides with the motives for all the conflicts existing between the hero and the heroine. In addition, in relation to the family owned conglomerate, the manga narrative reveals the characteristics of hierarchical society dominated by commercial capital. The young hero's mother (the present CEO of hero's family group) can do anything to interrupt hero and heroine's relationship with her authority. She could manipulate the subsidiaries, and fire the heroine's family members or friends with her power. There was nothing she could not control over except for hero and heroine's continuous relationship. This narrative remains unchanged in the three adaptations.

In addition to the popular memory concerning Chaebols, the narrative regarding F4's popularity could be easily used for the idol star-centered entertainment industry system in the three adaptations. Korean producer of the TV series stated that buying the copyright was so competitive due to the money-making features embedded in the original manga series (Han, 2009, February 10). Actually, casting F4 roles in the three adaptations is reflective of the structure of Asian entertainment industry. In the Japanese version, the leader of F4 is from famous pop group member. In the Korean version, the two of the F4 members are also from famous idol pop groups. In the Taiwanese case, the show's popularity resulted in a new idol group composed of the F4 members in the TV series. In Korean and Japanese versions, producers tried to guarantee the proper level of ratings by casting the popular idol stars. Most of the Korean and Japanese idol stars start their entertainer lives as a pop group member and challenge acting in a TV drama or a film after they get some fame as an idol star. Then their qualities as a big star are evaluated. This production system in each industry also fit the original manga's narrative representing four young stars as attractive characters. Therefore, it can be concluded that the star system of entertainment industry in each country is taking advantage of the narrative fidelity of three adaptations.

For example, in addition to the hero's attractiveness, Rui, one of the F4 members in the original manga series, is described as another type of magnetism in the three adaptations. He is a silent, but heroic figure who appears whenever the heroine is in danger or needs help. Also, he understands heroine's sense of justice opposing toward F4's unreasonable power and collective bullying. The three adaptations take advantage of Rui's heroic and considerate characteristics creating another attractive character that is compared to and contested with the hero. Rui often plays the violin in the original manga series, and the three adaptations depict the scenes in atmospheric ways to portray Rui's "idolic" attractiveness.

Modifications in adaptations and differing cultural values

The producer of Korean TV series said, "I had to change a few details in the storyline because of the cultural differences between Japan and Korea" (Han, 2009, February 10). In addition, Lim and Tanina (2005) state in their research on the Taiwanese adaptation that while using successful and popular Japanese formats in manga, *Meteor Garden* is negotiating a Taiwanese identity in its popular TV programs.

By modifying the environmental settings in the adaptation, the Korean and Taiwanese versions tried to erase "Japanese" color. Although In Japanese manga and TV series,

Tsukushi is working at a Japanese rice cake store, in Korean version, Jan-di (the heroine) is working at a Korean rice gruel (called “Juk”) store and in Taiwanese version, Shan Cai (the heroine) is working in a bakery. Especially in the Korean context, Japanese cultural colors in major broadcasting have been treated as taboos due to the historical conflicts between the two countries.

In a few previous Korean TV series that were adapted from Japanese manga series, many critics and audiences have criticized the represented Japanese colors. Therefore, in the Korean version, producers tried to encode the “Koreanness” in the TV series. For example, one of the F4 members is a scion of a prestigious family in Korean traditional ceramic art. In addition, the grandson of previous Korean president, who is also one of the F4, is living in a traditional Korean style house called Han-ok. These changes can be understood as the efforts to keep cultural identity by emphasizing cultural pride.

Sojiro and Rui’s familial backgrounds in the original manga series were modified in the Korean adaptation although Taiwanese version didn’t highlight their stories. Both I-Jeong and Ji Hoo (Sojiro and Rui in the original manga) have wounded hearts due to their sad family histories. I-Jeong is from a renowned Korean ceramics family and Ji-Hoo’s grandfather was a former South Korean president. In describing their wounded hearts caused by their family background, the Korean adaptation is trying to reflect Korean sentiment by weaving the family histories into the adapted narrative. In the Japanese adaptation, Sojiro is the heir of a tea ceremony school, and Rui is introduced as a son of a big Japanese company. Therefore, it appears that as the results of adaptation, Sojiro’s Japanese color has been replaced by I-Jeong’s Korean sentiment and Ji-Hoo’s character more emphasizes Korean color compared to Rui’s background lacking cultural sentiment in the original version. For example, I-Jeong’s conversation with Jan-di’s friend in the Korean adaptation illustrates a modification of narrative to insert unique Korean sentiments.

It looks really weak, isn’t it?’ (Throwing a pottery tea cup on the floor) But it’s stronger than it looks. How long do you think it took it to become like this? Turned upside down, stepped on, cut over and over again, and it needs to withstand 1300 degrees of heat. It’s not the end. And when you go through all those things and it still can’t be yours, you need to completely give it up. Like this. (Hitting the pottery with a hammer) What I’m saying is that in order to become strong and to find what truly belongs to you, there will be a process you must overcome.

In the Korean adaptation, elderly characters were described as more important figures than in the Taiwanese and Japanese versions. Although Japanese series is also featuring a few elderly characters, their significance in narrative is much less than in the Korean narrative. In relation to the modified setting, in Korean version, elderly characters were represented as sage-like characters having an insight in many situations. For example, the previous Korean president, who is Ji-Hoo’s (Rui in the original version) grandfather, is a doctor who heals poor patients in his small hospital. He is portrayed as an ideal role model for the heroine, Jan-di, and she eventually realizes her dream by becoming a doctor. Also, he is described as having an insight with which he can see what others can’t see. After he met the heroine several times, he says, “The more I see you, you’re quite like a lotus flower. Do you know why lotus flowers bloom in mud?” By comparing the heroine with a lotus flower, in the Korean adaptation the old man suggests his insight penetrating a person’s inner side as well as the heroine’s extraordinariness.

The degrees of violence portrayed in the adaptations are also varied according to the social atmosphere. By relieving or intensifying the degree of violence, producers tried to fit

with the social standards and norms. The manga series is describing several violent situations with a cruel creativity, which can be possible only in the comic book. For example, there is a scene that the bullying guys drive a car which heroine is hanging behind. This description in the comic book was not seen as cruel. Rather, the characters were described like cute dolls. However, Japanese TV version is more realistically violent in describing *izieme*. Especially, the leader of F4 shows reckless violent actions such as water torture in several situations. Taiwanese version is similar to the comic book. It imitated the cartoonistic behaviors in the manga in its TV series. Therefore, the level of violence was very high in some specific scenes, although the scenes were less violent than the Japanese version. In the Korean version, it seems that generally the degree of violence description was alleviated compared to the Japanese version. The F4 boys don't involve inhuman violence directly, and the hero's cute and innocent characteristics are highlighted in the adaptation. However, the scene describing a collective *izieme* toward the heroine was severely violent, which generated a dramatic effect when the hero came to save her. However, many audiences criticized the violence description as a Japanese color that does not fit Korean people's sentiment. Eventually, the Korean series got a warning from the Korean Broadcasting Commission according to the article 24 (ethicality) and 36 (violence description) of Broadcasting Deliberation in spite of the series' high ratings.

What is interesting about the collective bullying in the Korean version is the heroine Jan-di gets a scholarship offer from the Shinhwa Group by saving a student from committing suicide while delivering laundry. This is a critical moment for her to become a student of Shinhwa high school, which is a unique narrative modification in the Korean adaptation. Shinhwa Group's owner wanted to moderate the negative press coverage about the incident involving F4's school bullying by giving her a scholarship, but Jan-di was not interested in the offer. However, Jan-di finally accepted the offer because her parents wanted her to attend the school and as a competitive swimmer, she could use a nice swimming pool in the school. This narrative initiation intensifies the heroine's oppositional characteristics toward the existing school bullying cultures.

There are differences in the endings, which embody the main theme of each series. The original manga series have an open end. In the last volume, Tsukasa promises Tsukushi that he will be back in 4 years and leave her. However, in the three TV adaptations, the conflict related to the hero's mother is dramatically solved and each story ends with a happy conclusion. And the moment when the main conflict is solved is described uniquely in each version according to the theme the version tries to include and several practical reasons.

Since the Taiwanese version was produced before the manga series finished, the ending is most different from the original manga. In this adaptation, the hero Daoming Si tried to keep his relationship with the heroine Shan Cai in spite of his mother's pressure. Eventually, he started fasting as a protest. In the miserable situation, he says, "Tell this to mom. If she thinks she has the right to manipulate my life by giving birth to me, I don't want this life of mine." Finally Shan Cai also declares that she will wait for him to come out and fulfill this by waiting for him in front his house for several days regardless of bad weather. Then, the hero's older sister tries to persuade her mother; "He is still young. Life's myriad possibilities await him. Why must you make decisions for him now? (...) Because I did not fight for my own love life, I allowed you to manipulate my life. I married a hotel magnate to help you build your career. This is a regret I can never reconcile with. I don't want Si to be like me." Finally, when Daoming Si arrives to a miserable state, his mother intentionally leaves for the New York City. This ending values the hero's individual will to keep his love.

However, in the Korean Version, the hero Jun-Pyo's father, who have been ill in bed for a long time (the only creation in Korean version), recovers from brain death. Since Jun-Pyo and his older sister didn't know that his father was not dead, this fact shocked them and

made them distrust their mother. When the hero's mother requested conversation to the hero, he says, "Mom? Have you ever really been my mom for even one moment? Why don't you stop trying to act like a mom, which really doesn't fit your personality, President Kang." Then, he became to be involved in a terrorized attack by a person bearing a grudge toward her company. The suspect was the president of a venture capitalist firm that was involved in a hostile takeover by Shinhwa group. Experiencing her son's accident, the cold-blooded CEO mother feels guilty and realizes the value of her family and love toward them. However, the hero and heroine bid farewell to each other leaving a promise that they will get together in 4 years. And 4 years later, the hero has grown to a well-prepared leader, and the heroine is studying in a medical school. On the day they meet again the hero proposes to her. As seen previously, Korean version is ambivalent in describing the female characters. Hero's mother was a devil as a CEO, but after her husband has come back to the CEO position, everything becomes balanced. However, this series still emphasize women's self-actualization through the heroine accomplishing her dream. Therefore, it appears that the Korean version's ending respects patriarchic value such as women's motherhood, the importance of father's existence, and elderly people's wisdom while accentuating women's self-development.

On the contrary to this, in the Japanese version, hero's corporation becomes being in a dangerous situation due to his marriage break-up with the daughter of a big oil corporation. At the same time, the heroine Tsukushi accidentally meets with an old man trying to commit suicide and persuades him to stop it. She says, "You probably have a much better life than mine! Day after day after day after.... My family eats nothing but seaweed! You don't know what it's like." Then, the old man starts to laugh loudly. And he says, "I have been trying to sell products developed by our company in many different places, but no one is willing to buy them. Nobody wants to do business with us just because we're a small company. The world is full of idiots!" Then, Tsukushi advises him to change his attitude;

If you try to show some warmth to your clients, like how you take pride in your products then maybe you'll have different results. (...) my dad is so hopeless. He was even fired by his company... (...) but he's always genuinely grateful to everyone. That's why even though he's a hopeless man, I love him a lot.

At the same time, Tsukushi and Tsukasa go through an accident and confirm their love to each other, which hits headlines soon; "Girl saves Domyoji Corporation Heir. Is this a countdown to a wedding?" What was more surprising was the old man Tsukushi saved was the leader of IT industry who would transact business with the hero's mother, the president of Domyoji Corporation. The following conversation shows how the conflict was solved:

- The old man: I believe it could probably dominate the IT industry for the next thirty years.
- Tsukasa's mother: I couldn't dream of a better offer, but why did you choose us?
- The old man: As long as the story about your son's marriage is true.
- Tsukasa's mother: Huh?
- The old man: I think Tsukushi might be the Domyoji group's savior.

Then, Tsukasa's mother leaves the group in Tsukasa's hand by designating him as the heir, and potentially admits Tsukasa and Tsukushi's relationship. Eventually, the hero proposes to the heroine at the high school graduation party. In addition to the attitude toward life, Japanese version seems to respect the interest of the corporation most among the three

versions. Once the economic problem was solved with Tsukushi's indirect help, hero's mother, who had been a villain, became generous to her and everything went smoothly to a happy ending.

Modifications in adaptations and differing socio-economic system in production or reality

Retaining or modifying the original narrative depends a lot on the budget of the production. Therefore, receiving funds from other countries is very important to decide the place of shooting and to create the narrative fitting with the place. The Taiwanese producers were concerned with updating the storyline, selectively appropriating minor characters while retaining the key characters, customizing the language and mise-en-scene with a Taiwanese flavor and, changing the settings to "meet budget and location constraints" (Lim & Tania, 2005). In terms of budget, the Japanese and Korean versions top the Taiwanese one, with airplanes, helicopters, a trip to New Caledonia and the luxurious wardrobes (Han, 2009, February 10).

According to *Korea Times* (2009, February 17), when news hit that Korea was filming the next *Boys over Flowers* series, there were several proposals sent from Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan. According to this news article, however, the production company Group Eight wanted to offer viewers a new place. They added that it's not just about nice locations or promoting a certain area but a way to promote the drama industry and bring more interesting scenes. Finally, the popular drama *Boys over Flowers* was fortunate enough to receive support from New Caledonia and the Korean series created a new narrative describing a trip to New Caledonia, which includes some sightseeing information. In the original manga, there is a similar episode that F4 and the heroine travel to the hero's family-owned villa in Canada. The Japanese version omitted this episode while keeping other short trip episodes. And in the Taiwanese version, Shan Cai and F4 boys go on a trip to Okinawa, which was very short and no sightseeing information or relevant narrative was included.

In the narrative of original manga series, New York City is described as the most important foreign location. In that narrative, the hero leaves the heroine to get CEO lesson in New York City. However, due to the budget and other practical problems, the faithful NYC shooting could be realized only in the Japanese version. In the Japanese version, there is the episode that the heroine goes to NYC to see the hero and eventually meets him, but the hero's reaction is cold to her. In Taiwanese version, the hero goes to NYC but comes back to her soon. According to Lim and Tania (2005), the 19 episodes of Taiwanese adaptation are featuring most of volume 1-29 (all volumes published by the time) except for the parts that were not realizable such as Shan Cai going to New York (Lim & Tania, 2005). In the Korean version, the narrative was modified due to the change of the filming location. Since the hero's father died suddenly (The fact that his father was not dead but hospitalized with brain death is revealed in the latter part of the Korean TV series), the hero automatically becomes the teenage heir. Therefore, he leaves for Macao, not NYC, as an heir and a CEO of the international conglomerate his family owns. As expected, Korean version received support from Macao and shot all the famous places there.

Due to the social environment these series present, the values of commercialism and capitalism are continuously created throughout these adaptations. According to Lim and Tania (2005), many Taiwanese dramas before *Meteor Garden* have been criticized for having poor production values. However, they evaluate that *Meteor Garden* was definitely a television series that did not look cheap with the sponsors like Budweiser beer, Nokia mobile phones, McDonalds, Italian haute couture brands like Prada, Nina Ricci and Gucci, Japanese sports cars and European luxury cars (Lim & Tania, 2005). Therefore, in the Taiwanese

version, there is an episode where Shan Cai has lost at Nokia cell phone Daoming Si gave her. Also, in the first episode of the Japanese version, the Domyoji students' hyper-luxurious lifestyles and excessive consumptions are described from the heroine's perspective.

While Lim and Tania (2005) praise the capitalist values in the Taiwanese series, in Korea, for a long time, people have criticized the commercialized TV dramas including PPL, indirect advertisings, and the hyper-luxurious lifestyle of teenagers and young people described in many Korean dramas. Eventually, the Korean series got a warning from Korean Broadcasting Commission according to the article 46 (indirect advertisement) of Broadcasting Deliberation.

Nevertheless, as Korean dramas become more globalized, the production side came to need a larger amount of capital. Therefore, the Korean producers started to place more products in the programs and Korean stars started to use luxurious products in the TV programs as well. In Korea, the price of star salaries and production expense are much higher than those in other countries and even much higher than in Japan. Therefore, in the Korean adaptation of *Boys over Flowers*, although the heroine is originally from a poor family, the clothes and shoes she wears, and other commodities she uses were all expensive products, which was a difference from the portrayals in Taiwanese and Japanese adaptations. Therefore, many audiences criticized that those indirect advertisings make the drama unrealistic. The writers and producers of commercialized Korean TV drama often modify the narratives because of the products they are placing for ads. Therefore, in the Korean adaptation, meaningful presents or objects appear more frequently than other versions. For example, the bicycle the hero present to the heroine and the shoes the heroine wanted to buy (eventually the hero presented them to her) are being advertised by being included in the narrative of the Korean TV series.

In the three adaptations, a necklace is used to reveal the hero and the heroine's love based on the original manga. In the Japanese adaptation, when he leaves for New York, Tsukasa presents Tsukushi a necklace saying, "According to the horoscope, we're both from Saturn. Maybe it was our shared destiny to have all those fun and difficult times together. So I wanted to give Saturn to you as a present." In the Korean version, Jun-Pyo says to Jandi, "Look at this. This (A star) is me, and the moon in this is you. (...) because Geum Jan-di is a moon that cannot get out of a star, Gu Jun-Pyo forever. No matter what happens, I will never lose the moon." In the Taiwanese narrative, giving the necklace, Daoming Si says to Shan Cai, "If the shooting star is seen by lovers on earth before it descends, their destinies will be entwined... just like they're tightly attached to the Cupid's wings. The symbol of love will forever be with them." The three adaptations use a necklace to symbolize the hero and the heroine's love, put meanings to the symbol and advertise the product effectively within the narrative.

Discussion and Limitations

In this research, I discussed fidelity and modification in the Taiwanese, Japanese, and Korean TV series adapted from a Japanese shojo manga *Boyes over Flowers*. Throughout this study, I assumed that the embodied fidelity in the adaptations could reveal the shared cultural values and socio-economic system, and the audiences' collective memory on them. In addition, I also supposed that the modifications embodied in the adaptations could present the differences in the cultural values in each country and the socio-economic systems regarding the production side.

As a result, I could identify several parts revealing fidelity and modification in the three adaptations, which can be interpreted as being associated with the glocalization of cultural products in Asian community. Fidelity and modification revealed in the adaptations

involve the characteristics of micro market (Robertson, 1995), shared cultural values and shared social structures in the local area. As a conclusion of this study, fidelity revealed in those adaptations was interpreted as presenting shared glocal value system, which can be rephrased as Asianness. Fidelity in those narratives presents the following shared specific glocal values in the East Asian countries: shared culture based on the narrative structure of shōjo manga, collectivistic and hierarchical cultural characteristics, collective memory in terms of economic development in the context of, westernization, and similar entertainment industry system. On the contrary, modified narratives in the three adaptations revealed gatekeeping activities based on the different socio-cultural atmospheres and values, the reflection of production systems and environment regarding the economic situations, etc.

This study, however, cannot be free from a few limitations concerning the author's epistemological and ontological beliefs related to her cultural and personal background. As mentioned earlier, I have been very interested in the global media and cultural studies as a Korean PhD student studying communication in the US. This socio-cultural and individual context may have an impact on this study because the locus of interpretation and understanding is based on the context including Koreanness, which basically one of the three adaptations is grounded upon. Also, as a native Korean speaker, I analyzed the translated versions of Japanese and Taiwanese TV series while I could directly understand the Korean language analyzing the Korean adaptation. Therefore, there might be differences in the level of understanding each culture embedded within the language uses in the three adaptations.

To avoid biases, I tried to find evident similarities and differences revealed in the three narrative structures, excluding assumptions and vague interpretations. Also, meanings and values were derived from the clear similarities or differences based on the structural approach of narrative analysis, which includes the point of story, orientation including place and situation, plot, and the outcome of the plot. Especially, I focused on the resolution of conflict in each plot because it is directly associated with the theme of each narrative reflecting specific cultural values. Therefore, although there might be some impacts caused by the author's contexts and linguistic ability, the three narratives were interpreted and compared to each other through a thorough narrative methodology.

Nevertheless, since there are other possibilities such as the reflection of writer or director's taste and ratings, the results of this study should be carefully interpreted and the differences should not be over-generalized from the perspective of national level gatekeeping. Therefore, when it comes to the values represented in the modified narrative structures and endings, there is a big room for deeper investigations. For examples, the values found as the motivation of gatekeeping or shared Asianness can be re-investigated by interviewing the producers/writers and the audiences of each adaptation in each country. By reinvestigating the production and reception of each adaptation, the values found in this research will be re-interpreted and verified from the perspective of producers and audiences. In addition, to further investigate the cultural circulation in the Asian cultural community, it can be helpful to study the audiences of each adaptation in the three countries and explore the differences in their receptions of same adaptation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, fidelity of the adaptations could be interpreted as presenting the glocalized cultural values or socio-cultural popular memory in the Asian context while modification in the adaptations could be considered as being reflective of a wide variety of different socio-cultural contexts where the series were created. The three versions of *Boys over Flowers* have very similar storylines to one another although there are several modifications due to the differing audiences and goals of each series. The three series were

very successful, which reveals the power of Asian “super content” embodying audiences’ collective emotions and memories. As seen in the result, however, the narrative structure was vulnerable to commercialized and internationalized huge capital, which controls the production system in general. This point questions if the “glocal” and “glocalization” might be just a word-play within the power of global capital. Recently, Hunan TV China produced its own version entitled *Meteor Shower* (2009-2010), which was not authorized by Shueisha, the Japanese publisher of the original manga. In addition, Philippines became the fifth Asian country that adapted this series into a TV drama via ABS-CBN in 2011. Now it is time to contemplate on how long these cultural circulations can remain in the “local” within the power of global capital.

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