1. Intro
   1. General topic
      1. Music theory of Korean idol pop music
   2. Why this topic
      1. Contemporary popular music is sorely under-studied as a whole, in part due to lack of time for scholars to study & publish
         1. Even truer as one looks further beyond Western pop music sphere
         2. K-pop industry has long had decent success abroad and is currently exploding in popularity and impact worldwide
            1. stan cultures
            2. PSY’s worldwide breakout in 2012
            3. BTS winning multiple awards on Western music shows
            4. BP, AESPA, Twice and more performing at Coachella
            5. DC performing at Primavera
      2. Better/deeper understanding of modern composition techniques and musical vocabulary, how this music differentiates itself from W-pop that more commonly dominates popular charts
2. Lit Review
   1. Already known
      1. Most striking characteristics include intense genre mixing & modal mixture (Sound Field, 2020)
      2. US influence existed in Korean popular music starting from post-colonial period (’45 onward), mostly in instrumentation or in playing western classical music, but the foreign sounds generally didn’t catch on and were eventually banned by authoritarian Park regime (pg 10-11)
      3. Even with US influence, Korea kept traditional E Asian & Japan-inspired sounds in their popular music (pentatonic scales, based on traditional folk music, trot music based on Japanese enka) until Seo Taiji and the Boys in ’92 brought US-style hip-hop w/ dancing as a crucial performance element into mainstream (pg 12) (Lie, 2012)
      4. With East Asian walls of cultural protection weakening in post-Cold War globalization, using digital music to aid distribution as well as dancing and music videos to bridge language barriers, companies like SM, JYP, etc rode “Korean (entertainment) wave,” exporting acts to China, Japan, Taiwan (16-17)
   2. Lit Gaps
      1. Most peer-reviewed K-pop scholarship focuses on its history or effects (psych of stan culture, economic & political drivers of K-pop as cultural export, cultural influences from increasing popularity)
      2. Hard to find music scholarship for K-pop at all (I found none)
   3. Questions
      1. How do K-pop songs imply a tonal center while still using its signature frequent genre and modal changes?
      2. How do K-pop songs maintain a sense of cohesion while using frequent genre and modal changes?
      3. **How are 4-chord loops used in K-pop, if at all? What techniques or structures do they use differently from Western music?**
3. Rationale
   1. How are 4-chord loops used in K-pop, if at all? Do these loops largely mimic their Western inspirations, or do they appear in very different and novel ways?
      1. With popular music theory being a relatively new field (and K-pop music theory in particular being almost brand new), anything goes
      2. Some research has already investigated chord loops, developing frameworks (12tone, 2020; Duinker, 2019; Spicer, 2017; Tagg, 2014; Taxxon, 2020) and those can act as a foundation to build off of, or compare to
   2. I hypothesize K-pop music of each “era” will use some similar chord loops to Western popular music of the time, but that as time progresses, more idiomatic chord loops or sequences will develop and become more common.
      1. If correct, it shows that K-pop, while having strong roots in Western pop music, has developed its own harmonic language separate from the West
      2. If incorrect, it shows the genre and industry has a lot more in common with Western pop than it may seem.
4. Methods
   1. Archival research (sort of)
      1. Every paper I’ve seen that analyzes music includes transcriptions of the relevant parts and sections as visual aids for the analysis/discussion (it is not specified where these transcriptions come from, but I assume the authors create them themselves)
      2. Will examine the 10 most popular K-pop songs from each year since ’92, looking for chord loops, then determining their origin as best I can (whether they're rare, entirely new, or borrowed/sampled from Western pop/hip-hop)
         1. Focusing on most popular for relative ease of access, and the fact that the most popular songs of the time will likely reflect the musical trends of that time
      3. Finding that many/most songs include progressions common in Western music early on then seeing that proportion fall as the number of unique or new progressions rises would support the hypothesis
   2. Interviews
      1. Will interview longtime K-pop listeners and fans who are generally knowledgeable about the industry about lesser-known groups/artists/ songs from each “generation/era” of K-pop or simply ones they thought were influential
         1. Their knowledge of and experience with the industry and genre will supplement my existing dataset with more information and context about the norms/conventions of each era, as well as insights into how/where influential groups and trends started before they became mainstream and affected the charts
            1. For example, BTS had been active for 1-2 years before they fully became the industry powerhouses they are now
      2. Interviewee demographics in terms of race, socioeconomic background, and ethnic background generally do not matter
         1. Ideally, there will be a wide age range among participants as older/more longtime fans may notice industry shifts that newer fans will not or cannot know about
         2. I may focus on contacting people from countries with lots of listeners (Korea and the countries they exported to most, typically along East Asia) as they would have more exposure to the music, content, and news from the industry
         3. If I am not getting enough people knowledgeable about a certain timeframe, I may begin selecting specifically for that knowledge
      3. Since I am part of a fan community, I can start by asking people I know to be interviewees or for recommendations about who else to contact
      4. Wordings are not final, but questions may include:
         1. What qualities (sonically, marketing, presentation, other) define each generation of K-pop that you have had experience with?
         2. What groups do you feel were the “faces” of each generation? (whether by defining that generation or exemplifying all of its conventions)
         3. Were/are there any smaller artists/groups during X generation/ time that you thought had a large impact on the industry?
      5. Interviews will follow a semi-structured format, beginning with a smaller set of ready-made questions, and focusing on groups or qualities of interest that the participants bring up
      6. Interviewees will be recorded (with their informed consent) and I will most likely use process coding to capture a timeline of events
      7. Interviewee opinions (of how strong the Western influence on K-pop is) may inform the music analysis and supplement the results as the participants will surely be more knowledgeable about some genres that I have little to no experience with
         1. They can also speak to whether any specific group’s discographies remind them a lot of Western music or what songs have an especially strong or weak Western influence
5. Conclusion
   1. Improves over existing studies by being (among) the first to apply existing frameworks for analyzing/understanding chord loops to the realm of K-pop
   2. Helps start scholarly musical analysis of and conversation around this genre which is booming in popularity worldwide, challenging the dominant position that Western artists have held over global charts (2ndgenbias, 2022)

References (add vid on structure)

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