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# **ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT**

Udvardy Kitti  
Anglisztika alapszak  
Angol szakirány

2018

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# ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT

*Konglish: Az angol nyelv térhódítása a koreai nyelvben*

*Konglish: English Incorporated into Korean*

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to emphasise the existence of the so-called phenomenon ‘Konglish’ in present day South Korea which is the practice of implementing ungrammatical and made-up English phrases into the Korean language. Efforts will be made to distinguish Konglish vocabulary from English loanwords; to make a difference between the Korean and English phonological system; to show how they are created with several techniques such as clipping and broadening; to observe them from a semantical aspect and to provide actual examples of Konglish occurrences with the help of the South Korean pop culture. Papers that elaborate on this issue and conducted research will be discussed in order to show different points of views and experiences of the phenomenon, including a linguistic landscape of South Korea. The literature review will lead up to research that focused on English and Konglish occurrences depicted in South Korean television series, often referred to as ‘dramas’. The aim of the research is to provide a chronological depiction about the frequency of Konglish vocabulary usage from the year 2009 until 2017. The writer of this thesis chose one of the most popular dramas from each year to indicate how, when and to guess why Konglish has been integrated into Korean interlocutors’ ways of speech. A table and a graph depicting the final results can be found in the Appendix.

## Introduction

The education of English in Korea dates back to the year of 1885, when the first English language institution, the Dongmunhak (in literal translation, the ‘Western Culture School’) was established. From then on, Koreans have been exposed to the English language and have made efforts to master it. For them, English is a crucial skill that is the door to the global world and a better life. Koreans who speak good English are considered to have a higher standard of living, therefore the acquisition of the language is essential, as the expectations both from the parents’ side and the Korean education system tend to be higher than in other countries. It seems almost impossible to get into a multinational or transnational company without knowledge of English. Under all these pressures lies a small portion of English that is often referred to as ‘Korean English’ or ‘Konglish’. They look and seem like English words; however, one cannot find them in English dictionaries at all. These are the creations of South Korean interlocutors who try to implement English vocabulary into their daily register in order to reflect modernism, globalism and luxury at the same time. Some of them have been around from the Japanese colonial empire, however, the usage of Konglish became more and more prominent during recent years. In my thesis, I will differentiate between English loanwords and Konglish Anglicisms, elaborate on the different possible ways to create such words and show how they are integrated into everyday Korean conversations. The literature review is followed by research conducted with the help of nine Korean ‘dramas’ (series) in order to prove the ongoing increase of Konglish word usage in the Korean language.



## 1. The definition of Konglish

At the Billboard Music Awards in 2017, a well-known South Korean boy band called BTS won the Top Social Artist Award. Several Korean pop bands are aiming to reach this level of fame, and many of them are on their way to be internationally acclaimed. For their fans, it is not a surprise that most of their songs are not solely in Korean, but numerous English words can be found in their lyrics, which might seem odd and intriguing at first. In one of BTS's releases, called "Not Today", several English appearances can be detected. Their intro is only in English, building up the tension for the first verse: "All the underdogs in the world/A day may come when we lose/But it is not today/Today we fight!" They also included several hybrid sentences where English and Korean are in perfect correspondence with each other both in semantical and grammatical sense. We can observe this phenomenon at the beginning of the second verse: "Geurae, urineun extra/But still part of this world" meaning "Yes, we are extra/But still part of this world". As we further examine the lyrics, however, not only perfect English word and sentence level usages can be seen, in some instances it is ungrammatical, as in: "Too hot, seonggeongeul doublin'/Too hot, chatheureul deombeolling/Too high, we on teuraempheollin" standing for "Too hot, doublin' the success/Too hot, tumbling on the charts/Too high, we on trampoline". Although a bit distorted, we can recognize the words 'chart', 'tumbling' and 'trampoline' from the Romanised Korean lyrics. The questions are the following: Why did they write these English words in Korean? How is it that their English counterpart was deemed to give less sense than their Koreanised versions? And to top all these, why are they even ungrammatical? It all comes down to the phenomenon of Korean English, or as it is often called nowadays, Konglish.

There are various ways in which we can examine and look at Konglish. To name a few.: it has linguistic, sociolinguistic, generational and technological aspects. English in

general is frequently used in scientific papers when words do not have exact Korean equivalents, and this phenomenon stretched out to everyday Korean usage. Several modern technologies and gadgets do not have Koreanised names, and they either use the English term for the object (as in “kheompjutheo” for computer”) or make up an English-looking word like in the case of “haendeuphon”, or handphone, referring to cell phone. I will further elaborate on this issue later on in my thesis.

As for the definition of Konglish, several have been proposed by researchers. Nam (2010, p. 278) defines Konglish as a separate category inside English loanwords, therefore draws a tight connection between the two. She puts them in the group of false cognates, that may share some similarities with foreign-looking words, although on the semantic level the meaning is vastly different from the original. According to Charles (2015), there are instances where South Koreans perceive Konglish as a broken or bad version of English. Meanwhile Shim (1999) describes Konglish as a ‘codified Korean English’, whereas Lawrence (2012) argues that it is a ‘spoken, not codified, language’, therefore emphasises the importance of its usage in everyday conversations between South Korean interlocutors. Cohen (2001) in his article refers to the matter as ‘the hybrid of jazzy Korean and messy English’.

Lawrence tries to categorise Konglish into a phenomenon introduced in 1984 by Platt et al. called ‘new Englishes’. They have come up with four main points to consider:

- “1. It has developed through the education system.
2. It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was not the language spoken by most of the population.
3. It is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write it in the region where it is used.
4. It has become ‘localized’ or ‘nativized’ by adopting some language feature

of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words, expressions. (Lawrence, p. 73)”

Although most of the points made here are correct and could be used to describe Konglish, the only opposition is that Korean native speakers do not acknowledge it as a distinguished language, but rather ‘a subsection of Korean’ (Lawrence, 2014) that bears with some discrepancies of vocabulary and grammar.

For the purpose of my thesis, I have decided to use the term Konglish in the sense as described below by Lawrence (2010):

“Konglish [is a] potential contact vernacular developing as a creative mix between English and the local language, which normally include morphology, semantics and syntax but may also include pronunciations, pragmatics and discourse. They are ‘potential’ in that they are not considered languages, but subsections of languages. They are ‘contact’ in that they result from the contact of English and local languages. They are ‘creative’ in that they are not static, but dynamic with new elements appearing and some disappearing over time. They are a ‘mix’ in that elements of English are mixed with elements of the local language, or changed, or recombined with other elements of English in unique ways.”

Therefore, we can conclude that Konglish is comprised of the fusion of English and Korean. Its vocabulary has developed during the last few decades and is in constant change through everyday conversations carried out in Korean with the help of English loanwords.

## **2. The phonology of the Korean language**

In standardised Korean, there are 19 consonants, 10 vowels, 2 semivowels and 11 diphthongs. As for the vowels, they do not differentiate between lax and tense vowels. Because of this fact, the pronunciation of English has been perceived as challenging for

Korean learners (Ha et al., 2009, p. 165). They cannot stand as word starters, even if a word seems to begin with a vowel, in Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, they are likely to begin with the velar nasal. It is also labelled as the ‘empty or zero consonant’ (Swan&Smith, 2001, p. 326).

Compared to English, Korean has less consonants because of the lack of labiodental and linguadental fricatives. Korean also lacks the following sounds: /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. (Ha et al., 2009, p. 165). Given these differences, the loaning of English vocabulary will result in words that might seem distinct from the original English ones. With the spread of Korean culture, under the name of Hallyu or the Korean Wave, these discrepancies were recognised by more and more international fans. Many of them experienced this phenomenon for the first time in one of the most popular dramas (which is also a Konglish word for ‘series’), called ‘Kkot boda namja’, or internationally known as ‘Boys Over Flowers’, to be discussed later on during my research. The series is an adaptation from a Japanese manga, and the story centres around four rich boys called the ‘Flower 4’ or ‘F4’. While in the Japanese adaptation, pronunciation differences were not so prominent, the Korean version of this term became completely distorted: the actors referred to their group as ‘pheuraeo pho’, or occasionally ‘epheu pho’ for the abbreviated version. Since there is no /f/ sound in their register, they changed it to the closest consonant they could find to it: their aspirated /p<sup>h</sup>/. Even though the series was broadcasted under a title that included the Korean word for flower, the production team still decided to use the English term and completely adjusted the pronunciation to the Korean alphabet.

Similarly to Japanese, the sounds /r/ and /l/ are problematic for Korean learners of English. Although Koreans do pronounce both sounds, they only have one character for it. The distinction is defined by the place where the letter is put. Albeit in Korean, no words begin with either of these two sounds, several loan words are incorporated into their language

that start with the sound /l/ and /r/ (Ha et al., 2009, p. 165). If they occupy a word starter position, the sound /r/ is used, thus creating pronunciations such as ‘rain’ for ‘line’. The sound /l/ occurs when another consonant follows it or when the letter for these sounds are doubled.

Another linguadental fricative, the /θ/ is exchanged to /s/. For example, the pronunciation of ‘think’ sounds like ‘sink’ in English. Its voiced sister, /ð/ is changed to a Korean sound that is between /d/ and /t/, making the name ‘Dorothy’ sound similar to ‘deoreoshi’ that leads us to the issue of /s/ and /ʃ/. Based on what I previously explained in the case of /θ/, the expected pronunciation would be somewhat similar to ‘deoreosi’. However, another discrepancy must be named before making this assumption. In Korean, the sounds /s/ and /ʃ/ are used for the same letter. Correspondingly to the issue of /r/ and /l/, these two sounds are also differentiated by the place of the letter. In this case, it is more probable, since /ʃ/ is only used before /i/ and before diphthongs.

All these differences are important to note before delving into the phenomenon of Konglish and the reason standing behind its ongoing growth of usage.

### **3. Konglish word creation**

As I have previously mentioned, the presence of Konglish words might be explained by three factors: the lack of equivalent Korean words to the concept of a term; the frequent usage of the English word despite an available Korean one; and, to express modernity and luxury.

There are, however, several Konglish entries, where the existence of such words cannot be explained by the aforementioned reasons and need further examining to determine their integration. Nam identified them as ‘ill-formed contractions’ (Nam, 2010, p. 292) and put them into five categories. They are as follows: clipping (with one word omitted), clipping (part of the word omitted), contraction from two words, non-native acronym formation and blending.

### *3.1 Clipping*

Two different cases of clipping are discussed: one-word-omission and part-of-word omission. An example of a one-word-omission is the case of ‘one piece’, meaning a ‘one piece dress’, where the word ‘dress’ is omitted from the end. The term ‘complex’ is frequently used in Korean television both in variety shows and dramas meaning ‘inferiority complex’. The omission of the first word might be explained by the simplification process that happens to English words upon integration into the Korean vocabulary. The term ‘after service’ stands for ‘warranty’ or ‘after sales service’. Either way, the word ‘sales’ is omitted to give a clearer and shorter phrase to remember.

Clipping also happens when a part is left out from a word: such as ‘accel’, denoting the term ‘accelerator’. ‘Note’ is used instead of ‘notebook’ and ‘over’ in the place of ‘overreact’ (Nam, 2010, p. 292). The latter one is so deeply integrated into Korean that there are sentence structures such as “oba hajima” (do not over), implying that one has just crossed the line.

### *3.2 Contraction*

Contraction can be seen in the case of ‘remocon’, made from the phrase ‘remote controller’ and ‘remix’ from ‘ready-mixed’ (Kent, 1999, p. 204). Other examples include ‘aircon’ from air conditioner and ‘apaetu’ derived from ‘apartment’. Another interesting illustration is ‘chikeikeu’ made from ‘birthday chicken’ and ‘cake’ as celebratory meal for birthday (Yu, 2016, p. 9).

### *3.3 Non-Native Acronym Formation*

The following category is non-native acronym formation. One might wonder what DC, BGM, CF, PD and MC might stand for. The latter two are often heard in the broadcasting environment and completely understood by Koreans, but never used anywhere else by other

English speakers. While ‘DC’ means ‘discount’, ‘BGM’ and ‘CF’ implies ‘background music’ and ‘commercial film’. If one identifies himself as Kim PD, he is a producer, and Lee MC’s occupation is a ‘mic controller’, therefore a host or hostess in an English context.

### *3.4 Blending*

The last group Nam (2010, p. 292) discussed is blending, that is, two words made into one that are not originally one phrase (like ‘remocon’). The examples provided by Nam (2010) depict clipping and blending, too: the word ‘leisure’ and ‘sports’ were fused into ‘leports’, and the combination of ‘office’ and ‘hotel’ resulted in ‘officetel’, a small studio apartment.

We can see that all of these word forming techniques include abbreviation, since the original phrases are longer than the results they use daily. If they were to use these words as they are, compared to the Korean words that are relatively short they might be long and stand out more in the context. For example, Koreans have been using the word ‘areubaitau’ (German for ‘work’) in lieu of part-time for a while, but over the years the five-syllable word was shortened into two as ‘alba’. Therefore the aforementioned measures might have happened to adjust the terms into the Korean language without making its presence more obvious and eye-catching.

## **4. Semantics**

As mentioned above, Konglish words are different from common loanwords in the sense that they are not in absolute accordance with their English counterparts. In the case of ‘syaphu’ (originating from the English word ‘sharp’, standing for mechanical pencil), figuring out the true meaning behind the vocabulary is not as obvious as in the case of ‘khophi’, where, although phonological distortions are visible, the connotated ‘coffee’ corresponds to the original interpretation and therefore it is not considered Konglish but rather as a loanword. Another example presented by Shim (1999) is the term ‘growth’, that is used in parallel with

the words ‘plants and trees’. Despite its incorrect usage, it was included in the Essence English-Korean Dictionary in 1987 although no UK or US originated dictionaries added it to their collections.

The prevailing belief about L1 expressions having the same meaning in L2 may result in miscommunication. For example, Konglish is triggered upon the usage of the word ‘yakseok’, which carries two major meanings: promise and appointment. In an English context, a native Korean might assume that these two are still interchangeable, thus sentences such as ‘I have promise after school’ are possible mistakes (Nam, 2010). We can see the same pattern in the usage of ‘no wonder’. Contrary to its English meaning, in Korean English, ‘no wonder’ is practiced as a type of conversation starter (Shim, 1999). The reasoning standing behind this phenomenon is the utilisation of the equivalent of ‘no wonder’ in the Korean language, ‘eocheonji’. In an example provided by Shim (1999), we can further observe this occurrence:

“A: When does spring begin in America?

B: Spring comes early in the south, but it comes late in the north.

A. No wonder. America is a large country.”

From this conversation we can conclude that the phrase ‘no wonder’ is followed by an explanation to the statements mentioned right before the utterance is made, which is in exact accordance with its Korean counterpart.

Nam (2010) differentiates between four types of transmissions of English words into the Konglish vocabulary. Those are, as listed: expansion, narrowing, innovation and pejoration.

#### *4.1 Expansion*

Expansion is the practice of using a word for a broader meaning than it actually indicates. In the Korean language, there are a few instances where one brand or a type of



object can describe the whole aspect. Expansion involves the integration of words such as 'Burberry coat', standing for trench coats in general. The word 'hip' does not only refer to that certain body part but rather refers to the whole rear and bottom part of a person. The term 'social media' has been widely used in English contexts, however, Koreans use the abbreviation SNS standing for 'Social Networking System'. This does not only refer to one particular system but is used for social media in general, including their preferred applications such as Twitter, Instagram and Kakaotalk.

#### *4.2 Narrowing*

Narrowing is applied when the so-called big picture only stands for one part of it. It can be seen in the case of 'manicure' that is only used for nail polish instead of the whole procedure of hand care. Therefore, everything else meaning manicure is disregarded and the term solely indicates nail polish.

#### *4.3 Innovations*

Nam (2010) labelled the third category as 'innovations'. These include words that are non-existent in the Standard English vocabulary. Regarding comprehension, even native English speakers have difficulty to get the gist of the idea they are referring to, as these words are used in a different and new way. One might also ask the question: How do Koreans understand these words if they do not even make sense in Standard English? Since these words are generally derived from a non-Korean context, one might assume that they are not easily understood by Korean native speakers, let alone their ungrammaticality. In the case of Japanese and Chinese, previous studies have shown that the usage of English vocabulary is not for a clearer comprehension of the content but rather to give off a luxurious and 'cool' vibe. It is not unusual for readers to not get the idea or message that the passage means to convey, the only important part is the foreign words' 'by product', the feeling of high elevation that eventually provides a more luxurious context. In the case of Korean, however,

not having a clear view of what is implied is discouraged (Kent, 1999), since Konglish words are not only used for the pleasure of the eye and luxurious feelings but also for understanding and clarification. I would like to dive into this phenomenon more deeply compared to the previous and the following ones, since a great amount of Konglish vocabulary can be labelled as innovated. Their ability to comprehend and communicate with these words are also extremely intriguing, since, even though these passages were made up from English words, their semantic implications are completely different from theirs.

The term ‘after service’ was already mentioned before. The Konglish phrase ‘after service’ points to warranty, that is, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: ‘a usually written guarantee of the integrity of a product and of the maker's responsibility for the repair or replacement of defective parts’. Therefore, if we look at it from a Korean perspective, a warranty is a kind of service that is free of charge. If we cut off ‘after’ and look only at ‘service’, it is usually used in the context of restaurants or retail in general, where free goods are provided for the visitors (Yu, 2016, p. 3). This is a preferred method to satisfy their customers and encourage them to visit their shops more frequently (Yu, 2016, p. 9).

Another notable Konglish phrase is ‘Sandwich Day’. According to a comment at an online forum (Yu, 2016), it indicates a normal working day between two holidays. For example, if there’s a week with Wednesday and Friday as holidays, Thursday, for Koreans, is said to be a ‘Sandwich Day’.

One cannot miss the word ‘fighting’ when travelling to South Korea. It is used in everyday conversations to give motivation and strength to others in order to do well at their workplace, on a job interview, test, etc. Regarding its meaning, it is similar to the English ‘Keep it up!’ or ‘Good luck!’ phrases, but indicates a little bit more than these. In one article written by Kim Hyo-jin (2002), she deeply analyses it in the context of soccer. An actor-singer, Lim Chang Jun (who could be labelled as a ‘talent’ or ‘idol’ in today’s vocabulary)

encouraged the Korean players with the sentence: “Korean players, fighting!” Although it might seem violent and brutal, the word does not literally refer to fighting in the usual sense. An interviewee asked by Kim suggested that the usage of ‘fighting’, at this point, became irreversible, as it is deeply integrated into their language without any comparable replacement.

Other examples in this category include ‘stand’ (lamp), ‘cider’ (for any type of soda), ‘overeat’ (throwing up) and ‘MT’, the abbreviation of membership training, which is when novices go through group and team activities so as to integrate into a new group, be it work or university studies. (Lawrence, 2012; Kim, 2012).

#### *4.4 Pejoration*

The last concept Nam issued is ‘pejoration’. In Korean English usage, the term stands for the action of giving lewd connotations to neutral English words. Two words have been listed here, the first one being ‘hostess’ in lieu of a female worker at a brothel, while ‘room salon’ stands for their workplace. It might be interesting to take a look at ‘hostess’, since a TV show’s hostess is often referred to as an MC. One cannot imagine what consequences would follow if a female ‘MC’ were accidentally addressed with the original English word on television.

### **5. The daily occurrence of Konglish**

In 2012, Lawrence published *The Korean English linguistic landscape* examining the use of English, Konglish, Korean and Chinese in several locations in Korea. These areas include the Gangnam District (Seoul), the Teuksom district (Seoul), the Itaewon district (Seoul), the Namdaemun market and Dongdaemun market (Seoul), the Everland theme park, graffiti sites and the countryside. Since my thesis mainly focuses on the relationship between English and the Korean language, I decided to omit the Chinese remarks and summarise only the relevant – mostly Konglish – notes he made during his research.

### *5.1 Gangnam*

Gangnam in Seoul is a frequented and wealthy district in the heart of Seoul. Its name comprises of the syllables ‘gang’ (river) and ‘nam’ (south), implicating that it is located at the southern part of the river. It is well-known for its expensive apartments and buildings, as well as the several financial institutions that operate there. Based on Lawrence’s findings, there is a plethora of English and Korean signs. On the main street, 50% of the signs were written in English and 40% of them carried out in Korean. 5% were proved to be Konglish, i. e. ‘Skinfood’ and ‘I’m Converse’. The former one means nutritious products for one’s skin (there is also a cosmetics brand named ‘Skinfood’), while the latter one is a misinterpretation from the Korean grammar structure that implies what they would like to get. Koreans use this expression without any verbs, in Lawrence’s example: “Naneun cola immida” literally means “I am cola” and refers to their preference when picking which soda one would like to have. At inside areas of Gangnam, the Konglish percentage stagnated at 5% and in alleys it doubled to 10%. It is interesting to notice that vendors used neither English nor Konglish words on their signs, only Korean passages were utilised.

### *5.2 Tteuksom*

Tteuksom is another district in downtown Seoul, just next to the Han River. One of its main sights include the Tteuksom Hangang Park, where among the facilities we can find ‘music fountains, a riverside square, a rose garden, playground, and a nature learning centre’ (Official Korea Tourism Organization). English word usages became less frequent, dropping down to 10%. Surprisingly no Konglish was found on the main street, but inside the district it rose to 5% with words such as A/S Center, standing for after service centre. Its meaning is close to a warranty centre that provides further services after the sale has already been done, therefore the etymology of this word can be understood from this explanation. As previously mentioned, simplification is one of the main types of Konglish words, providing clearer and

better comprehension. Meanwhile ‘warranty’ might not be a well-known term, the words ‘after’ and ‘service’ are easier to know and remember.

### *5.3 Itaewon*

The next neighbourhood to examine is Itaewon in the centre of Seoul. Frequented by many tourists during their visit to the capital of South Korea, the district is famous for its multiculturalism and cuisine, giving home to several restaurants specialising in foreign cuisine, such as German, Mexican, Spanish, Indian and many others. Lawrence recognised that 80% of the main signs are in English, and another 10% in Konglish. The example ‘24 open’, referring to ‘open 24 hours’ was provided. These numbers, especially the percentage of English usage, are not surprising outcomes, since a lot of foreigners visit the district.

### *5.4 Namdaemun market and Dongdaemun market*

Namdaemun market and Dongdaemun market are two well-known and frequented places to visit. The former one is by far the grandest traditional market in the country (Lawrence, 2012, p. 80). Established in 1414, it has great historical and cultural value. Inside the market 5% English passages and 5% Konglish words were stumbled upon. These findings might be understandable, as the vendors are expected to have little or no English knowledge. The given Konglish example is ‘PC Room’, a literal translation from the phrase ‘PC bang’ where ‘bang’ stands for the word room. In this case, too, we can see simplification happening, as an internet café is nothing more than a room where PCs are held and can be used in exchange of money. On the other hand, Dongdaemun market only dates back until 1905, when it opened for the first time. Dongdaemun is mainly focused on retail and sells mainly clothes either for regular customers or wholesalers. Foreign visitors are encouraged to visit and we can see their presence in the increased percentages of English and Konglish usage. On the main side, English appeared on 40% of the signs with no Konglish and inside English passages rose up to 70% alongside with Konglish words at 10%. I decided to highlight the

example of ‘Doota’ that is a ‘contraction from two words’ (Nam, 2010), as it was comprised from Doosan Tower.

### *5.5 Graffiti sites and the countryside*

At graffiti sites (like under the bridges) and the countryside, Konglish words were rarely or almost never used. We can see that at places foreigners are unlikely to visit, there is very little chance for finding English words. One of the reasons standing behind this might be the fact that, in the case of graffiti sites, the artists do not need to show off in front of other people, there is no need to prove that their English proficiency is good, since they are not directly communicating. Since Konglish words usually indicate something modern, there might be artistic pieces where its vocabulary can be used, but based on Lawrence’s findings, it was not prominent.

As for the countryside, Koreans will probably not use English passages if no foreigners will visit them at all. In the case of Konglish, however, I believe that it is more significant and present in conversation rather than on signs.

### *5.6 Everland*

The last location I would like to emphasise is Everland, Samsung’s – the so-called ‘chaebol’ company’s – theme park in the vicinity of Seoul. According to Lawrence (2012, p. 88) the occurrence of Konglish words were the highest compared to the locations previously discussed, with contractions like ‘Gamepia’ (from the words ‘game and utopia’) and ‘Zootopia’ (made from ‘zoo’ and ‘utopia’).

Lawrence concluded his linguistic landscape with the results that English and Konglish words are in parallel with each other in sense of usage on the streets of Seoul. If English words are more frequently used, so will be Konglish words, too (Lawrence, p. 86). The outcome of the research proved that the usage of English indicated ‘modernity, luxury and youth’ (Lawrence, p. 90).

## 6. The media and pop culture

English in the South Korean media is also a deeply monitored and researched part of the lingua franca's appearance in the country (Jin&Ryoo, 2012; Lawrence, 2014; Lee 2006; Lo&Kim, 2012). Lawrence (2014) argued that Korean pop songs are infiltrated with English vocabulary, but the parts where English and Korean are most likely to be used can be predicted based on his findings. According to Kachru (1986, p. 9), utilising English in order to 'neutralize identities' is also a part of code-mixing. Native words tend to have several types of connotations and English is a tool to spare the actual term from them. Through Lawrence's study explanations are given as to why English is used instead of Korean in the case of certain words. Upon examining twenty-four popular Korean pop songs, he decided to look at English word usage from the following perspectives: where, why, and how they are used.

### *6.1 Popular songs*

One word that is often exchanged to English is no other than the concept of 'sarang', that is, love. It is important to highlight that not only the word but the whole image of the term is adopted (Lawrence, 2014, p.47). Based on his findings, the word was used more frequently in a negative connotation in contrast to American pop songs which tend to be rather on the joyful and erotic side. (Lawrence, 2014, p. 47) Other examples are "name, baby, boy, heart, girl, crazy, bad, tell me" and a few others.

The location of English words was put into four groups: chorus, intro, title and verses. Out of the twenty-four Korean pop songs, twenty-one contained at least one English word in the title. Ten of the songs had an introductory part ('intro'), and 90% percent of them were performed only in English. All except one included English in the chorus: six of them were solely in English, another six of them were over 50% in sense of English word usage, and 71% percent of the songs contained foreign words.

There are several reasons as to why English is used instead of native Korean words. One of them is rebelling against the standard, since utilising foreign words vetoes the traditional and conservative South Korean society. (Lawrence, 2014, p. 49) According to Jin&Ryoo (2012, p. 118), “musicians [...] try to create songs with provocative and direct melodies” and thus the result of Korean and English mixing. Another one is on the semantic level. As Kachru (1986) explained, by neutralisation words are given new definitions and can be used in a much broader sense than their native counterparts. In Kunta & Nuoliunce’s “Mama”, it is proved that the constant switching from English to Korean back and forth is purposeful. Lawrence realised that here the English word usage is not because of rhythmic reasons but rather occurs because of the aforementioned rebelling. There are words that were too profane to be used in Korean or their English versions seemed more modern. Lawrence also interviewed Korean pupils and asked them about this phenomenon to come to the conclusion that many did not even comprehend difficult song intros – they simply considered it ‘cool’ (Lawrence, 2014, p. 53). This might be one of the major reasons why a great amount of Konglish words were born with the help of simplification.

In 2NE1’s “I Don’t Care”, there is an abundance of Konglish with words such as ‘hendeupon’ (handphone for cell phone) and ‘sogaeting’. In the case of ‘sogaeting’, it is extremely difficult to provide a concise and accurate definition. The overall meaning would be a blind date, but that explanation does not demonstrate the whole concept of the term. The Korean term ‘sogaehada’ is put together from ‘sogae’ (introduce) and ‘hada’ (doing), therefore meaning ‘to introduce’. From the English word ‘meeting’ they extracted ‘ting’ and put it at the end of ‘sogae’, thus inventing a new ‘hybrid’ from the two languages: sogaeting. (Lawrence, 2014, pp. 54-55.)

For the question how English is incorporated into Korean Kpop songs, the answer is that it is mostly in a ‘presentational form’ (Lawrence, 2014, p. 57) providing rhythm and



rhymes for the passages. Lawrence used the word beautifully to describe the technique of borrowing as it is in perfect accordance with the Korean grammar patterns. (Lawrence, 2014, p. 60)

In his conclusion he stated that even though foreigners tend to believe Koreans admire English, there are researchers who despise the immense amount of English vocabulary constantly integrated into the Korean language.

### *6.2 Television Commercials*

Lee (2006) led a study where she analysed four hours of Korean television commercials to examine the mixing of English. According to her, we cannot simply state that the reason standing behind this occurrence is to show a positive attitude regarding modernisation and globalisation and to completely ignore the comprehension of the English passage. In contrary to Japanese and Chinese commercials, English is indeed meant to be understood, otherwise words such as ‘push-up bra’ would not be advertised in Korea as a ‘moving bra’. Korean advertisers modify and create their commercials in a way so that viewers are able to comprehend and understand the message standing behind it based on their level of English knowledge (Lee, 2006, p. 65). As it was mentioned before, simplification plays an essential role in Konglish word creating and the importance of social media and media altogether cannot be disregarded, since they are present in the everyday life of South Koreans.

## **7. Research of Korean dramas**

When examining the daily usage of Konglish words, Kpop songs might be interesting to look at, however, Korean dramas point to a more accurate view of Koreanised English. I decided to examine nine popular Korean dramas to prove that the usage of Konglish became more and more frequent and common through the years.

## *7.1 Methodology*

The method I used was simple and clear: I wrote down everything from the uttered sentences that seemed to be of foreign origin while watching the first two episodes of each drama. All of the dramas were picked from the top six listed as the ‘most popular shows’ on Mydramalist.com for each year, from 2009 until 2017. After analysing all foreign occurrences in the episodes, I categorised them either as ‘English’ or as ‘Konglish’ based both on word and sentence level usage. Based on these findings, I used simple tables and statistic calculations to count these occurrences both separately and altogether. Although the results that prove my hypothesis are quantitative, I will list several qualitative examples to further introduce and depict the usage of Konglish. The overall results can be seen in the Appendix in the form of a table and a graph.

## *7.2 The dramas and results*

First of all, it is important to note that most of the popular dramas fall under the young adult and high schooler category, hence Konglish usage might be more prevalent than elsewhere. However, the discrepancy between one high school drama and another high school drama must not be disregarded. We can see in the next few pages that not only the category is important, but the actors/actresses and the aimed audience are also deciding factors when it comes to production and also English and Konglish appearances. Korean dramas are not only popular on the southern part of the peninsula, but they are also present on the Chinese and Japanese market. There are several examples where the licenses of prefilmed dramas were bought by Chinese broadcasting stations and aired in parallel to the Korean release. As previously mentioned, globalisation plays a big role in everyday South Korea, and the aim of these exported series is to depict that they are not only Korean but also global at the same time.

### *7.2.1 Boys Over Flowers (Kkot boda namja)*

The drama called ‘Boys Over Flowers’ was aired in 2009. Based on my previous experiences, many ‘Kdrama’ (Korean drama) fans started their journey with this masterpiece – including myself as well. The story is an adaptation from a Japanese manga called ‘Hana Yori Dango’. There are several live action versions of it besides the Korean one: Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese, too. The story centres around a rather-poor girl, Geum Jan Di and four boys, the infamous ‘Flower Four’. Jan Di enrolls into Shinhwa High School, the top-of-the-line school in South Korea by a scholarship only to be picked on by one of the ‘flowers’, Gu Jun Pyo, whose family owns the school.

In the first episode, there are 96 English words or sentences uttered. Most of them are in perfect accordance with the Korean language both in grammar and semantics, therefore they can be categorised as loanwords. In the second episode, however, this number decreased to 39, leading to an overall 135 of English appearances. Out of the 135, only 13 were deemed to be Konglish. Some of them were repeated a few times, therefore only eight distinguished Konglish words were found. One example from the first episode is ‘hatkhei’, a clipping for the still-Konglish ‘hot cake’ that means pancake. It is mentioned five times, thus being the most frequently used Konglish word in the series. Another interesting word to note is ‘style’. Throughout the research, I came to the realisation that the word ‘concept’ is often used instead of ‘style’, meanwhile ‘style’ applied by Koreans tends to refer to ‘type’, thus resulting in sentences such as “You’re the style that says the opposite of what she thinks, right?” instead of “You’re the type that [...]”.

Before proceeding to the next drama, I would like to highlight that most of the English utterances were made by the higher-class students. This fact does not automatically mean that Konglish was only used by lower-class students, it is exactly the opposite – as it was previously discussed in Lawrence’s linguistic landscape, where English is used, Konglish is also used more often. Another interesting thing to note is that most of the dramas have one

character that likes to talk in English – usually at a native level. In this case, one of the ‘Three Graces’ often used expressions such as “Oh, my Gosh” and ‘Oh, God’. From the main characters, a ‘flower boy’ also implemented several English phrases (such as ‘What’s up, man?’ or ‘my bro’) into his Korean passages.

### *7.2.2 Playful Kiss (Jangnanseureon khiseu)*

Similarly to the previous drama, *Playful Kiss* is also an adaptation from a Japanese manga called ‘Itazura na Kiss’. The word ‘kiss’ was used the same way as in the title of the manga, therefore creating a hybrid title from Korean and English. Although not as much of a blockbuster as ‘Boys Over Flowers’ (BOF), the series is still an important landmark for Korean drama viewers. Many of those who did not switch to Korean dramas with ‘BOF’ made this transition with the help of ‘Playful Kiss’. It is a cute and delightful story about a foolish girl and the smartest boy in their school who, through some unsuccessful events, end up living together.

Since there is no international context at all throughout the whole drama, English word occurrences are much less prominent than in the case of ‘BOF’. During the first episode, this number is 14, whereas in the second episode 46 English words are used, bringing it to a total of 61. Seven distinguished Konglish words were found from the total of nine occurrences. Among the ‘innovations’ previously explained by Nam (2010), the word ‘pointheu’ for the English ‘point’ is a remarkable one. This is a Konglish word made with the help of ‘broadening’, since it implies a lot of items from ‘theme’ through ‘topic’ to ‘keypoint’, resulting in sentence starters such as “Today’s point is to...” instead of “Today’s topic is...”. Another Konglish example is ‘therebi’, which is actually under the cloak of a Japanese loanword that indicates ‘television’.

### *7.2.3 Heartstrings (Neon nareul banhaesso)*

The next choice is *Heartstrings* (or also known as ‘You’ve Fallen for Me’), an internationally acclaimed musical university drama. Contrarily to the aforementioned dramas, it is not a Japanese manga adaptation but an original work written by Korean screenwriter Lee Myung Sook. The drama was highly anticipated by those who have watched ‘You’re Beautiful’, where the current female and male lead were also in the main cast. Together they play the role of a couple with a girl playing a traditional Korean instrument, ‘gayageum’ and a guitarist boy. The past (‘gayageum’) and the present (‘guitar’) is joined through the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of their university. The situation is also emphasised by their bands. While Lee Shin, the guitarist boy plays in the rock band ‘Stupid’, the main female lead’s band name calls for a more traditional impression with the Korean equivalent of ‘Windflower’.

In the first two episodes of *Heartstrings*, the overall English counter is at 61, just a little bit over the previous scores of ‘Playful Kiss’. Six different Konglish words were heard a total of ten times during the two hours I examined. Three of them are frequently used in the Korean language, these being the previously mentioned ‘fighting’, ‘service’ and ‘sign’, the last one meaning autograph. The etymology of the latter word can be explained by clipping from the English ‘signature’. I also found one non-native acronym formation, ‘PD’ for the producer of the school anniversary performance.

#### *7.2.4 School 2013 (Hakgyo 2013)*

Moving on to the end of 2012, KBS2 released a Korean drama with the title ‘School 2013’. It is the fifth season of ‘School’, with the previous seasons aired between 1999 and 2002. The drama depicts the difficulty and harshness of the Korean education system high schoolers have to endure in order to get accepted into university. It is important to note that almost none of the characters are rich or come from a good family, as the story centres around the worst class in a school located in Seoul.

According to my research, English words were used a total of 35 times which is almost half the amount of last year's results. However, compared to 'Heartstrings', this drama focuses on the students' lives and the main topic is their friendships and hardships. There were no specific fields (like music and the acting world in 'Heartstrings') where English word usage is necessary. Perfect English examples are 'final exam', 'cake' and 'director'. Out of the 35, interestingly, one-third of them were Konglish vocabulary. The word 'phon' is an abbreviation from the already-Konglish 'haendeuphon' for cell phone. Comparing students' and teachers' language usage, I found that most of the teachers referred to cell phone as 'hyudaephon', which is a hybrid, a clipped and a blended phrase at the same time, made from 'hyudaeyong', the Korean equivalent of 'portable' and the English 'phone'. Other Konglish examples included the already discussed 'fighting' for cheering classmates and the usage of 'size' when indicating the power of someone. One of the teachers referred to a student as 'not even a person of size', meaning that she did not have a noble and noteworthy background. Another frequently used Konglish I found during the watching of 'School 2013' is the phenomenon of 'morning call', the incorrect Koreanised version of 'wake-up call'. I would conclude this as an example for simplification, as the term 'wake-up' might not be that well-known among Korean interlocutors than 'morning'. The word 'call' will be discussed later in the paragraph of 'Fight! My Way', but it is definite that 'morning' and 'call' are more widely used terms than 'wake-up'.

#### 7.2.5 *Heirs (Sangjeokjadeul)*

A year later, Kim Eun Sook, an internationally acclaimed screenwriter made 'Heirs' (also known as 'The Inheritors') possible. With actors and actresses well-known all through Asia and among fans of the Korean Wave ('Hallyu'), the drama was well anticipated and gathered interest even before the airing of the first episode. The longer title of the drama is 'The One Who Wears the Crown, Bears the Crown – Heirs', implicating that several

inheritors of title and money are depicted in the drama. As previously discussed, where money is included, English and Konglish word usage is expected to increase as the by-product of the aim to make the series and the characters more international and global.

An abundance of English usage can be detected because, for the most part, the screening location is California, USA. It might not come as a surprise that the numbers raised to ten times more than in ‘School 2013’, finally stopping at 341. There were several grammatically correct English sentences and dialogues carried out throughout the two episodes I examined, however, characters with limited English proficiency produced sentences like “This is misukharu. Kheureonikka... Bean powder, you know? Just food. My point is, it’s not drug.” The term ‘point’ has been previously discussed to mean a little bit more than what the English ‘point’ indicates, but there are instances where it is used correctly, as we can see in this example, too. The difference between an heir living in America for most of his teenage years and another teenage girl from the poorer area of Seoul is also emphasised in their word usage denoting ‘mobile phone’. Kim Tan, the heir of Jeguk Group (played by the same actor who portrayed Gu Jun Pyo in ‘BOF’) refers to it as ‘cell phone’ in a Korean environment, instead of the Konglish term ‘haendeuphon’ that is used by Cha Eun Sang, the female protagonist. In one of the cases, she utters a Korean sentence in the following way: “Talking about this, please lend me your haendeu... cell phone for a while” implying that she is indeed aware of the fact that ‘haendeuphon’ is a Konglish and incorrect way to refer to the gadget. Although Kim Tan is a Korean person, since he has been living in Korea for a long time, she corrected herself to say the right English term as if she is in front of an American person. Besides these examples I also managed to find a few hybrid Konglish words, including creations such as ‘jeonwaipheu’ from the Korean ‘jeon’ for ‘before’ and the English – although distorted for some extent – ‘wife’ standing for ‘ex-wife’. Other examples include ‘raeophum’ comprised of the English ‘rare’ and the Korean ‘phum’ meaning product. The

previously mentioned ‘areubeaiteu’ for part-time job became abbreviated around this time, as people started to use a shorter version of it: ‘alba’.

As for my research, I decided to use this drama for the purpose to show that Koreans know and acknowledge that Konglish words are not actual English words. If Eun Sang did not have any knowledge about the ungrammaticality of ‘haendeuphon’, she would not have corrected it.

### *7.2.6 Healer (Hillo)*

After the success of ‘Heirs’, the next series to discuss is the first non-high school drama in my research, called ‘Healer’. It is about the lives of two people in their twenties, a reporter woman and a male so-called ‘delivery guy’, Healer, who does everything except murdering for good money. The series has action-like features and is vastly different from the previously introduced dramas.

Although ‘Heirs’ used a plethora of English words, if we compare this year’s numbers to ‘School 2013’, we can still see that while in 2012 the outcome was 35, ‘Healer’ – including the title – had a total of 160 English words, 18 of them being distinguished Konglish vocabulary. Altogether they were used 34 times. The term ‘apatheu’ has been already determined as a clipping, cutting off the end of ‘apartment’. The opposite of it can be seen in ‘beltheu’, when the ‘seat’ from ‘seatbelt’ is omitted to make it shorter. I found a hybrid creation in ‘eobmuseuthail’, made up of ‘eobmu’ (‘work’) and the English ‘style’ to have the meaning of ‘working style’ or ‘way of working’.

Nam (2010) would categorise the term ‘spec’ as an innovation, since it has been used for the skills, achievements and other notable works of a person. When one says that ‘they are building up their spec’ they refer to the process of filling up their CV by studying at famous universities or institutions, having splendid working experiences and acquiring other useful skills (i. e. languages).



### 7.2.7 *She Was Pretty (Keunyeoneun yeppotta)*

Deterring from the criminal and corrupt reality of South Korea, ‘She Was Pretty’ is a delightful and lovely story about a woman and a man in their late twenties working in the beauty industry. The male protagonist is the Chief Editor of a well-known beauty magazine named ‘Most Korea’. He emigrated to the USA fifteen years ago and came back to Korea at the beginning of the series, therefore the drama includes some dialogues carried out in English. Similarly to ‘Heirs’, the female main lead does not have such an amazing resume (or ‘spec’ to use the Konglish term) – she just started at her first big company as an intern.

In ‘She Was Pretty’ the beauty industry gives a great background for the great amount of English phrases I encountered in the first two episodes. The overall count is 347 with 18 distinguished Konglish words repeated 56 times. There is one instance where an editor recites a famous Michael Jackson song the following way: “Billie Jean not my lover” omitting the ‘is’ from the original lyrics. Since Koreans are not familiar with the auxiliary verb ‘be’ in their own language and use topic markers instead, the intentional omission from a grammatically correct text to make it incorrect seems remarkable. The term ‘drama’ referring to Korean series is also repeated a few times from the innovation category alongside ‘sausage’ that is actually a broadened Konglish term for different types of wieners and sausages. We can talk about hybrid terms in the case of teams inside the company where they work – the management team is referred to as ‘kwallithim’ from the Korean ‘management’ and the English ‘team’. Likewise, the editing team is called ‘phjeonjibthim’, making a perfect fusion from the two languages. Linked to the two aforementioned phrases, team members are regarded either with the original English term or with ‘thimwondeul’, in which ‘won’ means ‘member’ or ‘employee’ and ‘deul’ implicates the plural.

### 7.2.8 *Descendants of the Sun (Taeyangeui huye)*

Kim Eun Sook is often considered to be a legend among Kdrama screenwriters, and her ‘Descendants of the Sun’ does not disappoint either. As I have previously mentioned, sometimes prefilmed dramas are bought by Chinese broadcasting stations before they are even aired in South Korea. They are dubbed and released at the same time as the original Korean ones - this also happened in the case of ‘Descendants of the Sun’. Most of the episodes are located in a fictional country at war, called Urk, depicting the lives of a Special Forces team and a volunteer medical team residing adjacent to each other.

According to the statistics, English is spoken quite often, 186 times to be exact. From these instances, 21 Konglish items were utilised 39 times. The former numbers include trainings conducted in English for the Special Forces and several medical expressions that are used interchangeably with the Korean equivalents as synonyms. Among the Konglish words, clipping is depicted in ‘ashi’ for ‘assistant’. Among the hybrids we can find the pair for the previously mentioned ‘thimwondeul’, ‘thimjang’, that is, the leader of the team. The English ‘whipping cream’ is known to South Koreans as ‘saengkheurim’, putting the Korean ‘fresh’ in front of ‘cream’. The reason behind this might be the same as it was with ‘wake-up call’, the term ‘whipping’ is not as widely known, and replacing it with a Korean syllable meant that it is more comprehensible by Koreans. ‘Style’ was also used for ‘type’ several times during the episodes examined.

### *7.2.9 Fight! My Way (Ssam! Maiwei)*

Before delving into the analysis of the drama, I would like to emphasise the importance of the title. The last drama of my research is from the year 2017. My aim was to show that the presence of Konglish became more and more prominent over the years, and the drama ‘Fight! My Way’ (or sometimes referred to as ‘Fight for My Way’) proves this hypothesis not only by the contents but even the title is a perfect example of a hybrid Konglish phrase. The story of the series centres around four childhood friends whose lives did

not turn out the way they actually expected it to be. There are no English environments at all, therefore every single one of the 174 English appearances are used in a Korean context, 25 of them being Konglish items repeated a total of 35 times. The female main lead's dream was to be an 'announcer' that is used instead of 'anchor' among Koreans. In retrospect, both 'anchor' and 'host/hostess' are exchanged with a different term, the last one often called 'MC' because Koreans tend to use 'hostess' with a pejorative connotation, as previously discussed. Among other Konglish terms, we can see examples such as 'wonrum' for a small studio, the infamous 'fighting' for wishing good luck and 'kheol' for 'call'. I mentioned in the case of 'morning call' that I would elaborate on 'call' later on during my thesis. 'Call' is sometimes used grammatically, but most often it means something similar to the exclamation "I'm in!". When two people want to make a bet, we expect the following dialogue to happen: "Are you in?" "Yes, I'm in!". In Korean, however, the discourse is as it is written: "Call?" "Call!". Therefore, I cannot say that the term 'call' is used ungrammatically all the time, but there is a high chance that it is.

### *7.3 Conclusion*

During my research, I completed the analysis of eighteen episodes from nine popular Korean dramas. My main goal was to depict how Konglish is integrated into everyday Korean conversations. From 2009 until 2017, the distinguished number of Konglish items are as follows: 8, 7, 6, 8, 15, 18, 18, 21, 25. Although it has a decreasing pattern at the beginning, we can see that from 'Heirs' in the year of 2013, the numbers begin to soar. Up until that time, from 2009 until 2012, 295 English appearances were recorded, which does not even add up to the occurrences found solely in 'Heirs'. Throughout the eighteen episodes, 1274 English words were detected, 232 of them being Konglish terms. In total, 79 different types of Konglish items were recognised. Please note that this number does not come from the previously listed occurrences from 2009 until 2017, but groups all the Konglish without

separating them by dramas. The most frequently used terms were ‘alba’, ‘fighting’, ‘haendeuphon’ and ‘phjeonjibthim’, having the first three words completely integrated into the Korean language.

Last but not least, we see a connection between Konglish and the characters with higher social status. My findings are that in those dramas where wealthier characters were included, the frequent usage of English also resulted in more Konglish words, thus implying that Konglish and English overall are indeed meant to indicate prestige and knowledge which opens the door to globalisation.

#### *7.4 Limitations*

Given that the research was conducted in a limited time frame, I was not capable of examining every episode of the dramas to come to a better and more precise conclusion with more examples of Konglish. While watching, I also realised that besides jotting down all the uttered sentences, signs and lyrics would be also an intriguing aspect to examine in the dramas. Thus, a more concise and meticulous research should include all the data gathered from everything seen and heard in all of the episodes. For other research purposes, I would recommend conducting a study that draws a parallel between higher and lower rated Korean dramas in terms of Konglish occurrences.

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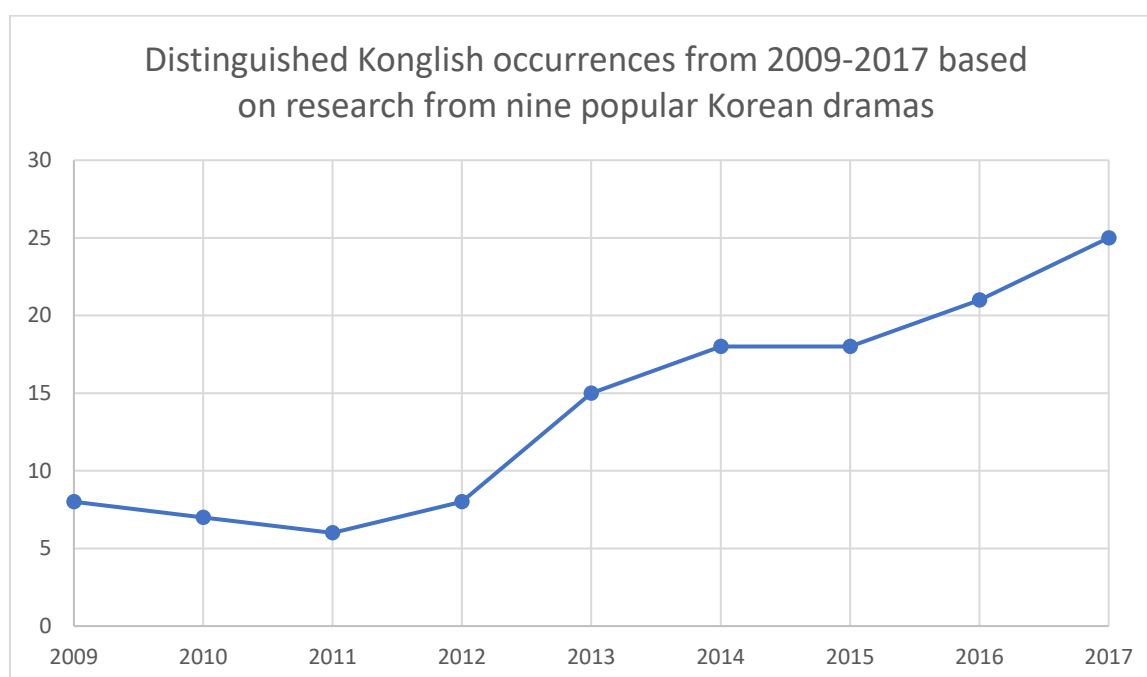
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## Appendix

	Perfect English	Konglish	Total
Boys Over Flowers (2009)	122	13 (8)	135
Playful Kiss (2010)	52	9 (7)	61
Heartstrings (2011)	54	10 (6)	64
School 2013 (2012)	20	15 (8)	35
Heirs (2013)	320	21 (15)	341
Healer (2014)	129	34 (18)	163
She Was Pretty (2015)	291	56 (18)	347
Descendants of the Sun (2016)	147	39 (21)	186
Fight! My Way (2017)	139	35 (25)	174
Total	1274	232 (79*)	1506

Table 1: English and Konglish occurrences from 2009-2017 based on research from nine popular Korean dramas

\*: Note that this number is from an overall count, therefore is not the result of summing the previously bracketed numbers in the same column.



Graph 1: Distinguished Konglish occurrences from 2009-2017 based on research from nine popular Korean dramas