

Analysis of the (Co-)Construction of Cultural Belongings in Several Episodes of a Korean-  
American Podcast

Analyse der (Ko-)Konstruktion kultureller Zugehörigkeiten in mehreren Folgen eines  
Koreanisch-Amerikanischen Podcasts

by

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A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

and the Universität Mannheim

in fulfilment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Intercultural German Studies

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada / Mannheim, Germany, 2023

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### Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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## Abstract

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the “transnational turn” (Pence & Zimmermann, 2012, p. 495) in social, literary, and linguistic studies can be observed as a response to new forms of mobility and global interconnectedness, facilitated by rapid developments in the technological field and the spread of mass media and social media (Noh et al., 2013). This sociolinguistic study therefore investigates a specific small part of social reality construction (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1996) in one such digital and transnational new domain: in podcast conversations publicly available on YouTube, in particular four episodes of the show “Get Real” produced by Dive Studios, involving speakers with American, Korean, Canadian, and German affiliations. Using the method of interactional analysis (Imo & Lanwer, 2019), I investigate how the speakers co-construct their cultural belongings as individuals and as a group in the conversations through (dis)claiming cultural and linguistic knowledge. The analysis employs Positioning Theory (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991; Van Langenhove & Harré, 1994) combined with the expert-novice model (Reichert & Liebscher, 2012), examining negotiations of levels of epistemic authority that construct speakers’ belonging to certain abstract cultural group identities, which builds on a conceptualization of culture “as an inventory of knowledge” (Busch, 2009, para. 44). Findings of the analysis reveal the embeddedness of the podcast in the specific ethnographic context of transnational Korea. The mapping of the discursive moves of the speakers in diagrams shows how the speakers relationally position themselves as belonging to more than one cultural community, co-constructing their own transnational new space that is both part of and in-between other larger cultural spaces. While doing so, they still move within the allowances and constraints of ‘transnational Korea’, drawing on its discourses and established personas and constructing different types of Other while constituting themselves as “authentically belonging” at the same time. Their concurrent embeddedness in global social phenomena such as the Korean Wave as well as being steeped with local Korea-specific discourses and ideologies is one of the findings of this thesis. Moreover, the subject position of “transnational Korean” or “Korean” appears to be closed off to certain people groups based on such local ideologies. This can be seen in the troubling effect of a German American immigrant speaker, whose co-membership in the Korean group identity is largely denied. These findings show that transnational German research, as suggested by Pence and Zimmerman (2012), will have to consider local ideologies and ethnographic constraints applying to the social space that the German abroad navigates and relates to.

## **Acknowledgments**

Five months ago, on 20 March 2023, I was sitting in the train on my long way home with my closest friend right next to me, thinking once again about a possible topic for my master thesis that I still had to come up with. While this had already been on my mind for months, on this specific three-hour long journey, my friend inspired a completely new approach for me to think about this, simply by asking me: What is something I would love to read, think, and write about? For the first time I allowed myself to forget felt expectations and limitations and just try to formulate a topic that would encompass just that: something I honestly love. The same night I wrote an email to Prof. Grit Liebscher, introducing myself and this idea to her. Thanks to her willingness to help me develop the idea and supervise my work, I got to really finish my studies with a topic I was sincerely passionate about. I am equally grateful to Prof. Adrienne Lo who readily accepted my request to be my second supervisor, after I mustered up the courage to write my thesis in English. Her expertise in linguistic anthropological research on transnational Korea was particularly valuable. Thank you both for your guidance, encouragement, and support throughout the development of this work.

Lastly, I want to thank my friends and family who have supported me throughout the years of my studies and the writing process of this thesis.

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## 1. Introduction

The mass movements of people and capital together with rapid developments in the technological field facilitate new international social phenomena and transnational practices of people and people groups worldwide. Often discussed in relation with the notion of the ‘digital age’, the spread of mass media and social media allows for the crossing of national borders with just a click, enabling new social practices and spaces. Against this backdrop, the nation-decentering lens of transnationalism has become increasingly employed in research on “the various types of flow across national boundaries” (Pence & Zimmermann, 2012, p. 496). Especially the transnational practices of ordinary migrants or collectives of ordinary migrants (grassroots transnationalism) have been noted to be “a collective response to new global order” (Noh et al., 2013, p. 122) and as such “a salient issue for many social science researchers” (p. 122). Pence and Zimmerman (2012) go so far as calling this development a “turn in the humanities and social sciences toward transnationalism” (p. 495), which has emerged since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. German studies, too, has seen an increased interest in this new approach to its subject matter, focusing on “the flow of people, ideas, capital, culture, and goods across national borders to and from Germany” (Pence & Zimmerman, 2012, p. 495) as well as on “international interconnections, ‘contact zones’, [and] networks” (p. 495). This thesis has been written in completion of a joint master’s program called “Intercultural German Studies”, which suggests a similar interest of looking beyond the ‘German’ in German studies. This is also one of the main reasons why I chose to enroll in this program.

One very popular and influential “contact zone” of different cultures and group identities is YouTube, which has become a platform with a massive global reach, making user-generated content from all over the world available to virtually anyone with access to the internet. Benson (2017) therefore describes it as a “text for multilingualism, intercultural communication, and informal language and intercultural learning” (p. 3), providing “distinct



cultural and linguistic spaces” (p. 4), thus making it a rich database for sociolinguistic research interested in the effects of the globalization on today’s transnational subject-construction. YouTube has also played an important role in a cultural phenomenon that has taken place in Asia and beyond, known as the *Korean Wave* or *Hallyu*, beginning at the end of the 1990s with the increased exports of cultural goods from South Korea to the rest of the world, including Germany (Jin, 2016). One milestone of YouTube “history” has been the music video of the Korean pop song *Gangnam Style* by Psy, uploaded in the summer of 2012. The video caused an international sensation due to its unprecedented virality – only two years after its upload it had already attracted so many views that YouTube’s view counter, allowing for 32-bit integer, could not record them anymore and had to be adjusted (Benson, 2017, p. 1). In her recent article: “Wenn Social Media ein Kunstwerk wär”<sup>1</sup> in the German newspaper *Zeit Online*, Kohout (2022) describes how the Korean Wave reached Germany with *Gangnam Style* as well, calling Psy’s viral video the “Einbruch der ‘Koreanischen Welle’ in Deutschland”<sup>2</sup>. While the beginnings of the Korean Wave can be traced back to K-pop and the Korean music industry, it has since then undergone a significant expansion including Korean films, dramas, beauty products, and gestures (Kohout, 2022). Kohout (2022) describes how the influence of Korean cultural products can be observed in Germany as well, having become part of everyday life in the Western world and possibly heralding a new era in popular culture (Kohout, 2022). In popular media, an abundance of points of contact between “the West and the East” emerges as a result of these developments, having an impact on the construction of cultural identities and intercultural communication worldwide, which make studies analyzing such transnational mass media highly relevant to understanding the production of social realities (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1996) and the construction of today’s subjects – especially those who are at

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: If Social Media was an Artwork/a Piece of Art

<sup>2</sup> Translation: The breaking-in of the “Korean Wave” in Germany

the "margins of the categories and places to which they are tied" (Joseph, 2010, p. 17), like expatriates and (trans)migrants, whose discursive identity construction will be the focus of this thesis.

Harré and van Langenhove (1991) argue that "the most basic substance of the social realm" (p. 394), and therefore of social and societal phenomena and processes, are discursive practices found in conversations. Following this argument, I will analyze conversations that are available on YouTube on a global scale but take place locally (Wortham & Rhodes, 2012) between three to four people with complex cultural belongings working in the Korean entertainment industry. In particular, I want to examine several episodes of the podcast 'Get Real' produced by the multimedia company Dive Studios, involving speakers with American, Korean, Canadian, and German affiliations. Using the method of interactional analysis (Imo & Lanwer, 2019), I aim at looking at how speakers co-construct their cultural belongings as individuals and as a group in the conversations through claiming cultural and linguistic knowledge. To do so, I will base my analysis on Positioning Theory (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991; Van Langenhove & Harré, 1994), combining it with the expert-novice model (Reichert & Liebscher, 2012; Takei & Burdelski, 2018; Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022) as two specific relational positions and by extension social identities that can be dynamically taken up and assigned to others by interactants in conversations. Negotiations of levels of epistemic authority as well as alignments and disalignments with such positionings will play a central role in my analysis of cultural belongings. This line of argument builds on a conceptualization of culture "as an inventory of knowledge" (Busch, 2009, para. 44), which entails that individuals claiming expertise or knowledge, and therefore privileged epistemic access to a "particular domain of knowledge" (Yu & Wu, 2021, p. 284) shared by a certain group identity, also claim membership to said identity or culture.

Pence and Zimmerman (2012) discuss several new venues of possible future research in transnational German studies. I follow their suggestions of investigating relations of Germans abroad with non-Germans, their performance of “Germanness”, and the “interrogation of racial categories” (p. 498), by making these part of my case study, which sets this work apart from previous work on transnational Korean identity formations. In particular, this thesis will build on and contribute to the body of sociolinguistic and anthropological linguistic research on transnational Korea and North American Korean identity constructions (Lo, 1999; Kang & Lo, 2004; Kang, 2004; Lo & Kim 2012; Lee, 2013; Noh et al., 2013; Lo & Choi, 2017; Choi, 2019). Other than these previous studies, my work will look at a wider range of migration trajectories represented within one small group of people and will map their discursive movements in and in-between the abstract group identities of “North American”, “American”, “Canadian”, “Korean”, and “German” in systematic diagrams. A main contribution will thereby be to show how the subject position of “transnational Korean” or “Korean” is closed off to certain people groups based on racial categories and Korea-specific cultural ideologies of who is granted possible Korean belonging. Moreover, this study works with data that is different from the usual data analyzed in previous studies in that although they are taken from naturally occurring talk in interaction, they are publicly available, involve public figures in the Korean entertainment industry, and are open to discussion through the comment section and other platforms that Dive Studios uses to create a community. The interactions are also partly pre-structured through leading questions and a set topic and are edited to a certain extent, although this seems to be kept within limits. However, as has been laid out before, the global reach and popularity of YouTube, its technical affordances of creating a platform for community building as well as its popular cultural influence beyond national borders, make it highly relevant for investigations on today’s identity formation and communication processes and therefore for sociolinguistic studies. As YouTube and other mass media platforms have become enormously

influential in reflecting but also influencing knowledge inventories, perceptions and representations of people groups and group identities and therefore also the identity construction of its users, research interested in these social processes can find lots of material for investigation in this “global text of YouTube” (Benson, 2017, p. 4).

Besides the positioning theory and the expert-novice pair, the specific ethnographic context of transnational Korea (section 4) will be foundational for my argumentation. I will therefore outline the framework of transnational Korea in more detail after having introduced theory regarding the positionality of speakers (section 2), research on identity and language (section 3), and the notion of transnationalism in migration studies in more general (4.1). After the theoretical part, the method and data will be introduced in section 5 before concrete examples from the podcast will be analyzed. While first laying the groundwork by analyzing the co-construction of the podcast as a transnational Korean space (6.1), the analysis will then focus on two persons on the margins of this established social space. This will be done by first looking at a Korean guest (6.2) and then analyzing the complex positionings and repositionings of a German guest in most detail (6.3), contrasting it with the positioning and identity construction of the supposedly monocultural Korean guest as examined in the preceding section. Each section will have its own diagram, mapping out the constructed belongings of the speakers through the specific discursive moves analyzed in the respective section.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Positioning Theory

In their article: “Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves” from 1990, Davies and Harré propose their theory of positioning as a more dynamic alternative to the concept of ‘role’ in describing the psychology of personhood. They describe two opposing views:

‘transcendentalism’, purporting that grammars pre-exist before their application in social interactions, versus ‘immanentism’, according to which rules are already immanent in actual social interactions, constructed through and located in the social acts themselves (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 44). Deeming ‘role’ a transcendentalist idea, they view their concept of ‘position’ as its “immanentist replacement” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 45), arguing that “a conversation unfolds through the joint action of all the participants as they make (or attempt to make) their own and each other’s actions socially determinate” (p. 45) – or in other words: as they turn speech-actions into speech-acts with illocutionary force. The argument is therefore that position and illocutionary force are interrelated with each other, producing and changing social meanings. In that wake, discursive practices are actions that produce social realities by providing for subject positions. Interactants dynamically take up such positions as their own, adopting with it how they make sense of the world. This has implications for the conception of self, personhood, and identity:

An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. Accordingly, who one is is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one’s own and others’ discursive practices and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and others’ lives. (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 46)

A subject, following this reasoning, is made up of all the subject positions “in which a person is momentarily called by the discourses and the world he/she inhabits” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48). In this light, Davies and Harré (1990) define positioning as follows: “Positioning, as we will use it is the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably

and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (p. 48). In this framework, the concept of “positions” is used as a spatial metaphor to describe subject positions that interactants dynamically take up, assign to others, or refuse in coproduced storylines. By engaging in conversations, speakers always create positions “as the speakers and hearers take themselves up as persons” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 62), thereby producing a discontinuity of selves, which make up the ever-changing subject. In this process, the self is being continuously produced through coproduced narratives, fragmented autobiographical storytelling, or the use of cultural stereotypes. Consequently, Davies and Harré claim positioning to be “the central organizing concept for analysing how it is that people do being a person” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 62). The practice of positioning and of rhetorical reconstruction are described as the two essential elements of discursive processes, with the former referring to how people position themselves and others relationally and the latter describing the means through which interactants “present versions of the material and social world” (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1994, pp. 162-63), pertaining to mainly the stories told in conversations. In their taxonomy of different modes of positioning, Harré and van Langenhove (1991) differentiate first and second order positioning, performative and accountive positioning, moral and personal positioning, self and other positioning, and tacit and intentional positioning, making up “three different kinds of positioning talk” (p. 398-99). Central to the positioning theory is the triad of position, speech-act, and story-line (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991) and the restrictions of “moral orders” (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991, p. 399; Van Langenhove & Harré, 1994, p. 364) which are the rights, obligations and duties in which social actions are embedded.

Over twenty years later, Beeching et al. (2018) introduced their collection of studies that use ‘positioning’ as their key concept by summarizing positioning theory as follows:

Our social reality is constructed, reproduced and can be contested through repetitive acts of daily interaction. Institutional and rhetorical practices are important elements in the

constitution of social reality but it is through conversations that our positionings in relation to one another and to the broader social system are reproduced and transformed. (p. 2)

Positioning is described to happen when speakers consciously or unconsciously negotiate with each other which linguistic features to use (Beeching et al., 2018). These linguistic features “come to have particular social indexicalities [...] which can in turn be drawn upon strategically for particular purposes” (Beeching et al., 2018, p. 5), like doing identity work but also “face work” (p. 4).

## **2.2 Related Concepts and Theories**

Ribeiro (2006) applies the concepts of footing, positioning, and voicing in a frame analysis of a phone conversation between two brothers to demonstrate how these ideas are related with each other but also serve different analytical purposes when it comes to investigating “the construction and performance of social and discursive identities” (p. 48). She defines the term “framing” as interactants signaling each other how they interpret what they are doing and how they want their discursive actions to be understood. With reference to Goffman (1981, as cited in Ribeiro, 2006, p. 48) she identifies his concept of footing and alignment between speakers as a means to do framing: “Interlocutors jointly construct frames by signaling their own ever-shifting footings while recognizing and ratifying those of coparticipants” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 48). Ribeiro further describes Bakhtin’s “voice” (1981b, 1986, as cited in Ribeiro, 2006, p. 49), Davies, Harré, and van Langenhove’s “positioning”, and Goffman’s “footing” as all pertaining to “contextualization processes in everyday talk” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 49), differentiating as follows: “one may examine participants’ subtle shifts of alignment (footings), or their strategic interactional moves (positioning), or how they make their agency (voice) salient in a conversation.” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 49-50) She claims for all three terms to refine the sociological idea of the performance of roles, closely linking footing and positioning as concepts serving to “understand the ever-shifting moves of interlocutors in the construction of self in interaction”

while all three “provide ways of capturing what we mean by identity or ‘doing identity work’” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 50). The difference between footing and positioning in Ribeiro’s understanding remains rather unclear. According to her, while footing describes “subtle interactional work, elusive micro-shifts” (p. 50) in someone’s speech, positioning “reveals the resource orientations of participants (closer to knowledge structures or schemata)” (p. 50), which could mean what Harré and van Langenhove (1991; 1994) call “moral orders”. The connection of positions with storylines and moral orders, or “salient knowledge schemas” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 74), seems to be an essential distinction made in contrast to footing, which is defined as having a lower degree of “salience to inferential processes” (p. 74). The difference between these two related notions seems to lie more in such a gradation of salience than anything else. Voice, on the other hand, is about agency and a useful descriptor when examining “participants’ expressive orientations (intentions and emotions)” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 52). In Ribeiro’s outline, frame and voice are basically taken to mean the same thing and are used to describe what “introduces different footings” (p. 52). Positioning, which seems to be a very closely related concept to footing, is defined as more about the differences between speakers:

Participants’ social acts (verbal and nonverbal) constitute a conversational grid which attributes “locations” to each member. Thus participants work with a set of expectations as to where to place the other in a given interaction. I use positioning to characterize John’s and Louis’ locations and most prominent footings (or projected selves) in interaction. (p. 62)

Ribeiro subsumes all three notions (positioning, footing, voicing) under frame analysis, which is about the use of language to discursively construct identities.

In Jaffe’s survey of the discussion of stancetaking in sociolinguistics (2009), positioning is listed as one of the terms that has been used in research as a type of stancetaking. Like Ribeiro, who understood stance, footing, and positioning as very similar if not the same process, Jaffe (2009) links positioning and stancetaking together. With reference to Harré and



Van Langenhove (1991), “accountive (second order positioning)” (Jaffe, 2009, p. 5) is listed in the rubric “Evaluation” (p. 5), “performative positioning” (p. 5) under “Reflecting Speaker’s/Author’s Personality” (p. 5) and “performative positioning interpersonal stance” (p. 5) as the only entry in the category “Attributing Position to Others” (p. 5). The term “stance” seems to be used quasi synonymously with “position” in this taxonomy. For instance, “second order stances” (p. 5) are listed in the same category as “accountive (second order) positioning” (p. 5). What is more, similar to what was claimed for positioning theory, Jaffe (2009) argues that stancetaking is “one of the fundamental properties of communication” (p. 1), with the principle of indexicality, connecting individual performance with social meaning, at its core (p. 4). Accordingly, she subsumes the common interest of the literature she discusses under the term of “positionality”, which describes: “how speakers and writers are necessarily engaged in positioning themselves vis-à-vis their words and texts [...], their interlocutors and audiences (both actual and virtual/projected/imagined), and with respect to a context that they simultaneously respond to and construct linguistically” (Jaffe, 2009, p. 4). Research on positionality investigates “how the taking up of particular kinds of stances is habitually and conventionally associated with particular subject positions (social roles and identities; notions of personhood), and interpersonal and social relationships” (Jaffe, 2009, p. 4). In this context, stereotypical people types – “figures of personhood” (Agha, 2005, as cited in Reyes, 2016, p. 312) or “figures” (Reyes, 2016, p. 312) – are concepts that can be fruitfully combined with theories of positionality to investigate the discursive production of selves. Jaffe (2009) defines linguistic stances as performative (dis)alignments by speakers with “stereotypical associations with particular linguistic forms” (p. 5), making it a tool for analyzing the management of (aspects of) identities. Social acts of evaluation always entail alignment and disalignment with other participants in interaction, which Jaffe in turn equates with positioning. Just like in positioning theory, moral orders play an essential role in delimiting rights to perform such

social acts but also in being constructed by them (Jaffe, 2009). Jaffe differentiates between affective stances and epistemic stances and discusses self- and other-positioning, again fundamentally equating the two with stancetaking. In her survey, self-positioning is just a different term for “individual stance” (Jaffe, 2009, p. 7), in which the uptake of a position “automatically invoke[s] a constellation of associated social identities” (p. 8). Another synonym used by her for stances or positions is “socially paired roles” (p. 8). In my analysis, one such pair, namely the expert and novice, will be especially relevant.

Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1996) stress the crucial role of “contextualization conventions” (p. 18) in making sense of an interaction and identifying what and to what purposes something is being done interactionally. Contextualization conventions are formed through the interactive experiences of speakers, they are “a result of an individual’s participation in particular networks of relationship [...] Where these networks differ, as they do in ethnically mixed settings, conventions differ and communication can break down” (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1996, p.18). Jaffe describes a similar process for stancetaking, as “a form of contextualization” (Jaffe, 2009, p.10) in Gumperz’ sense, in that it manages how speech or communicative acts are produced and received: “contextualization cues are thus basic, culturally specific tools or resources for stancetaking” (Jaffe, 2009, p. 10). Further underlining the synonymous nature of stance and position, Jaffe (2009) writes: “linguistic stance can be read as a more or less direct sign of a position, identity, or role with which an individual wishes to be associated” (p. 10). It is one of the strategies for narrowing down “the multiplicity of contextual frames” (Jaffe, 2009, p. 12) in an interaction, essentially indexing social identities through “particular ways of speaking (styles)” (p. 15). Reyes (2016) describes a very similar process with Bakhtin’s concept of voicing, which describes how in speaking, individuals “always invoke the types of people who are linked to that speech” (Reyes, 2016, p. 313). With regard to the comparison between stance and position, Jaffe (2009) hints at a subtle difference

when she writes: “Stance is constructed across interpersonal encounters, but it is not limited to fleeting or temporary positionings” (p. 19), indicating that stance is taken as more stable than position.

### **2.3 The Expert-Novice Pair**

I have already mentioned a very prominent pair of social roles (Jaffe, 2009) in the context of the social sciences, particularly in research on “language socialization” (Takei & Burdelski, 2018, p. 83), which is the expert and novice pair. In rather recent years, the discursive production of these roles has garnered increasing interest (Takei & Burdelski, 2018). In Conversation Analysis (CA), the expert position or “doing being an expert” is something that has been investigated traditionally in situations with power imbalances or clear hierarchical structures like interactions between students and teachers or doctors and patients, with the social roles of the participants institutionally predetermined. In one of such studies, Van Braak and Huiskes (2022) define expertise “as specialist knowledge of procedures, reasoning and practices, which signals ‘accountable excellence’” (p. 3), and use “expert” as “a participant category” (p. 1). Takei and Burdelski (2018), conducting a CA study on dinner table interactions of a bilingual immigrant family, write about these two relational roles: „We consider the roles of expert and novice as heuristic categories – as two points on a continuum – that are linked to linguistic and cultural knowledge and expertise, as well as to power and hierarchical relations“ (p. 84). What all these studies agree on is that both relationally connected positions of expert and novice are “locally constructed, which means that speakers position themselves and others as experts with respect to context” (Reichert & Liebscher 2012, p. 600). Takei and Burdelski (2018) thus refer to these two relative roles or positions as “social identities” (p. 86), which are discursively constructed through linguistic “and non-linguistic resources (e. g. gestures) that index an epistemic stance (qualities of knowledge, degrees of certainty) towards some focus of concern” (p. 86). Although institutions can assign the expert

role to individuals, it still needs to constantly be ratified in interactions, meaning they are: “always subject to negotiation” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p. 2) and “can be claimed, induced, projected, invited, taken up, ratified and resisted discursively” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p. 2). The expert and novice positions are also “provisional (they can but need not be established in a particular interaction) and multiple (people take on different identities over the course of interaction [...])” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p. 2) or to use Takei and Burdelski’s description: “partial and negotiable” (2018, p. 85). The social identity of an expert is interactionally accomplished through the discursive construction of typical characteristics such as “authority (role asymmetry [...]) and high epistemic access (epistemic asymmetry [...])” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p. 2) or privileged “access to a particular domain of knowledge” (Yu & Wu, 2021, p. 284). Carr (2010) emphasizes the centrality of language in the construction of expert identities as follows:

to be an expert is not only to be authorized by an institutionalized domain of knowledge or to make determinations about what is true, valid, or valuable within that domain; expertise is also the ability to ‘finesse reality and animate evidence through mastery of verbal performance’ (p. 19)

According to Carr (2010), becoming an expert means “learning to communicate that familiarity from an authoritative angle” (p.19) and acquiring “the ability to use language to index and therefore instantiate already existing inner states of knowledge” (p.19). This is in accordance with the constructionist view represented in theories on positionality and the central role that linguistic resources are taken to play in identity-construction processes. Discursive practices that construct the expert-identity can be: “explaining, giving advice, and instructing [...] explication[s] of knowledge [...] Expressions of moral stances of certainty, evidence for claims, modality markers and reported speech” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p. 2) as well as the use of an “[a]uthorized voice” (p. 2) – basically everything that “signal[s] one’s direct access to knowledge and experience” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p. 2). Epistemic asymmetry can also be achieved by “casting other people as less aware, knowing, or knowledgeable” (Carr, 2010, p.

22). Conversely, the novice emerges as a dynamic social identity, for instance “through the social actions of requesting for information, explicit advice-seeking and troubles-telling” (Yu & Wu, 2021, p. 275). Vickers (2010) describes the construction of experts and novices as “the recurring, turn-by-turn ratification or rejection of ideas that constructs, co-constructs, and re-constructs the ‘achieved identity’ of expert or novice” (p. 117). When the contributions of one speaker tend to be ratified more than others, meaning their turns are incorporated more in the subsequent turns of other speakers, they “shape the group’s constructed reality more than do the contributions of others” (Vickers, 2010, p. 119). As the relational roles of expert and novice are constantly negotiated in conversations, “degrees of expertise” (Takei & Burdelski, 2018, p. 86) and “‘epistemic authority’ – that is, possessing a higher degree of knowledge – with regard to some domain or topic of interaction” (p. 86) are observable, as will become apparent in my data as well.

Combining “the expert-novice model” (p. 500) with the framework of positioning theory, Reichert and Liebscher (2012) applied the concept more dynamically in their analyses of peer interactions between language learners, in which expert positions are constantly renegotiated instead of predetermined as they are in the traditional student-teacher or professional-apprentice (e.g. Carr, 2010) dynamic for example. The same goes for the interactions that I will be looking at in this thesis. There are no institutionally pre-assigned social roles that the speakers automatically assume. Instead, the speakers in the podcast episodes are of equal footing, roughly within the same age-group, comparable exposure to similar cultural spaces (South Korea and North America) and professional field and are usually familiar with each other personally, which raises the probability of expert positionings or claims to knowledge being contested or challenged more often. In my analysis of the co-construction of cultural belongings, I will specifically focus on how speakers claim expertise or knowledge (and non-expertise) with regard to cultures and languages and by doing so create in-

and out-groups, aligning themselves and/or others with regard to these groups and thereby developing their stance as transnational, cosmopolitan individuals. Using the expert position and claims of knowledge as a way to discursively construct cultural belongings builds on the premise of an understanding of culture “as an inventory of knowledge shared and reproduced by the use of interpretation patterns” (Busch, 2009, para. 44).

### 3. Language and Identity

As already mentioned in the previous sections, concepts like positioning, footing, stancetaking, figures of personhood, and voice or voicing all serve the purpose of trying to provide analytical tools and frameworks for describing how social belongings or identities are discursively constructed, making language and linguistic resources the central means of doing identity work. All these different approaches build on the premise that “talk itself is constitutive of social reality” (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1996, p. 3):

We customarily take gender, ethnicity, and class as given parameters and boundaries within which we create our own social identities. The study of language as interactional discourse demonstrates that these parameters are not constants that can be taken for granted but are communicatively produced. Therefore to understand issues of identity and how they affect and are affected by social, political, and ethnic divisions we need to gain insights into the communicative processes by which they arise. (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1996, p. 1)

After thus describing this fundamental principle, Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1996) proceed to discuss historical developments regarding “ethnicity” and “ethnic identity”, defining ethnicity as traditionally meaning “relationships based on the linkage of similar people, whose social identity was formed by influences from outside the society in which they now live” (p. 5) and labelling this the “old ethnicity”. The “new ethnicity” (p. 5), in contrast, “depends less upon geographic proximity and shared occupations and more upon the highlighting of key differences separating one group from another” (p. 5). This highlighting happens through linguistic symbols that are used “to establish speech conventions that are significantly different” (p. 6). These “discourse conventions” (p. 6) or “in-group symbols” (p. 7), which are mostly independent of the language that is being used, are “taken over into the group’s use of the majority language” (p. 6) and “come to reflect the identity of the group itself” (p. 6). Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz’ line of reasoning is fundamentally that social reality, “social identity and ethnicity are in large part established and maintained through language” (p. 7), which lies at the heart of all theories and research discussed in the previous and present section.

Gumperz is known as a founding father of interactional sociolinguistics, which builds on these premises.

In his chapter on identity, Joseph (2010) too stresses the close connection between language and identity. Correspondent with views expressed by Davies, Harré, van Langenhove and Ribeiro, Joseph argues for identities not being pre-existent and then determining language-use but rather the use of language in interaction is seen to construct speaker identities. Studies on identity in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, social psychology, and narratology have moved to this social constructionist view, in which identity is largely understood as “a process in flux enacted in concrete social encounters and social practices” (Beeching et al., 2018, p. 6), making it “highly negotiable in interaction, emergent and largely co-constructed” (p. 6).

In his discussion of the notion of ‘identity’, Joseph (2010) locates the main difference between individual and group identities (including national, racial, ethnic, and professional identities) in their degree of abstractness:

Group identities seem more abstract than individual ones, in the sense that ‘Brazilianness’ doesn’t exist separately from the Brazilians who possess it, except as an abstract concept. Yet combinations of such abstractions are what our individual identities are made up of, and group identity frequently finds its most concrete manifestation in a single, symbolic individual. The group identities we partake in nurture our individual sense of who we are, but can also smother it. (pp. 11-12)

Referring to Bourdieu’s (1991: 221, as cited in Joseph, 2010, p. 12) discussion of “regional and ethnic identities” (Joseph, 2010, p. 12), Joseph makes the point that divisions between people groups might be arbitrary and constructed but “the fact that, once established, they exist as mental representations makes them every bit as real as if they were grounded in anything ‘natural’” (p.12). This justifies my analysis of belongings to abstract group identity categories, such as “Canadian”, “German” or “transnational Korean”. Joseph traces the beginnings of an interest in the identity function of language in linguistics back to Labov’s pioneering Martha’s Vineyard study from 1963 (as cited in Joseph 2010, p. 12). Yet such quantitative studies of variation of language explained with social factors in the 1960s were not yet explicitly about



identity and language (Joseph, 2010). Focusing on the identity marker 'gender', Lakoff's research on the difference in language use between women and men in 1973 (as cited in Joseph, 2010, p. 13) triggered increasing scientific interest in "the reading of identity in language" (Joseph, 2010, p. 13). Afterwards, the "study of group identities of all sorts beyond those national and ethnic ones traditionally associated with language difference" (Joseph, 2010, p. 13) became more prominent in the field of linguistics in the 1980s and finally fully established in the 1990s in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Beeching et al. (2018) describe a process similar to the one Joseph outlined, calling it the "three waves' of variationist study" (p. 3). They locate the first wave in the 1960s, naming Labov as a prominent example for it, where "the relation between linguistic variability and major demographic categories (class, age, sex, ethnicity)" (Beeching et al., 2018, p. 3) was investigated. In the second wave, "ethnographic methods" (p. 3) were applied, "which give local meaning to the more abstract demographic categories outlined in the first wave" (p. 3). Lastly, the third wave of variationist study investigates "the social meaning of variants of a particular variable. It views styles, rather than variants, as directly associated with identity categories" (p. 3), thereby it moves "the focus from speaker categories to the construction of personae" (Beeching et al., 2018, p. 3).

As for influential theories and concepts, coming from the field of social psychology, Tajfel's Social Identity Theory from the 1970s became the most influential framework for investigating social identities (Joseph, 2010). In this theory, social identity is regarded as an individual's group membership(s) as well as the individual's awareness of and attachment of meaning and value to them (Tajfel, 1978: 63, as cited in Joseph, 2010, p. 13; De Fina, 2006, p. 355). Before, social identity has been seen as belonging to a social group with inherent features. Persons were grouped according to social categories, with emotional and highly subjective components not playing a significant role in the process (Joseph, 2010). Turner extended Tajfel's model in the 1980s in the Self-Categorization Theory, adopting and further stressing the

importance of individuals' memberships of "'in-groups' and 'out-groups'" (Harwood, 2016). Anderson (1991, as cited in Joseph, 2010, p. 14) defined "the 'nation' as an 'imagined community'" (Joseph, 2010, p. 14), bound together by their "shared belief in the membership in the community" (p. 14). Building on Anderson and Tajfel, Billig (1995, as cited in Joseph, 2010, p. 14) devised the concept of "banal nationalism" describing daily habits that reproduce ideological imaginations of the 'nation' (Joseph, 2010). More recent work by Silverstein (2003, as cited in Joseph, 2010, p. 16) and Blommaert (2007) on identity in the field of sociolinguistics has been drawing on Peirce's semiotic theory in which indexicality is a key feature of signs and thus made relevant to indexing identity and belonging through language (Joseph, 2010; Johnstone, 2010).

Defining identity as constituted through other- and self-positioning in conversations, Bucholtz and Hall (2010) devise a framework that aims to synthesize "key work on identity from a number of scholarly traditions to offer a general socio-cultural perspective on identity" (p. 18). In their model, they collect five principles that have emerged in "socio-cultural linguistic" (p. 19) research on identity: emergence, positionality, indexicality, relationality and partialness. The first principle, emergence, is what Davies and Harré (1990) described as the immanentist view: "Identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon." (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010, p. 19) This is a view shared by various related fields: in ethnomethodology reflected in the "concept of 'doing' various kinds of identity" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010, p. 19), in conversation analysis in the view that identity is something interactionally accomplished, in gender studies in the theory of performativity and in semiotics expressed in "concepts of creative indexicality (Silverstein 1979) and referee design (Bell 1984)" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010, p. 20). The second principle, positionality, is closely related to positioning theory and can be defined as follows: "At the most basic level, identity emerges in

discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010, p. 20). In positioning theory, the term ‘position’ was chosen to capture a more dynamic and less prescribed version of ‘role’ which is reflected in Bucholtz and Hall’s use of the phrase “temporary roles” to define “interactional positions” (p. 20).

Thirdly, the principle of indexicality is seen as “fundamental to the way in which linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions” (p. 21). Drawing on work from Ochs (1992, as cited in Bucholtz & Hall, 2010, p. 21) and Silverstein (1985, as cited in Bucholtz & Hall, 2010, p. 21), Bucholtz and Hall describe indexicality as “the creation of semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings” (p. 21) relying heavily on “cultural beliefs and values – that is, ideologies” (p. 21) – namely what Harré and van Langenhove called ‘moral orders’ (1991; 1994) or what Reibeiro referred to as “knowledge structures” (2006, p. 50). Johnstone (2010) discusses indexicality as one of four key concepts employed to answer the question of how linguistic structures are associated with identities. She reflects on the history of linguistic research of meaning, moving first from denotational to pragmatic and then to social meaning. In Peirce’s theory of signs (as cited in Johnstone, 2010, p. 30), semiotic signs are categorized as either iconic, symbolic, or indexical, which is significant in that context. Iconic signs visually resemble what they signify, whereas symbolic signs point to their meaning through convention (Johnstone, 2010). Indexical signs are defined as “co-occurring with the thing [they are] taken to mean” (p. 31). Indexing identity through linguistic patterns thus happens when specific semiotic signs are experienced together, for example with a certain pronunciation or choice of words. This entails that “[i]ndexical forms can both evoke and construct identities, and they always potentially do both” (Johnstone, 2010, p. 31).

Bucholtz and Hall’s fourth principle is that of relationality, meaning that “[i]dentities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations” (2010, p. 23), which was a principle also described with regards to positions and the expert-

novice pair. Lastly, the partialness principle captures how postmodernity views “identity as fractured and discontinuous” (p. 25). The construction of identity in interaction can happen deliberately, habitually as well as unconsciously. Moreover, it can be affected by the representation and perception of others and larger ideological structures. Within single interactions but also across different discourses, social identities are constantly evolving. In order to capture the fact that social acts, such as doing identity, can be performed individually but also intersubjectively, the concepts of “distributed agency” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010, p. 26) or “distributed cognition” (p. 26) have been developed. The labels “joint activity or co-construction” (p. 26) are often used with regards to this phenomenon. Large social structures and local discursive actions construct and influence each other making “both structure and agency [...] components of micro as well as macro articulations of identity” (p. 26). Wortham and Rhodes (2012) criticize this widespread notion of “the macro-micro dialectic” (p. 79) as oversimplifying what is actually a highly dynamic and complex network of social processes and scales, arguing instead for the concept of “timescale”, defined as “the characteristic spatiotemporal envelope within which a process” (p. 84), such as social identification, takes place. While recognizing the complexity of the various scales and processes that partake in constructing ever-changing social identities, subject positions and types, this thesis will focus on a very local scale of doing identity work: a few conversations between a limited amount of people over a short period of time. However, these conversations are publicly accessible on a large global platform, allowing for comments and assessments by viewers far beyond their initial spatiotemporal scope which already points to their embeddedness in a large variety of wider discourses and scales, like the Korean Wave worldwide or Korea-specific discourses and “moral orders”.

#### **4. Transnational South Korea**

One such scale is transnational South Korea, which is crucial in understanding the identity formulations of the speakers in the American-Korean podcast and in fact incorporates a complex network of discourses, scales, language ideologies, and available subject positions in itself, some of which shall be introduced in the following sections.

##### **4.1 Transnationalism in Migration Studies**

Around thirty years ago, the concept of transnationalism was introduced to Migration Studies to grasp new developments of streams of migration and formations of immigrant groups, mostly in labor migration, and has since been significantly revised through lively academic debate (Faist & Bilecen, 2019, p. 499; Kapoor, 2017, p. 2). In their handbook entry on “Transnationalism”, Faist and Bilecen (2019) outline the development of the scholarship using the transnational lens in migration studies beginning at the end of the 1960s in International Relations, with a focus on practices of cross-border organizations, corporations, and institutions. A decade later, with scholarly interest in globalization increasing steadily, the attention shifted to the effect of the international flows of capital on national economies and politics (Faist & Bilecen, 2019). Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc are names associated with the implementation of the transnational perspective in the field of international migration in the 1990s (Faist & Bilecen, 2019, p. 500; Noh et al., 2013, p. 121). The transnational lens became especially central for social scientists to investigate the agency of migrants, moving away from mostly focusing on large international organizations: “This approach dealt with dense and continuous ties across the borders of nation-states, which concatenate into social formations” (Faist & Bilecen, 2019, p. 500), conceptualized in “typologies of transnational practices and spaces” (p. 500). Early advocates of transnationalism argued historically that migrants of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cut off all ties with their homelands, whereas “today’s immigrants are composed of those whose networks, activities, and patterns of life encompass both their host

and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field” (Faist & Bilecen, 2019, p. 501). This has implications for social changes and forms of resistance as highlighted by Kapoor’s article (2017), in which she argues that transnational practices and communities for instance challenge nation-state authority over nation borders.

The idea of the transnational approach was to adopt a global instead of a national view of the world with a primary focus on social relations to account for “the multiple and fluid identities of contemporary transmigrants” (Faist & Bilecen, 2019, p. 501), moving away from essentializing ethnic identities, and nation-state borders. Within this framework, the idea of “transnational social spaces” conceptualizes “the migratory system as a boundary-breaking process in which two or more nation-states are penetrated by, and become a part of, a singular new social space” (p. 502), including the circulation of “ideas, symbols, activities, and material culture” (p. 502) and the movements of people across borders. Faist (2010) defines such social spaces as:

relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across borders of sovereign states. Transnational spaces comprise combinations of ties and their substance, positions within networks and organisations and networks of organisations that cut across the borders of at least two national states. (p. 13)

In response to criticism concerning methodological nationalism and groupism as well as an overgeneralization of all migrants being transnational, recently the term of transnationality has been coined (Faist & Bilecen, 2019). Transnationality is meant to describe “the strength of ties individuals, groups, or organizations entertain across the borders of nation-states, ranging from thin to dense on a continuum” (Faist & Bilecen, 2019, p. 508). Recurring categorizations of transnationalism are “grassroot transnationalism” and transnationalism “from above” versus “from below”. Grassroot transnationalism has been brought up in transnational studies referring to “diverse forms of collective identities that are led by ordinary migrants and different from the institutional transnational agents” (Noh et al., 2013, p. 123). Other typologies differentiate

transnational spaces or transnationalism “from below” versus “from above” based on their degree of institutionalization (Faist & Bilecen, 2019, p. 502; Noh et al., 2013, p. 123). Highly institutionalized actors include international corporations and government institutions, whose practices are categorized as “transnationalism from above” (Noh et al., 2013, p. 123). In contrast, transnationalism “from below” is similar to grassroots transnationalism and can be defined as “private transnational networks and cross-border interactions of individual migrants” (Noh et al., 2013, pp. 123-24), with a low degree of institutionalization. The latter applies to what will be analyzed in this thesis.

Building on former conceptualizations of the term, Sahoo (2023) describes transmigrants as engaging in regular cross-border activities and:

multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously. (p. 2)

Transnationalism is described as the international networking of diasporic communities beyond the land of emigration and immigration (Sahoo, 2023, p. 2), “migrants’ durable ties across countries” (Faist, 2010, p. 9) and “all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups and organisations” (p. 9), with implications for individual and group identity formations. De Fina and Perrino (2013) therefore refer to transnationalism as “a focal domain of interest for the study of new forms of identity construction and communication” (p. 510).

They describe how transnationalism is a result of the globalization of economies and the establishment of neoliberalism in global capitalism, both causing a mass movement of people.

They too purport a change in migrants’ connection to their home countries today as opposed to the past:

[N]owadays the diffusion of new globalizing media has resulted in the ability of displaced populations to keep in touch with their home countries and with other, far away interlocutors, and in the possibility for those who are not physically displaced, to constitute and take part in virtual transnational communities ‘with no sense of place’ (De Fina & Perrino, 2013, p. 510)

This applies to the American-Korean podcast (Dive Studios) as well, creating a transnational Korean space and virtual community with members from all over the world. Sahoo (2023) explains transnational phenomena with technological developments affecting transport and communication and facilitating new means for people and people groups to connect with each other beyond time and space. Dislocating and uprooting experiences with movements make transnational identities especially prone “to the contradictions of in-betweenness and hybridity” (De Fina & Perrino, 2013, p. 512), which makes “self-other differentiation, proclamations of sameness, and strategic identity positionings [...] especially complex and ambiguous in their case” (De Fina & Perrino, 2013, p. 512). Because of this, transmigrants engage with both “new practices and put forth personae that emphasize their hybridity and diversity” (De Fina & Perrino, 2013, p. 513) as well as practices that “stress continuity and homogeneity” (p. 513). The sociocultural context of transnational South Korea further adds on specific tensions to such complex processes of transnational identity formulations as, I will argue, affects the local identity constructions in my data taken from American-Korean podcast interactions. This argument follows Noh et al.’s assumption that is based on studies on immigrants in North America, claiming that “contexts of sending and receiving countries of immigrant groups determine the characteristics, intensity, and process of transnationalism” (2013, p. 124). I will therefore now introduce the specific sociocultural context of South Korea.

#### **4.2 The Case of South Korea**

Over centuries Korea has ensured its unity and national identity through the myth of cultural, ethnical, and linguistic homogeneity, “the ‘one blood, one culture, and one nation’ ideology” (Moon, 2010, p. 6). This belief has helped the nation-state prevail through numerous military invasions from surrounding powers and ensured its sense of self in the recent decades in which the Western influences on South Korea have increased (Moon, 2010). Due to its location, Korea has been affected by Chinese, Russian, American, and Japanese military and political



campaigns at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which resulted in language ideologies in which the Korean language became constitutive to the country's sense of national identity and unity (Park & Lo, 2012). As for migration flows, until the beginnings of capitalist industrialization in the 1960s and 70s, migration in South Korea was mostly outward focused (Lim, 2010). This changed in the 1980s with democratization movements and rapid economic growth leading to a "migration transition" (Lim, 2010, 54), in which South Korea became a target country for migrant workers, at the same time slowly turning the once believed homogenic nation into a "pluralistic community" (Lim, 2010, p. 54). Since the 1990s, a sustained surge in migration both in and out of the nation, mostly including foreign workers and so-called "migrant brides" from Asian countries (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 148; Moon, 2010), has begun "to erode the once-solid myth of South Korea's homogeneity, and with it, the taken-for-granted assumption that South Korea is only for 'Koreans'" (Lim, 2010, p. 52). This sparked discussions on multiculturalism and shifts in the self-perception of the country, raising questions of belonging and citizenship (Lim, 2010). Throughout modern history, through seasons of imperialism, colonialism, and "the nation's rapid, harsh modernization" (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 153), overseas Koreans have already been perceived in contradicting ways by Koreans living in Korea, on the one hand "celebrated as patriots serving the national interest abroad" (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 152), with prominent historical figures such as Syngman Rhee. On the other hand, Korean wives of American military members, their mixed children, and Korean children sent abroad into adoption because of poverty were looked down upon and seen as shameful (Park & Lo, 2012). Foundational for these tensions that prevail to this day are "essentialist views of Korean language, culture, and identity, which restrict possible subjectivities claimable by transmigrant Koreans" (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 153). This historical issue still affects the "more micro-level timescales of an individual's migration trajectories and language acquisition strategies" (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 153) in Korea today.

Park and Lo (2012) outline “new modes of migration” (p. 149) in today’s South Korea, including “Return” Migration and forms of educational migration, such as “early study abroad” (p. 148), with the latter being a symptom of neoliberal ideologies in the highly competitive South Korean society. While traditionally, study abroad was mostly undertaken by university students, it has become common in the last two decades for Korean middle-class families to send their children abroad at a younger age in hopes of attaining linguistic and cultural capital they believe is not available in South Korea’s education system (Park & Lo, 2012; Lo & Kim, 2012). This “educational investment” (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 149) in linguistic capital points to “a valorization of a multilingual, cosmopolitan identity less bound to the monolingual culture of Korea” (p. 149). Besides the pursuit of linguistic capital abroad, out-migration is often envisioned as a form of “escape”: “leaving the ‘small country’ of South Korea for the wider world offers the neoliberal promise of transformation and emancipation, an opportunity for ‘alternative human development’ enabled by escaping the stifling constraints of life in South Korea” (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 256). However, overseas Korean migrant communities are faced with their own in-group tensions due to their heterogeneity (Lo & Kim, 2012).

As a result of these developments, transnational South Korea is faced with a variety of subject positions with different migration trajectories, including overseas Koreans and Koreans with short-term migration experiences, putting into question traditional perceptions of what it means to belong to Korea (Park & Lo, 2012). In these identity debates, language plays a central role, “as both an icon of Korean citizenship (Korean) and as vital ‘global’ capital (English, and increasingly, Mandarin Chinese)” (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 149). In sociolinguistic research, the “commodification of language and identity” (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 150) has been increasingly investigated, with neoliberalist thought treating language as an attainable skill with market value (Park, 2021, p. 5). Research has also pointed at the effect of power relations, language ideologies and specific language markets on transmigrants’ experiences (Park & Lo, 2012).

South Korea serves as a fruitful context for investigating transnational identity formations as it is faced with these increased and “new modes of migration” (Park & Lo, 2012), which Sahoo (2023) categorizes as “neoliberal transnationalism” (p. 5), while also subscribing to neoliberal ideologies as part of a globalized economy, further causing an increase in migration and cultural phenomena, such as the national “English fever” in Korea:

Transnational Korea, thus, highlights the complexity of the question of identity, as hybrid identities in the interstices between new ideologies of language and personhood associated with neoliberalism and older ones founded upon essentialist ideas of authenticity are strategically pursued and commodified as a response to global transformations. (Park & Lo, 2012, pp. 150-151)

Transnational Korea therefore encompasses a “shifting ethnoscape and linguascope of Koreans in the world” (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 160), causing “tensions and contradictions surrounding language and ethnicity across the porous boundary of the nation state” (p. 160) that render “images of purity and local fixity” (p. 160), with regard to what defines a person as Korean, insufficient. With reference to Bourdieu’s concept of linguistic markets, combined with Blommaert’s (2007) term of “polycentricity”, Park and Lo (2012) describe how transmigrants “must orient to multiple markets” (p. 154). This creates both tensions and possibilities for them as they “can skillfully exploit their mobility between markets” (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 154). Park and Lo (2012) characterize Korean transnationalism with “an extremely strong awareness of the differential value of linguistic capital across markets” (p. 155) making polycentricity an important aspect of transnational Korean subject formations, as transnational agents can strategically cross “boundaries of linguistic markets” (p. 155) through and for class mobility and the attainment of social capital.

### **4.3 English in South Korea**

Various new and old, often contradictory language ideologies mediate the transmigrant’s identity formation (Park & Lo, 2012), such as ideologies surrounding English in the Korean context, resulting in various opposing figures of personhood. Strongly involved in South

Korea's modern history as economic and military ally, in the division of the country, the Korean War, and the rebuilding of the nation thereafter, the United States have had and still have a strong influence on South Korea. This made English the "language of the powerful Other" (Park, 2021, p. 11) and therefore English language skills both "a sign of status and prestige" (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 156), but also of being pretentious, less Korean or an "American wannabe" (Choi, 2019, p. 1397). Since the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the racialized image of the male Asian speaking bad English has circulated in different types of media and social spheres, which in South Korea has "become tied to the nation" (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 259). Incompetency in spoken English is portrayed in media and political discourse "as a hindrance to national modernization and development, and framed as responsible for the country's low global status" (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 259). In the 1990s, the "English fever (*yeongeo yeolpung*)" (Park, 2021, p. 12) ensued in South Korea, reflecting the adoption of neoliberal capitalism in which:

English came to be seen as one of the most important 'soft skills' that index one's alignment with the neoliberal job market, where endless competition and self-improvement are celebrated as opportunities for maximizing the value of human capital. (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 157)

However, as Park (2021) argues, the investment in English skills was and is not just a mere consideration of economic advantages but also strongly influenced by emotional and moral associations with English specific to the Korean context:

Korean discourses about English are replete with dense expressions of feelings, longings, and imaginings. These include a desire for the different self that one might become through the learning of English; a sense of moral responsibility of carefully managing one's time and resources to invest in acquiring English; anxieties about failing to achieve their self-ascribed goals of English language learning; insecurities about their English being constantly measured and assessed against that of others; the frustration of the seemingly endless journey they trudge, in which the final destination of being a perfect English speaker is always just out of reach. (Park, 2021, p. 3)

Out of this ideological context, figures like the "elite breed of cosmopolitan, an 'Asian global'" (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 155) or the "successful *jogi yuhak* [early study abroad] student" (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 157, italics in the original) emerge, who is "commonly depicted in the media as a

hard-working student of proper discipline and character, beaming with the cosmopolitan ambition of serving humanity through her creative potential and elite position” (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 157). A constitutive sign for such figures is “native-level English” (p. 157), which is only believed to be acquired through living abroad, which therefore becomes the defining index for these idealized figures. Conversely, “framings of linguistic incompetency in English become iconic (Irvine and Gal 2000) of a South Korean who is not modern and not oriented towards the global sphere” (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 259). The trend of early study abroad reflects the ideology that connects fluency in English with cosmopolitanism and neoliberal subjectivity, believed to ensure a privileged position in Korean society and its highly competitive job market (Park & Lo, 2012). However, while native-level English is the goal, “displaying too much nativeness (e.g., the use of hyper-exaggerated English pronunciation, the frequent use of English idioms and slang) among Koreans” (Choi, 2019, p. 1398) can have the opposite effect of evoking negative figures associated with bilinguals and transnational Koreans and a different kind of linguistic incompetency. This “bifurcated gaze” (Choi, 2019; Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 257) both applies to the English language as well as to attitudes towards the United States with “anti-American and pro-American sentiment saturating contemporary South Korean society” (Choi, 2019, p. 1397) and connecting them to different contradicting social meanings and figures of personhood.

Contemporary transnational South Korea is confronted with a variety of subject positions within the heterogenous group of Korean-English bilinguals:

Korean Americans (*gyopo*), early study-abroad students (*jogyuhagsaeng*), the 1.5 generation (*iljjeomose*), study-abroad students (*yuhagsaeng*), temporary study-abroad students at an English language center (ELC) (*eohagyeonsusaeng*), returnees who left South Korea for a certain period of time for various reasons and have returned to South Korea (*liteoni*), working holidaymakers in English-speaking countries, and Koreans who learn English domestically (*gugnaepa*) (Choi, 2019, p. 1398)

The variety of transnational Korean migration trajectories and scandals involving the forgery of overseas degrees by public figures have led to suspicions among Koreans concerning the

legitimacy and authenticity of bilingual proficiency, transnational experience, and academic degrees of Korean-English bilinguals (Choi, 2019). Bilingual transnational Koreans thus find themselves in a field of tension caused by a persisting “belief in the centrality of the language-ethnicity-territory nexus” (Park & Lo, 2012, p. 160) coexisting with an “extreme valorization of the neoliberal personhood” (p. 160). Therefore, Korean-English bilingual performances in South Korea can signify “the speaker’s cosmopolitanism, modernity, authenticity, and global citizenship” (Choi, 2019, p. 1399), but also their “inauthentic and deceptive nature, and non-cosmopolitan and non-modern persona.” (p. 1399) This puts transnational and bilingual Koreans in a precarious position where they have to constantly navigate such opposing figures and try to “successfully index[] their authenticity and legitimacy” (Choi, 2019, p. 1399).

#### **4.4 Research on North American Korean Identity Construction**

Linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic research has investigated the complex construction of transnational (North American) Korean identities and personhoods in today’s transnational South Korea in various case studies. Research in this field has dealt with the discursive construction of ethnic identities through code switching (Lo, 1999), through Korean Americans narratives about themselves (Kang & Lo, 2004), and through self-categorization (Kang, 2004). Other studies investigated the representation of multilingual figures in Korean popular media (Lo & Kim, 2012), the effect of return migration on the transnational identity construction of “Third Culture Kids” (Lee, 2013), discourses of failed elite mobility (Lo & Choi, 2017), and the issue of authenticity for Korean English bilinguals (Choi, 2019). An example for a quantitative approach to transnational practices of Korean migrants is the study of Noh et al. (2013), who conducted a survey with 274 respondents on their transnational practices, differentiating between “informal social ties and contacts (cultural, emotional and financial ties) and organizational participation” (p. 122) in the Greater Toronto Area. They found “that transnational informal ties are prevalent among Korean immigrants living in

Toronto, especially among younger and more recent immigrants” (p. 131) as opposed to more institutionalized transnational practices. In Lo’s study from 1999, she describes social identity as group-membership or co-membership in a language community, which can be negotiated through code-switching, linking “language, categories of ethnic identity, and speech community membership” (p. 462) together. She analyzes a conversation between a Chinese American and Korean American university student, in which “self- and other- attributions of co-membership” (p. 462), category identities, associated stances, and the out-group and in-group status of speakers are negotiated through linguistic choices. The outgroup (Korean) talk of the Chinese American student is perceived by the Korean American as “an attempted appropriation of identity” (p. 474) and his performance of “Koreanness” or Korean in-group status as over the top and inauthentic. Kang and Lo (2004) lay the groundwork for their study of Korean American narratives of ethnic identities through critically discussing differentiations of “race” as other-ascribed and “ethnicity” as self-ascribed, with the former pertaining to “ethnic categories” and the latter to “ethnic groups” (p. 94). Categories like “Asian American” as a “racial term” are portrayed as other-imposed, while “ethnic terms” such as “Korean” are understood as self-ascribed, grounded in “an understanding that while individuals’ own positioning may change over time, the meanings of the words themselves remain stable” (Kang & Lo, 2004, p. 94). Kang and Lo contest this viewpoint in their study of interviews with Korean Americans in Los Angeles, in which they observed the variable use of the same ethnic terms in different discursive contexts, leading them to focus on discourses on social positionings of Korean Americans instead of categorizing words. They found two prevalent identity discourses within the Korean American community represented by their respondents. The “*discourse of dispositions*, situated individuals’ positioning within the Korean American community as being linked to states of mind, beliefs, and values which were depicted as inherent and not readily changeable” (p. 95, italics in the original), while the “*discourse of*

*agency*, linked identities to easily modifiable and observable practices” (p. 95, italics in the original). The study showed how members of a community (here Korean Americans) co-construct heterogenous identities within their community themselves, in their case creating “the ‘third spaces’ that Asian Pacific Americans create and inhabit” (p. 96).

Intragroup differentiations are also what Kang (2004) and Choi (2019) investigated in their respective studies of Korean American identity constructions. Kang (2004) analyzed the self-categorization of Korean American camp counselors as more “Korean”, “Korean American” or “American”, serving to position themselves with regard to their personal motivation and goals to volunteer at a Korean camp, associating local meanings of either valuing mentorship or the teaching of Korean heritage more with certain ethnic identity positionings. Kang (2004) argues for a distinction between “ethnic groups” and “ethnic categories” (p. 218), wherein ethnic categories, with variable meanings depending on context, are used to construct ethnic groups. She makes the point that “ethnic group formation takes place as discursive performance” (p. 220), in her case through self-categorizations with ethnic categories. These categories become indexically linked to local meanings, stances, and ideologies, essentially constructing “a sense of ethnic identity that challenges notions of homogeneity within an ethnic category” (p. 232). Choi predominantly focuses on the issue of authenticity and authentication for transnational Koreans in her research. In her ethnographic study of Korean elite bilinguals at an American university (2019), she investigates linguistic strategies of speakers to position themselves as legitimate and authentic bilinguals and thereby distancing themselves from “newly emerging images of imposters associated with bilingualism and transnationalism” (p. 1395) and certain models of personhood connected to these images especially in the Korean context. Inauthentic bilinguals are defined as “imposters and pretenders who try to articulate their alleged modernity and transnationalism by mimicking



other ‘reals’” (p. 1395), an image grounded in the idea that bilingual practice entails someone speaking a language that is not “theirs” or that does not belong to them:

In other words, bilingual practices can always create the risk of being understood as speaking someone else’s language that one seemingly does not have any ownership of and making a pretentious attempt to be passed as a native speaker of a particular language. (Choi, 2019, p. 1395)

Certain types of language competences are associated with different models of personhood, connecting language and identity with each other, which can construct “failed bilinguals” as having “abandoned their Koreanness and Korean identity” (p. 1396). Choi (2019) demonstrates the agentive role of Korean elite bilinguals in strategically making use of linguistic resources and specific language ideologies to position themselves as authentic bilinguals and participate in defining what constitutes an authentic bilingual performance, thereby solidifying their elite status.

The studies of Lo and Kim (2012) and Lo and Choi (2017) also focus on issues of authenticity and ambivalent images of transnational Koreans and Korean-English bilinguals in South Korean media. Lo and Kim (2012) apply the concept of “fractal recursivity” (p. 256) to citizenship and language ideologies existing in Korea as well as globally, that are being projected onto the Korean migrant community abroad. The effects have been observed in research as an “intense preoccupation with gradations of citizenship within transnational Korean communities” (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 256) and “the persistent efforts to demarcate lines of inclusion and exclusion” (p. 256) both in and outside the country. Such processes of “othering” within an ethnic community are grounded in racial hierarchies perpetuating White hegemony (Lo & Kim, 2012). Analyzing South Korean media portrayals of multilingual figures, Lo and Kim argue that “discourses of linguistic incompetency serve as a key locus for claims to global and South Korean citizenship within transnational South Korea” (p. 257). Since the 1990s, the *gyopo* male Korean American has been popular in Korean entertainment, especially in the music industry, with English signifying coolness and cosmopolitanism (Lo &

Kim, 2012). Contrary to “the linguistically inept Korean” (p. 260), the “*Gyopo* ‘overseas Korean’” (p. 260) is associated with “contemporary youthfulness and modernity and is prototypically used for someone who has migrated to a more ‘developed’ place” (p. 260), including North America, with an “ambivalent citizenship, as someone who is both transnationally oriented yet ‘still’ Korean, in line with ideologies about Koreanness as a kind of blood inheritance” (p. 260). Out of these emerge two new contrasting figures as observed in examples taken from contemporary Korean TV-shows, movies and comedy shows:

The elite transnational returnee is portrayed as producing controlled displays of multilingual competency and flexibility, which index authenticity, modernity, cosmopolitanism, intelligence, high class and global citizenship. The inauthentic Korean American, on the other hand, is presented as someone who unintentionally marks his low-class, non-modern, non-cosmopolitan persona and his marginality within the Korean nation through his pathetic Korean. (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 257)

In the study, the multilingual competency of these figures is analyzed “not as an individual property, but rather as a social production which depends upon metapragmatic cues (like whether someone is laughed at or admired)” (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 258). While “Transnational Koreans are portrayed as linguistically and culturally flexible citizens who adapt easily to the linguistic and cultural norms of different settings” (p. 264), those who are framed as “linguistically incompetent Korean American[s]” (p. 264) are being “constructed as inauthentic, non-modern citizens whose unsuccessful linguistic performances betray their marginality to the Korean nation” (p. 265). This figure is portrayed as dumb, infantilized, unable to produce the standard Korean spoken in Seoul, low class, and unknowledgeable about modern Korean culture. Their “multilingual hybridity becomes evidence not of elite transnationalism, but of dubious Korean citizenship” (p. 268), making framings of multilingual competences indexical of citizenship and thus belonging.

Using a discourse analytic approach, Lo and Choi’s study (2017) investigates the cybercampaign against the Korean hip hop artist Tablo. This campaign contested his status as an elite transnational Korean and instead cast him as an instance of failed mobility. In Korean

media, different portrayals of study abroad returnees circulate, such as “the ‘bad apple’ returnee – a morally dissolute, academically weak spoiled rich kid” (Lo & Choi, 2017, p. 77), signifying “national betrayal” (p. 77), which is contrasted with the “elite cosmopolitan returnee” who is associated with “national development” (p. 77). Lo and Choi argue that the “listening subject” plays a central role in mediating “understandings of mobility” (p. 90) as demonstrated with the case of Tablo, whose study experiences in Canada and the United States became contested in a cybercampaign through “metasemiotic regimentation” (p. 78), thus framing his Stanford MA degree in English literature as fake and recruiting him to the “escapee” persona, which is used to describe “people who leave South Korea because they lack the discipline to succeed in the rigorous South Korean system” (p. 82). Lo and Choi (2017) argue that this was done through “the formulation of signs as emblems, the delineation of figures, and the consideration of ensembles of signs in relation to one another” (p. 82). Listening subjects turned specific signs like Tablo’s demeanor in a comedy show into “emblems that associated Tablo with various figures of failed mobility—the poor South Korean who lacks access to standard English; the anxious middle-school student who is bad at English translation; the racialized American who can’t spell; the blowhard escapee returnee” (Lo & Choi, 2017, p. 90).

Lastly, Lee (2013) conducted 63 interviews with *Joseonjok* (descendants from Korean migrants in China) and Korean Americans who migrated “back” to Korea in their twenties and have lived in Seoul at the time of the interview for an average of 2.1 years at the time of the interview. The study investigated “the dynamic nature of Korean identities and how meanings of Koreanness constructed at home in the U.S. and China are challenged by South Korean ideas of ethnic authenticity” (Lee, 2013, p. 158). Imagining Korea as a place of belonging where they would no longer be marked by their ethnic difference and defined as the racial other, the returnees experienced a complication of their ethnic identity in Korea “that denies them ‘real’ and authentic Koreanness” (p. 161), which was never questioned abroad. One phenomenon that

resulted from the ethnic fluidity of the respondents was the development of “diasporic sub-ethnic enclaves” (p. 165). Lee calls this building of their own networks of “pockets of transnationalized space[s] with a unique cultural hybridity” (p. 166) a phenomenon “that expressed the ambivalence of Korean Americans and Joseonjok towards a Koreanness that simultaneously included and excluded them” (p. 165). In a struggle for belonging, Korean American returnees reframed themselves as transnational Americans, forming a new transnational space in Korea. Lee therefore finds that the return migration experience led to a “decentering of the homeland and the construction of a hybridized, transnational Korean identity” (p. 169) within the group of “third culture kids” (p. 169).

My analysis of transnational Korean English interactions in a Korean-American podcast aims to build on and contribute to this body of sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological research on transnational North American Korean identity constructions.

## **5. Method and Data**

### **5.1 Methodology: Interactional Analysis**

Interactional Linguistics' object of investigation is situated language use that is structured collaboratively and sequentially in concrete social interactions of all sorts, viewing language as more than just a means to convey information (Imo & Lanwer, 2019). Instead, language is seen as a tool to intersubjectively perform discursive acts (Imo & Lanwer, 2019). This approach builds on ethnomethodological conversation analysis, differentiating monological and dialogical speech, with the latter aiming at performing acts jointly, therefore looking beyond the propositional content of utterances (Imo & Lanwer, 2019). Ethnomethodology, Conversation Analysis, and Interactional Analysis build on the theories of the sociologist Alfred Schütz, who wrote about how shared objective meanings are achieved through inter-action in everyday life. Harold Garfinkel founded ethnomethodology, investigating the underlying patterns, unconscious rules, and social routines, human beings apply in order to structure their social life and interactions (Imo & Lanwer, 2019). Conversation and Interactional Analysis are both based on this reasoning, working with recordings of natural interactions, transcribing and analyzing them in order to investigate unconscious patterns and rules determining how individuals discursively perform social acts with linguistic resources (Imo & Lanwer, 2019). Interactional linguistics is strongly influenced by linguistic anthropology and interactional sociolinguistics, with Gumperz' contextualization theory being a seminal work in this field. My analysis of discursively constructed personhoods and identities is grounded in this specific field of sociolinguistic research.

### **5.2 Introducing the Data: The Speakers and the Podcast**

The data that will be analyzed in this thesis is taken from a podcast show produced by the multi-media company DIVE Studios/ 다이브 스튜디오<sup>3</sup>, based in Los Angeles and Seoul. The

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<sup>3</sup> DIVE Studios' Homepage: <https://www.divestudios.io/>

company offers a variety of shows, mostly in English, featuring Korean North American artists talking about a wide variety of topics. DIVE Studios' main YouTube channel<sup>4</sup> (DIVE Studios / 다이브 스튜디오, n.d.) has 979.000 subscribers, 757 videos and over 284 million views (Dive Studios, n.d.).<sup>5</sup> The company is also represented on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and Discord and hosts an app called Mindset, which focuses on mental health. Their mission statement can be found on their homepage: "Positively impacting culture and society through authentic storytelling and story sharing" (DIVE Studios, n.d.). My analysis will focus on four episodes of Get Real, in which a small group of regular hosts talks about various topics pertaining to young adult life with the claim of being unfiltered and authentic. I chose this show for my analysis mainly due to the informal, mostly unscripted nature of the conversations, and the complex cultural identities of the speakers. Though as podcasts being designed to primarily being consumed without the visual component, the full episodes are available as audio-visual YouTube videos, which will serve as the basis for my analysis.

I have selected four episodes from seasons 2 and 3 of Get Real, which is one of DIVE Studios' most successful shows, with the regular hosts Ashley Choi, Peniel (of BTOB), and the rapper Harry Park (aka pH-1) in Season 2 and Junny in Season 3. All speakers of the chosen episodes, including three guests, have different trajectories in their personal migration stories. Some of them have spent their whole childhood in the United States (Peniel, Eric Nam) or Canada (Junny). Some of them have spent their childhood or parts of their childhood in South Korea and moved to Canada or the United States before or during their teenage years (Ashley, Harry, Lim Kim). Most of them moved to South Korea as young adults, pursuing a career in the Korean music industry and represent a variety of transnational Korean subject positions "within the ethnic category of 'Korean'" (Kang, 2004, p. 218), regularly moving beyond national

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<sup>4</sup> "DIVE Studios / 다이브 스튜디오" Podcasts: (as of 17 July 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Channel information: <https://www.youtube.com/@DIVEpods/about>

borders in their work and with their relationships. Additionally, one of the episodes features Stefanie Michova, a German model, who was born and raised in Augsburg and is not ethnically Korean.

As for the regular hosts of the show, Ashley Choi is a former member of the K-pop group Girls' Generation. She was born in Korea and moved to Queens, NY when she was nine years old, spending the following eleven years there before returning to Korea in 2011 and debuting two years later in a K-pop group (Choi & Nam, 2020). Peniel was born and raised in Chicago, IL and moved to Korea to become a K-pop trainee, attending his last year of high school there and eventually becoming part of the group BtoB as a rapper (Choi et al., 2020). Harry was born in Seoul, Korea, moved to Long Island, NY with his family when he was 12, and studied in Boston College, MA, together with Eric Nam (Nam & Park, 2019). After working as an assistant in a dentistry and then as a website developer, he moved back to Korea in his late twenties to pursue a musical career as a rapper (Nam & Park, 2019). Lastly, Junny is a singer-songwriter and producer. He moved with his family from Korea to Vancouver, Canada when he was four years old and returned to South Korea by himself right after college (Nam & Junny, 2021). All four of them moved (back) to Korea in their late teens or twenties to pursue their musical careers. In three of the four selected episodes, the guests Lim Kim, Stefanie Michova, and Eric Nam appear respectively. Eric Nam and Stefanie Michova have participated in their own shows in DIVE studios. Eric Nam was born and raised in Atlanta, GA by Korean parents and moved to Korea after his studies (Nguyen, 2022). He has founded DIVE Studios together with his two brothers and has hosted his own shows in the company, as well as being a solo singer and well-known public figure in the Korean entertainment industry himself (Nguyen, 2022). Stefanie Michova is a German model, was born and raised in Augsburg and engaged with a Korean rapper. She shares parts of her story in the first episode of her own show "Beauty Bar" with Joan Kim (Michova & Kim, 2021). She has lived in the United States

for ten years, has gone back and forth between the US and Korea for seven years for professional and private reasons, and then moved to Korea over two years prior the podcast recording (Michova & Kim, 2021). She was scouted as a model in a mall in Los Angeles when she was eighteen and started to get interested in K-pop and Korea after being cast for a K-pop music video (Michova & Kim, 2021). Although she does not say anything in Korean throughout her guesting episode in *Get Real*, she does so in the first episode of *Beauty Bar*, using Korean words to react emphatically to her co-host and conducting a word search fully in Korean about the words “eyebrow” and “eyelids” (Michova & Kim, 2021). Lastly, Lim Kim is a Korean singer who has early study abroad experiences during Middle School in Vancouver, Canada and six months in New Jersey in the US (Choi et al., 2022). The speakers’ ages range from 26 to 33. All of them are used to being in front of a camera and mostly know each other personally. The conversations are only partly structured in that a certain topic is given, one speaker is always a designated conversation leader, they have some leading questions prepared and each episode ends with a section where they respond to listeners’ questions and worries that relate to the respective topic of the episode.

For my analysis, I specifically looked for episodes uploaded within the last and present years that featured different participant groups with regards to their cultural affiliations. Two episodes were chosen as representative for the *Get Real* in-group: one with only American Koreans who all grew up in the United States (Choi et al., 2022b, with Eric as guest) and another one with only American Koreans, however including Harry, who only migrated to the States at the age of twelve (Choi et al., 2023). I also specifically looked for an episode with the Canadian regular host Junny to investigate for possible in-group differentiations within the North American group identity. I chose the episode with Lim Kim (Choi et al., 2022a) as she turned out to possibly share Canadian belonging with Junny or American belonging with Ashley or Peniel and because she provided another trajectory on the North American – Korean



spectrum, namely on the Korean end. Lastly, the episode with Stefanie Michova (Choi et al., 2021) was selected because it featured a German guest, who still shared affiliations with the other speakers. This episode turned out to be especially ridden with cultural positionings and claims to expertise, as will be examined later.

Episode title	Length (min)	Date of upload on YT	Speakers	Views and comments (as of 4/22/23)	Cultural affiliations
Crashing Hallelujah Night with Stefanie Michova   Get Real S2 Ep. #13 <sup>6</sup>	50:57	10/23/21	Ashley, Peniel, Harry, Stefanie (guest)	108.346 views, 463 comments	Hosts all American Kor., German guest (living experience in Kor, and US; only non-musician)
ERIC NAM is an Actor Now   GET REAL S3 EP 8 <sup>7</sup>	54:13	10/07/22	Ashley, Peniel, Eric (guest)	219.169 views, 532 comments	All American Korean
Lim Kim on identity crisis and her new single “Veil” S3 Ep. #12 <sup>8</sup>	47:04	11/11/22	Ashley, Peniel, Junny, Lim Kim (guest)	47.982 views, 147 comments	Korean American, Canadian American, Korean Guest (who lived abroad in US and Can)
pH-1 on Living a Solo Life   GET REAL S3 Ep. #30 <sup>9</sup>	50:38	03/17/23	Peniel Shin, Ashley, pH-1/Harry	136.842 views, 591 comments	All American Korean

**Table 1:** Overview of selected Get Real episodes.

All four episodes are between 47 and 54 minutes long and were uploaded on YouTube between August 2021 and March 2023, featuring seven different speakers, of whom two (Ashley and Peniel) are present in all episodes. Ashley is the conversation leader of almost all of them, except for the episode with Stefanie, where Peniel is the designated conversation leader.

Overview of all 7 speakers with their cultural affiliations/places they lived	
Regular hosts	Ashley Choi (NY, Korea), Peniel Shin (Chicago, Kor.), Junny (Vancouver, Kor.), pH-1/Harry (Korea, Long Island (NY), Boston (MA))
Guests	Eric Nam (Atlanta (GA), Korea), Lim Kim (Korea, US, Can), Stefanie Michova (Germany, US, Korea)

**Table 2:** Overview of all 7 speakers with their cultural affiliations

The selection of the episodes was partly random in that the first episodes I listened to that I recognized as possibly fitting into my criteria were immediately so replete with positionings with regard to Korean, North American or German belongings, that I did not see any need in

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfStNCONUvk>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUf1d10giAA>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC30ZqjnUSw&t=1130s>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_7FjZXjRPE&t=167s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_7FjZXjRPE&t=167s)

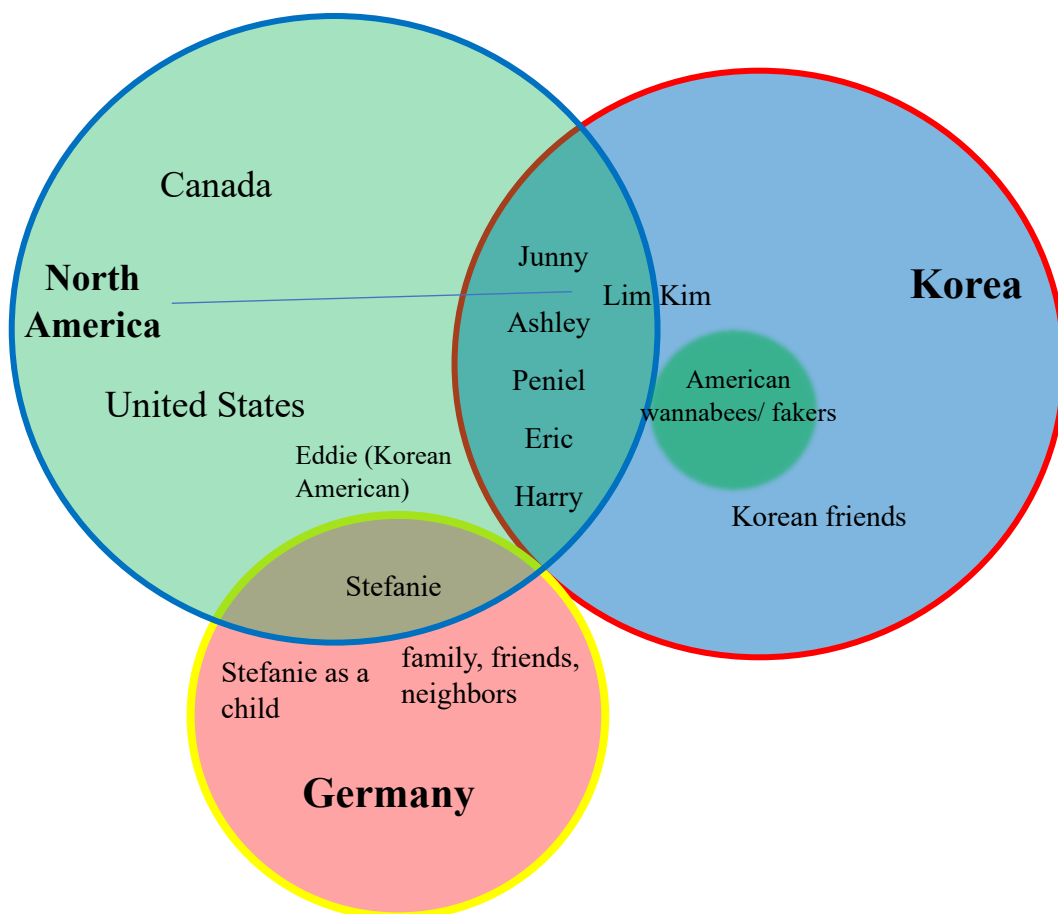
continuing my search. This is a testament to the heightened awareness of the speakers for their fragile position within and in-between cultural spaces, especially in this public online setting.

### **5.3 Method of Analysis**

The selected four episodes were searched for sequences in which speakers position themselves or others as experts or knowers about Korea, Canada, the United States and/or Germany. The collected sequences were subdivided into three subcollections: one when regular hosts of DIVE Studios (Ashley, Peniel, Junny, Harry, and Eric Nam), are amongst themselves, and two other subcollections with guests respectively representing out-group members on two different ends of the “transnational Korean spectrum”: Lim Kim (Korean) and Stefanie Michova (German). Relevant sequences were then transcribed and analyzed. In the following section, examples of claims to knowledge or expertise that demonstrate in-group status to certain cultural spheres shall be presented and analyzed to show how the participants co-construct a dynamic landscape of different subject positions that, as I argue, are strongly influenced by the ethnographic situatedness of DIVE Studios within the sociocultural context of transnational Korea as outlined in the previous section. First, I will focus on interactions between DIVE Studios members in which the speakers co-construct themselves as authentic transnational North American Koreans by demonstrating and confirming each other’s transnational adaptability, bilingual proficiency, and cultural knowledge. I will then analyze examples in which Lim Kim rejects being positioned as co-expert and thereby an in-group member of transnational Koreans, distancing herself from this vulnerable position. Lastly, I will examine how Stefanie Michova is treated as an out-group member to the transnational Korean group identity through rejections of her claims of Korean expertise, while she is positioned and accepted as a German and American expert. I will argue that rejecting her as Korean co-expert reflects the racialized notion of Koreanness, corresponding with historical ideologies regarding the ethnoracial homogeneity of Korea (Lim, 2010; Lo & Kim, 2012).

## 6. Analysis

The examples that will be analyzed in the following sections in more detail can be systematized along different axes of differentiation on various fronts, delineating and drawing lines between different group identities and stereotypical people types (figures of personhood) that are bound to certain cultural spaces and that the speakers try to align or disalign with, thereby constructing their own fluid identities. The local positionings that are done in each example can be mapped along those demarcations, showing how the speakers create a new transnational social space in-between cultural spaces while simultaneously belonging to more than one abstract group identity. The overall structure of the analysis of the data examples is organized along these lines as shown in the following diagram.



**Diagram 1:** Overall systematization of the co-construction of cultural belongings in the podcast.

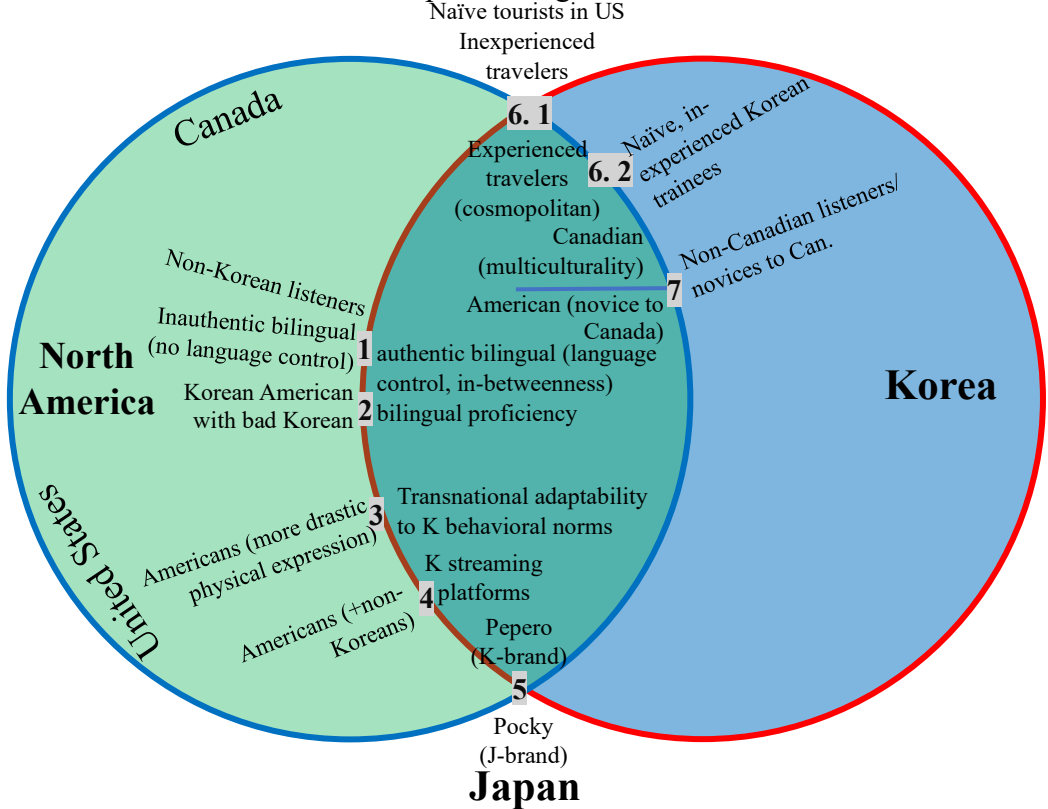
Along the transnational Korea vs. North America axis (red line), the speakers construct themselves as belonging to Korea and/or being different from other North Americans (6.1.1).

At the same time, they claim belonging to North America and/or being distinct from other Koreans on other occasions, which can be mapped along the transnational Korea vs. Korea axis (blue line, 6.1.2). In conjunction, these discursive moves construct the podcast as a transnational space and the speakers as transnational Koreans who are both “authentically” Korean and American or Canadian, illustrated in the diagram by the thus emerging overlap of the North American and Korean circle. After having examined how this transnational Korean space is being established in the Get Real podcast interactions, the sections 6.2 and 6.3 explore negotiations along the borders of this space. First Lim Kim serves as a liminal figure on the transnational Korea-Korea axis partly disclaiming her co-membership in the transnational Korean group identity through self-categorizing as “a hundred percent Korean” (example 9, 1.10) and partly disaligning with other-positionings of her as knower of Canada (example 10). Her discursive moves reveal her distancing from certain people types associated with Koreans trying to claim belonging to the North American circle and thereby the transnational Korean space, which is illustrated in the diagram as a green space (“American wannabes/fakers” (Choi, 2019)) in the Korean circle that tries to cross into the North American circle but is denied true citizenship by other listening subjects. These are countertypes to certain figures on the opposite side, which are part of the American circle but are not allowed access to the Korean circle, such as Korean Americans who have lost “their Koreanness” indexed through an American accent when speaking Korean (cf. example 2, Eddie as counterfigure). 6.3 will focus on Stefanie’s complex positions in and in-between these different fields. She brings in a new cultural space, Germany, which is illustrated in the diagram as a third circle, and constructs herself and is constructed as both belonging to Germany and the United States which again locates her in an overlapping field between those two spaces (cf. Diagram 1). However, similar claims to knowledge and by extension to a possible co-membership in the transnational Korean space are mostly rejected, pointing at the impermeability of the Korean “circle” for people who are not

ethnically Korean. While the North American circle seems to be permeable in both directions, for Westerners and non-Westerners alike, the Korean one appears to be restricted to racioethnic Koreans or Asians.

**6.1 The co-construction of Get Real as a transnational Korean space**

Building on previous studies that have described socially ratified and controlled bilingual competence, multicultural knowledge, and linguistic as well as cultural flexibility as markers of authentic, successful transnational Koreans (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 265; Choi, 2019), I will now present examples of the co-construction of what I subsume as “transnational adaptability” (cf. ex. 3,6) and “bilingual proficiency” (cf. ex.1,2) as well as ratified claims of expertise with regard to cultural knowledge and values in the podcast (cf. ex.3,4,5,6,7). Taken together, all these discursive moves construct Get Real as a transnational Korean space that is tied to both North America and Korea, creating a new social space in-between, illustrated in the diagrams as an overlap between the green and the blue circle. Each example can be mapped along the demarcations of this new social space, along either the Korean or American/Canadian front.



**Diagram 2:** The construction of Get Real as a transnational Korean space.

The subsequent section will focus on the examples 1 to 5, constructing authentic belonging to Korea along the transnational Korea vs North America axis.

### **6.1.1 Along the transnational Korea vs. North America axis**

In the first three examples, the notion of “bilingual proficiency”, the polycentricity to different linguistic markets (Park & Lo, 2012), are central in the self-construction of the participants as authentically belonging to both the American as well as the Korean group identity. Based on her data, Choi (2019) defines “legitimate Korean-English bilingual competence” (p. 1400) as being conceptualized as involving “a ‘properly balanced’ and ‘well-controlled’ display of bilingual competency, pragmatic appropriateness, and linguistic flexibility” (pp. 1400-1401). In contrast, “failed bilingualism”, which would be the socially inappropriate display of certain language skills, is perceived as a sign of “one’s inauthentic and pretentious nature” (p.1401). In the podcast, the speakers make efforts to construct themselves as able to appropriately orient to different linguistic markets, as will be shown in the following three examples.

In the first example, the speakers co-construct themselves as bilingually proficient or authentic bilinguals with regard to English and Korean. They also stress their transnational adaptability. The excerpt is taken from the episode, in which Eric Nam is invited as a guest to Get Real and talks with Peniel and Ashley about what he has been up to in the previous months, speaking about his tour, a new album, and a movie he recently participated in as the main actor. He is back at the company in Seoul after spending several months in America. The three of them are friends personally and the conversation is mostly focused on Eric. After talking about his busy previous months, Peniel wonders why Eric is on their show right now instead of resting.

(1)4:21 Bilingual proficiency and transnational adaptability<sup>10</sup>

01 P why are you on the podcast why are you not resting?

02 E this is resting for me;

03 P oh okay

04 A oh (shocked voice and expression)

---

<sup>10</sup> ERIC NAM is an Actor Now | GET REAL S3 EP 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUfl1d10giAA>

05 E this is my form of therapy; to see my friends I haven't seen in a very  
06 long time and to just uh 수다떨어/sudatteoleo which is= (turns to Peniel)  
07 =what's 수다떨어/sudatteoleo? in  
08 A just [chitchat?]  
09 P [°just talk?°]  
10 E just chitchat.  
11 A well then you [gotta spell like all the]  
12 P [you were in america and you forgot engl- (starts  
13 laughing) your english? (laughs, Eric too)  
14 E I'm in korean mode right now so it's  
15 P ah okay[okayokay]  
16 E [it's] you know [it goes back and forth uhm=]  
17 P [it's confusing it's confusing yeahyeahyeah]  
18 E =but yeah I just I finished the Australia Hawaii New Zealand tour,

In line 6 Eric suddenly uses a Korean word in his English sentence after exclusively speaking English with Ashley and Peniel for a while and then immediately sets out to translate himself. He shows himself aware and in control of his language choice, while displaying his multilingual competency, which are all markers associated with the model of “the elite transnational South Korean returnee” (Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 257). He does not just accidentally use a Korean word without noticing it, which would be connected to an inauthentic or unsuccessful bilingual performance (Lo & Kim, 2012; Choi, 2019), but shows his awareness of his linguistic output as well as his audience by immediately initiating a word search. On one level, this audience is Peniel and Ashley, who he positions as authentic Korean-English bilinguals, able to understand his Korean word, which makes its use adequate in this situation and not just an “inappropriate slip” in language choice. At the same time, he makes sure that out-group podcast listeners will be provided with a translation by collaborating with his fellow bilinguals in a word search. He stops himself midsentence (“which is” l.6) and turns to Peniel, nominating him to help him out with the translation as he struggles to find the English word for “수다떨어” (l. 6) in that moment. In doing so he positions Peniel as a bilingual English and Korean expert. Before Peniel can answer, Ashley jumps in and offers a candidate answer for Eric’s word search (“just chitchat” l.8), thereby positioning herself alongside the other two as a competent bilingual. She is prefacing her candidate with the adverb “just”, modifying the

answer to their word search as a straightforward one, and framing the action of translating Korean to English as something that comes easy and natural to her. In overlapping talk, Peniel offers a vaguer option (“chitchat” 1.8, vs. “talk” 1.9), almost at the same time. All three participants co-construct themselves as authentic bilinguals who consciously choose the English language in this specific context, positioning the listeners as possible outgroup members or non-Koreans. Eric takes up Ashley’s candidate by literally repeating it and thus confirming her position as co-expert (1.10; Vickers, 2010). Peniel playfully teases Eric for his struggle to find an English word after spending months in America (1.12-13). They both are confident in joking about Eric’s English-speaking abilities, showing their secure identity as proficient English speakers with English as their first language. Eric still explains himself by stating that he is “in korea mode right now” (1.14) as he adapted to the Korean environment that they are physically located in during their recording. He thereby positions himself as someone who is in-between, someone who often has to switch between different “modes”, depending on whether he is in the United States or in South Korea. In doing so, he is constructing his transnational belongings, as well as cultural and linguistic flexibility and adaptability, which all index his elite transnational Korean status. Before he can further elaborate on his explanation, Peniel readily accepts it, indicating his immediate understanding and positions himself alongside Eric’s transnational stance: “ah okayokay” (1.15). Still, Eric continues: “it’s you know it goes back and forth” (1.16), further stressing his mobility and in-betweenness between Korea and America and him going into different headspaces depending on where he finds himself in geographically and socially. Peniel adds on to this elaboration: “it’s confusing yeahyeahyeah” (1.17), again cutting it off as not necessary because he already understands while at the same time aligning himself with Eric as being familiar with moving between the two cultural and linguistic spaces and quickly adapting to them.



A common method for the construction of a transnational Korean in-group in the podcast is the contrasting with a non-present Other, who is associated with inauthenticity, monolingualism and -culturalism, and incompetency in navigating different linguistic and cultural contexts (cf. ex.2,6.2,12,14). This is a mechanism that Choi (2019) also found in her analysis of Korean-English bilinguals' discursive construction of themselves as "authentic bilinguals" as opposed to other "incompetent bilinguals": "By labeling these bilinguals as the incompetent ones, the participants then successfully position themselves as better and matured bilinguals who can display their bilingual skills in socially expected ways, and see the value of the Korean language and Koreanness" (p. 1405). An example for such a discursive move in my data can be found soon after the previously analyzed excerpt. When talking about the auditioning and preparation process for acting in an American movie, Eric positions his brother Eddie, who works as his manager and is a co-founder of DIVE Studios, as an inauthentic bilingual figure as opposed to himself, Ashley and Peniel, who are constructed as authentic bilinguals and thereby also successful transnationals. In preparation for the audition, Eddie read the other lines in the dialogues Eric tried to practice, which also included some Korean parts.

(2)7:35 Eddie as a "failed bilingual" Korean American

- 01 E but he was like? there were lines in korean, and I'd be like (higher  
02 volume) "stop doing it in korean eddie your korean is horrible"  
03 A (laughing)  
04 E no offense eddie, but he would like snap me out of it I'd be like it's  
05 a very serious thing=  
06 A oh  
07 E =he'd be like (marked voice, slow) "oh 밥 먹었어/bap meogeosseo<sup>11</sup>?" (others  
08 laugh)I'm like (back to normal pace)what are you doing? (.) like  
09 P+A(laugh)  
10 E like (laughter) ?actually/honestly?  
11 A he's trying his [best for you;]  
12 E [he's he was he was]trying his best [but his best  
13 wasn't good enough] (A laughs)  
14 P [oh wait oh so  
15 the- there's ko]rean in the movie too then;  
16 E yeah  
17 P oh okay[okayokay.]  
18 E [so it's] a korean-american story I'd say.  
19 P OH ookayokay[okay]

---

<sup>11</sup> Engl.: Have you eaten?

20 E [in m]any ways so=  
21 A =are you the main character?  
22 E °i am°

In his story, Eric positions himself and his brother relationally as opposites within the Korean American subject spectrum, himself being the expert bilingual and Korean-speaker, able to assess other peoples' Korean pronunciation: "stop doing it in Korean Eddie, your Korean is horrible" (1.2). Ashley responds by laughing at Eric's enactment, thereby aligning herself with Eric's position as authentic bilingual, who is able to ratify other American people's attempt to speak Korean out of his authoritative position as expert (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022). In line 7, Eric enacts his brother's accent in Korean for entertainment, with both Peniel and Ashley laughing at it. The short phrase Eric is saying in Korean with an American accent is a very basic and commonly asked question in Korean culture: "Have you eaten?" He is using the informal speech level, possibly indexing a very simple Korean used in domestic settings and by children, evoking the infantilized, dumb "Korean American" persona with bad pronunciation and dubious Korean citizenship, not really belonging to Korea (cf. Lo & Kim, 2012, p. 265). In response, Ashley shows some compassion for the "failed bilingual": "he's trying his best for you" (1.11). Eric first adopts this stance to then humorously discredit Eddie's linguistic performance as "not good enough" (1.12-13), constructing his brother as pitiful failed bilingual. Peniel guides the conversation back to the movie itself (cf. 1.14-15) and based on Eric's characterization of the movie as telling "a Korean American story", Ashley draws the conclusion that Eric might play the main character (cf. 1.21). She is implicitly confirming Eric's bicultural belongings by positioning him as a fitting protagonist for a Korean American story, having the looks, linguistic and cultural familiarity as well as social capital in both spaces.

As for pragmatic and social appropriateness as defining markers of bilingual proficiency (Choi, 2019), the speakers also construct their flexibility and adaptability to different cultural codes as shown in the following example taken from the episode with Lim Kim as a guest. In this excerpt, Peniel and Junny claim expertise with regard to proper behavior in Korea versus

America, explicating two different possible reactions to a question that Ashley directed to Lim Kim. In this interaction, Ashley, Peniel, and Junny are the regular hosts, who know each other very well. Lim Kim is featured as a guest and less familiar with the other three speakers. When Ashley asks Lim Kim to guess her MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) personality type, Peniel and Junny emphatically express their displeasure toward that question. Peniel positions himself as someone who is able to adjust their behavior according to the cultural context, they are presently in. Junny aligns himself with Peniel's assessment of the situation and the alternative responses to it that would be proper ways of expressing their affective stance in the American or Korean context respectively.

(3)16:53 Peniel and Junny as experts regarding proper behavior in Korea vs. America<sup>12</sup>

01 J if-if you don't mind asking what's your MBTI? (to LK)  
 02 LK ahh, (.) (thinking, looking up) I'm ENTP.  
 03 J ooh [you're ENTP,]  
 04 A [oh ENTP]  
 05 P [you're an ENTP]  
 06 LK mhm (nodding)  
 07 J so sh- she likes to be [around people right,] (eye contact with P. opposite)  
 08 P [she just likes going] out and stuff; (hand movement in air from side to side)  
 09 J yeah [likes going out]  
 10 P [yeahyeahyeahyeah]  
 11 LK what a- what about you guys? (looks from side to side, inviting them all to speak)  
 12 A .pt  
 13 J what [are you guys?]  
 14 A [guess] (squints eyes mysteriously, looking at LK)  
 15 (.)  
 16 J Hh/ugh that's [like the worst thing to say I hate it wh- especially]  
 17 P [I HATE it when people say this . I hate it](looking off camera (to producer?))  
 18 LK [(laughing)]  
 19 J [if [I was a guest on a show]  
 20 P [attention ?wh°res?]  
 21 A (whining voice) [WHY? ?I hear that?] [guessing others]  
 22 P [att~~ention~~ seeker]  
 23 A [it's fun] (LK laughing the whole time)  
 24 J [if I was] a h- like if I was a guest of a show and the host told me  
 25 to do that? I would hate that person.  
 26 LK (laughs)  
 27 J joking (laughs, arm stretched out to Ashley opposite)

<sup>12</sup> Lim Kim on identity crisis and her new single "Veil" S3 Ep. #12  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC30ZqjnUSw&t=1130s>

28 P yah  
 29 A re[ally?]  
 30 P [if I] was, (takes mike in hand) if I was in America, I would've  
 31 walked out (makes arm movements as if walking)  
 32 J yeah I would walked out (laughing, thumb to back gesture)  
 33 LK [hm]  
 34 A [(laughing) [I love guessing other people's MBTI;=]  
 35 P but since its Korea [I'm still sitting °nah I'm just kidding°]  
 36 A =okay if it's too hard I'll tell you (smashes fly on small table  
 in front of her)

To further underline his point of how much he hates people who ask others to guess their personality type, Peniel verbally describes his alternative “American” physical expression of his emotional stance that he would perform if the cultural context allowed a more drastic option: “if I was, (takes mike in hand) if I was in America, I would’ve walked out (makes arm movements as if walking)” (l.30-31). By not only refraining from reacting more dramatically, American, but also making this choice explicit, he constructs himself as culturally flexible, with controlled, adjusted behavior to the non-American environment. He adapts the American physical way of expressing his emotional response to Ashley’s question to the Korean cultural affordances by translating the “American” bodily response into a verbal form, still making use of the shared American communicational and cultural knowledge of his interlocutors to emphasize his point. In his turn (cf. l.30-31), Peniel thus draws on both cultural spaces at the same time to empathize his stance in a Korean-context-adequate way, while still making use of “American” communication strategies – here just walking out of the room if unhappy with a certain question. Junny, who grew up in Canada and who differentiates himself from “the Americans” within the transnational Korean in-group in other occasions (cf. examples 7, 10), completely aligns with Peniel’s American transnational communicative move, by repeating the part of his turn that described a physical action: “I would’ve walked out” (l.30-32). In doing so, he positions himself alongside Peniel’s Korean-American emotional expression and Canadian and American culture implicitly become combined into one sphere opposing the Korean cultural sphere that they locate themselves in at that moment. Peniel makes his differentiation between these two spheres more explicit in line 35, where he explains the reason for his choice

to not go through with the American physical response he just described: “but since its Korea I’m still sitting” (l.35), again constructing himself as culturally considerate and flexible by making explicit that his current physical behavior is “Korean” and a conscious choice to respect the current cultural sphere. In doing so, they both construct themselves as different from other Americans who would have acted according to the American cultural code and at the same time display their familiarity with the Korean behavioral norm, thus constructing their belonging to both the Korean as well as the American “circle”.

In a different episode with Peniel, Ashley, and Harry, the participants are only comprised of regular hosts of Get Real, which makes for a very casual conversation and the creation of an in-group dynamic through shared knowledge with regard to American and Korean culture. In this example for such an in-group dynamic, Peniel talks about having been confined to his home after a leg surgery and how that combined with the COVID restrictions has led to him being more antisocial. In the following excerpt, Peniel and Harry demonstrate and celebrate their shared in-group knowledge of Korean streaming platforms, marking their Korean expertise through their display of a privileged “high epistemic access” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p.2) to Korea-specific media platforms and everyday practices like paying bills in Korea.

(4) 38:10 Peniel and Harry as co-experts of Korean streaming platforms<sup>13</sup>

01 H [too inconvenient;]

02 P [uh what do you] call it like crutches like (.) (movement in air as if using crutches)

03 H yeah=

04 P =walk around outside and stuff you know, so then after that I was like  
05 “HEy” like (slightly higher, animated) ts “I actually don’t mind like  
06 staying inside actually” [like it’s]=

07 H [mhm]

08 P =like you know there is a bunch of stuff to watch on (laughing, lifts  
09 hand palm upwards, signifying phone/display) like

10 H (laughing quietly)

11 A (laughing quietly) is that all you do? Just watch? netflix?

12 P yeah I’m just like watching like netfli- I have like all the apps like  
13 like the korean ones=so I got like [netflix]

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<sup>13</sup> pH-1 on Living a Solo Life | GET REAL S3 Ep. #30  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_7FjZXjRPE&t=167s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_7FjZXjRPE&t=167s)

14 A [Disney;]  
15 P = I g[ot] Disney plus  
16 H [watcha<sup>14</sup>]  
17 A watcha  
18 P I got watcha (looking at Harry) [wavve<sup>15</sup>, TVIng<sup>16</sup>]  
19 H [wavve, TVIng,] (H+P in unison)  
20 A [damn]  
21 H (excited, higher pitch, laughter) YOO ME tOO BRO (handshake with P)  
22 P (laughs, equally excited)  
23 A oh you're rich [rich] (laughing)  
24 H [I'd pay] I'd pay like 십만 원/sibmanwon<sup>17</sup> a month bro  
25 [°like a hundred bucks°]  
26 P [I'm like damn] [that's house]  
27 A [진짜/JINJJA;]<sup>18</sup>  
28 P that's house rent  
29 A I only have netflix.  
30 H [ah:::] (calming himself down after laughing a lot)  
31 P [but I but] like some of them like uhm uh it's like my friends and  
32 then like we'll just share  
33 A yeah;  
34 P and like I have like one like  
35 H yeahyeahyeahyeah

In line 11 Ashley is the first to mention a specific streaming platform after Peniel left his sentence in line 8 unfinished: “there is a bunch of stuff to watch on”. She is offering the internationally known American streaming platform Netflix as a probable finishing part of his turn. Peniel takes up her explication by confirming that this is really all he does, watching Netflix (cf. l.12). However, he interrupts himself before finishing the word to give a more detailed account of the various platforms he uses, stressing the vast extent of his anti-social pastime activity through the description of his many subscriptions to “all the apps” (l.12), even “the Korean ones” (l.13). Right after claiming that he is subscribed to every streaming platform available, stressing the adverb “all”, he goes back to mentioning the biggest American providers Netflix and Disney plus (cf. l.13,15). Ashley aligns with him by joining in his demonstration of listing platforms, mentioning Disney in overlapping talk (cf. l.14). Harry joins

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<sup>14</sup> WATCHA (왓차) (Minjung, 2023)

<sup>15</sup> WAVVE (웨이브) (Minjung, 2023)

<sup>16</sup> TVING (티빙) (Minjung, 2023)

<sup>17</sup> Engl.: 100.000 Won

<sup>18</sup> Korean exclamation, Engl.: really

as well, bringing up the first Korean platform in line 16, which refocuses the following turns to actually listing examples of Korean platforms, as Peniel explicitly claimed to have them in the beginning (cf. 1.13). Both Ashley (cf. 1.17) and Peniel (cf. 1.18) take up Harry's example by repeating it, aligning with him as knowers of Korean media providers. Peniel extends his uptake with more information. He is not just repeating Harry's one-word turn, like Ashley did (cf. 1. 17), but instead produces a full grammatical sentence with it and then adds on to it: "I got watcha" (1.18), slightly turning to and looking at Harry next to him for a moment, who joins him in adding two more Korean streaming platforms (cf. 1.18). In unison they both list two more platforms, "wavve, tving" (1.18, 19), and get excited about their shared interest and knowledge, indicated through a handshake, laughter, the use of a higher pitch, and more colloquial register in Harry's turn: "yoo me too bro" (1.21). He uses the address term "bro", indicating their relationship as friends, and stresses the adverb "too", especially emphasizing their sameness. This shows how the demonstration of common knowledge creates a sense of shared identity, which has been found as one of the discursive practices that speakers perform to "enact being in an ongoing relationship" (Bolden, 2006, p. 662). In this bonding sequence between the two, Ashley becomes the outsider who reacts to their excitement (cf. 1.20, 23) but does not participate in it. She is taking up a disaligning stance through assessing their many subscriptions to various streaming platforms as a sign that they must be very rich (cf. 1.23), implying that she does not have them, which she makes explicit later on (cf. 1.29). Harry reacts to Ashley's comment by pointing out how much he pays for being able to access all these platforms, at the same time demonstrating that he shares Peniel's hobby of watching a lot of movies and shows: "I'd pay I'd pay like 십만 원/sibmanwon [100.000 Won] a month bro like a hundred bucks" (1.24-25). He does so using both linguistic codes: "십만 원" (1.24) is the South Korean currency Won and the number 100.000 in Korean, which makes the thereafter following "like a hundred bucks" (1.25) an immediate self-translation not only of his Korean

phrase but also the Korean currency. This “code-switched reiteration” (Harjunpää & Mäkilähde, 2016, p. 193) shows his consideration of American or international listeners, while demonstrating his bilingual proficiency. Such alternations between languages, that can be found in other examples as well (cf. ex.2,8,18,20,21), have been found to be “a communicative resource carrying social indexing potential” (Harjunpää & Mäkilähde, 2016, p. 165). In this case, Harry’s use of Korean and the Korean currency for the monthly amount of money he has to pay for all these platforms contextualizes the activity of paying his bills in Korea, further positioning himself within the Korean circle while still being able and self-conscious enough to not only immediately translate himself but also to effortlessly transfer the Korean currency into the American one. This together with the use of a slang word for the American currency, “bucks”, marks his simultaneous position within the American and Korean space along the transnational Korea vs. America axis. He is also directing the Korean part of his turn to Peniel, again through the colloquial address term “bro”, signaling their shared position in spending a lot of money on various streaming platforms and aligning Peniel with himself within the transnational Korean space, as Peniel too will pay those bills in the Korean currency. Peniel reacts to this in overlapping talk with Harry’s self-translation, showing how the translation was not necessary for him and expressing his affective stance towards that monthly bill: “I’m like damn that’s house that’s house rent” (1.26, 28). He acknowledges that this is a lot of money for him too and thereby aligns with Ashley’s assessment of how expensive these many memberships are. Ashley reacts affectively with a Korean interjection: “진짜/jinjja!” (1.27), “really” in English, expressing that the amount of money is so high, it really does interfere with basic living costs like house rent, framing Peniel’s playful statement as serious and not exaggerating. In using the Korean word instead of English, she aligns with Peniel and Harry’s Korean positioning from the previous turns and reacts in Korean to Harry’s Korean explication of a monthly bill, aligning with Peniel as in-group addressee of his turn in line 24.



The last example for the construction of Korean belonging through a claim of cultural expertise and othering of an outside group is taken from the episode with Harry, Peniel, Ashley, and their guest Stefanie. The context is a longer activity in which the participants discussed and evaluated different kinds of candy, which were mostly American, demonstrating their American insider status with extended parts in which Stefanie assumed more of an outsider role as she was unfamiliar with many of the candies. In the following excerpt, Harry is in disbelief that Peniel disagrees with his high evaluation of Pocky in comparison to other candy (cf. 1.3) and asks him whether he does not like Pocky (cf. 1.3). Instead of answering the question directly, Peniel accounts for his strong disagreement (cf. 1.2) of Ashley's and Harry's categorization of crunch and Pocky as "S-tier candy", still only explicitly mentioning Crunch (cf. 1.4). Harry reformulates his question now using the Korean brand name Pepero instead of the Japanese Pocky (cf. 1.5), excluding one possible problem source in his question by using a different name for what is a very similar snack: a biscuit stick coated with chocolate or a different flavor. When mentioning the Korean brand name Pepero, it is important to note that all speakers involved in this sequence (Ashley, Harry, and Peniel) pronounce the name in the Korean way, as it is written in Hangeul (빼빼로/Bbaebbaero), the Korean writing system, with a soft, voiced "bb"-sound instead of the voiceless plosive "p" as the English/romanized version "Pepero" would suggest. In doing this alone, they already index their Korean belonging.

(5) 30:27 A Japanese (Pocky) vs. Korean (Pepero) brand<sup>19</sup>

- 01 A [do you agree?] (touching Peniel's arm who's sitting next to her)  
 02 P [what? [REally?]]  
 03 H [pocky] wh-(turns to P) y-you don't like pocky? (pointing at P)  
 04 P I don't think crunch is an [S,]  
 05 H [you] like [pepero?] (still pointing at P)  
 06 A [I'm sick] of pockys.=  
 07 H =do you like pepero?  
 08 A I only like the n:ude ones;  
 09 H so you like pepero not pocky. (.) you're racist (only then lowers hand)  
 10 P (laughing)

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<sup>19</sup> *Crashing Hallelujah Night with Stefanie Michova | Get Real S2 Ep. #13*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfStNCONUvk>

11 A isn't it the same thing?  
 12 (first P+H begin to laugh, then others join)  
 13 A (turns gz to producer, higher pitch) isn't it the same thing?  
 14 H pocky[ is japanese.]  
 15 Producer off mic: °[pepero is] korean.°  
 16 A w- (producer saying something off-mic: ?"pepe is...")  
 17 P pocky is Kor-Japanese  
 18 A well: we should be representing pepero; (moving head from side to side, provoking, looking at H) (producer laughing)  
 19 P yeah.  
 20 A (laughing) (Harry rolls eyes at her, producer laughing in background)  
 21 P whai-I've never even gotten pocky forr  
 22 A no=  
 23 P =Hallo[ween]  
 24 A [yeah] me neither;  
 25 H they taste a little different °though, subtle.° (while looking on screen with candy tier list in front of them)  
 26 A mMHm.

While Harry directs his questions (cf. 1.3,5,7) to Peniel, he never answers them. It is Ashley who responds instead, however using the brand name Pocky, as they have in their previous discussion (cf. 1.6). Harry repeats his question once more, still insisting on using the Korean brand name and still keeping two fingers pointed at Peniel opposite him (cf. 1.7). Again, Ashley answers by specifying which ones she likes, if any, this time avoiding mentioning a brand name, treating Pepero and Pocky as synonymously referring to the same snack (cf. 1.8). Harry's following turn reveals his differentiating understanding of the two names, as he makes explicit how he interprets Ashley's answers: "so you like Pepero not Pocky" (1.9). He allows for a pause after his conclusion, but no one takes over the next-speaker right and challenges his statement. This could be because he still has his hand stretched out, which might be read as a sign that he is not done with his turn. It is also likely that Ashley struggles to assess Harry's summary of her opinion on the two snacks because she appears to use both terms synonymously and therefore takes them as referring to the same thing, as becomes clearer later (cf. 1.11). Harry then extends his turn by concluding that Ashley must be racist if she prefers the Korean brand over the foreign Japanese brand, still not making explicit in what ways they are different (cf. 1.9). In differentiating between the two competing brands and aligning Ashley with one of them, he not only demonstrates his cultural knowledge but also positions the group and her as Korean in-

group members. He teases her by interpreting her apparent negative stance toward Pocky as a racist one, rejecting what is different or Othered from oneself. This becomes clearer in the turns after, when Ashley reveals that she thought of the two terms as synonymous by asking whether they are not the same (cf. l.11,13). As is the case in other examples (cf. ex.20), the producer off-screen and off-microphone is consulted through gaze as authority who can answer a speaker's question, this time Ashley directs her question to her (cf. l.13) after her immediate interlocutors did not respond the first time she produced the same question (cf. l.11,12). Both the producer and Harry answer by explaining that Pepero is Korean and Pocky is Japanese (cf. l.14,15), Harry claiming expertise in the matter by self-selecting to respond to the question. Peniel takes up their simultaneous responses and mixes them up but self-corrects (cf. l.17). It remains unclear whether he knew about the difference between the two brands before, but he aligns with the producer and Harry in responding to Ashley's question, positioning himself as knower alongside them. Ashley now uses the new information to defend herself from Harry's previous playful accusation of her being a racist (cf. l.9; Vickers, 2010: ratification of expertise through incorporation of meaning by other speaker). She does so by aligning herself and her co-present interlocutors as Korean in-group members with the Korean brand: "well we should be representing pepero" (l.18). She stresses the pronoun "we" and then the brand name "pepero", associating them as a group with the brand that now has been defined as Korean and claiming their allegiance to what is Korean, thus positioning them within the Korean circle and the Japanese Pocky as the Other, outside of the circle (cf. "5" in Diagram 2). Before this transcribed sequence, Stefanie has participated in the discussion around Pocky, showing that she knows the snack. However, she remains uninvolved during the more detailed discussion that included another Korean brand name, introduced by Harry. He tends to take up the Korean expert role with the highest level of authority within the Get Real regular host group, as he

appears to claim expertise for Korea most commonly and confidently and is never challenged in this position by his interlocutors (cf. ex.4,20,21,22).

### **6.1.2 Along the transnational Korea vs. Korea axis**

Along the transnational Korea vs. North America axis (cf. Diagram 2, red line), the speakers construct their belonging to the Korean space through differentiating themselves from certain types of Americans, including the figure of the inauthentic bilingual Korean American (ex.1,2), who is perceived as having lost his Koreanness, but also outsider Americans in general who are novices to Korean culture (ex.3,4). Conversely, on the opposite side of the transnational Korean space (cf. Diagram 2, blue line), on the Korean front, belonging to North America is stressed and the speakers distance themselves from certain types of Koreans, as will be analyzed in this section. The first example on this axis is again taken from the Halloween-episode with Stefanie, Harry, Ashley, and Peniel and signifies another instance for an in-group construction through the contrasting with a non-present Other. In this sequence, the four speakers construct themselves as experienced travelers, cosmopolitan, in-group members of the American sphere as opposed to fellow Korean trainees, who are being relationally positioned as naïve, helpless tourists in America. Example 1 illustrated a distancing from a Korean American figure with bad Korean skills and therefore questionable Korean citizenship and belonging (Lo & Kim, 2012). The following example (6) shows how the speakers equally distance themselves from the “monocultural and monolingual Korean”, who is helpless and vulnerable outside of Korea due to their lack of international experiences. While in example 1 and 2 this was done focusing on Korean language skills, here the out-group members are characterized by their incompetency to navigate selling strategies on American streets, meant to deceive helpless tourists, while the speakers construct themselves as familiar with such encounters and able to navigate them. Right before this sequence the speakers talked about a costume parade in Los Angeles that Stefanie used to go to, establishing her as American in-group member (cf. 6.3.1, ex.13). Harry

now brings up a personal experience within the same cultural space that they just talked about, pointing at his mobility, reflected in his ability to easily travel when something sparks his interest (cf. 1.3).

(6.1) 42:40 Self-construction as experienced travelers, cosmopolitans<sup>20</sup>  
01 H you talked about holl-hollywood; right?  
02 St mhm  
03 H ?aswell/that's why? I went there and a lot of people are in costumes=  
04 St oh yeah;  
05 H =and what they do is like they grab you by the hand and like (sudden  
06 hand movement, pulling someone to himself) "take a picture with me"  
07 and then like charge you [?...or something?]  
08 A [yeah]  
09 [(everyone makes agreeing sounds)]  
10 St [oh you mean the] actors?  
11 H actors whoever I don't know; wh-  
12 St [(laughing)just random people,=]  
13 P [wait they did it in] new york [too though;]  
14 H [=°yeah people°]  
15 A yeah=  
16 P =like times square and stuff [they take a picture first] (producer  
laughing in background)  
17 H [°?...demo CD?]  
18 A yeah  
19 H they're like okay that's five dollars b- (makes facial expressions  
20 for stupid random person, and then his own shocked annoyed face)  
21 producer laughs  
22 H whawaitwhat? (still enacting gullible tourist)  
23 St they do you just have to keep walking say "no thank you" I mean I'm  
24 always like friendly I'm like "no thank you" (higher pitch, sweet  
voice)  
25 (.)  
26 A not gonna deny that (gritted teeth)  
27 St I'm like do you want my demo CD?  
28 everyone laughing  
29 St actually,

Harry describes a common practice in which costumed people forcefully invite tourists to take a picture with them and then charge money for it afterwards (cf. 1.5-7). The others position themselves as familiar with such practices, by producing agreeing sounds (cf. 1.8-9). Only Stefanie asks further questions to fully understand what Harry is talking about (cf. 1.10). She reacts surprised to Harry's response by reformulating his answer and slightly raising the pitch towards the end of the turn: "just random people," (1.12). In overlapping talk, Peniel only now

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<sup>20</sup> *Crashing Hallelujah Night with Stefanie Michova | Get Real S2 Ep. #13*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfStNCONUvk>

recognizes that he experienced something similar in New York, prefacing his turn with “wait” (1.13). Ashley, who lived in New York during her teenage years, repeatedly shows that all this is not new information to her by occasionally confirming the personal stories with a “yeah” (1.8,15,18). In overlapping talk, Peniel and Harry now describe and enact such scam-encounters in America (cf. 1.16-22). Stefanie then offers a solution to what one should do to deal with such a situation, explaining what she “always” does when she encounters it, showing that she does encounter it often: “they do you just have to keep walking say ‘no thank you’ I mean I’m always like friendly I’m like ‘no thank you’” (1.23-24). She thereby constructs herself as a capable, experienced traveler and a cosmopolitan modern individual, who is familiar with such scamming techniques and able to avoid them. Ashley again responds from the standpoint of an in-group member to a negative characteristic of her “group” (Americans, New Yorkers in particular). She does so by positioning herself as unable to deny the charges against them or defend her in-group, admitting such negative encounters with Americans as not uncommon: “not gonna deny that” (1.26).

Shortly after, Peniel brings up one of his former fellow Korean trainees as out-group member and contrasting persona who is unfamiliar with such scamming techniques in America. The trainee system in the K-pop industry is very Korean-specific in itself. Peniel presupposes the cultural knowledge in his audience to understand the social context and the kind of relationship he had with the young Koreans with whom he trained for a few years to become K-pop stars in a high-pressure environment. Moreover, he alludes to a specific experience and social context that especially Ashley but also Harry have been in personal contact with as professionals in the Korean music industry. This indirect referencing of a “shared experience or shared knowledge in launching new topics” (Bolden, 2006, p. 662) has been found to be characteristic for “conversations between the familiars” (p. 662). Besides constructing himself and his coparticipants as fellow in-group members of Korea and the Korean entertainment

industry, by using the pronoun “we” (cf. 1.1), he positions himself within the group of trainees in the Korean K-pop industry, constructing his cultural belonging to Korea by indexing his personal involvement in the Korean K-pop education system. He then complicates his membership to the Korean trainee group identity by shifting the pronoun to “they” to refer to a sub-group within the collective of trainees as “Korean trainees” (1.1-2), excluding himself from “them”. He proceeds to position one of his fellow trainees as a gullible tourist in the American space and thereby out-group member of the cosmopolitan, transnational group he counts himself and his immediate interlocutors into.

(6.2) 43:23 The Other: naïve Korean trainee in America

01 P we went-when we were a trainee; a:nd one of the korean like trainees  
 02 they obviously didn't know like that thing so h they they were just  
 03 like “oh” like “pictures” so he was oh sure like “I'm in times square  
 04 like why not?” (enacting, naïve kid with gesture and body movement  
 05 side to side) thought it was like a souvenir and they're like  
 (stretches hand out)  
 06 H give me [money?]  
 07 P [he was like] (acts, hand on pocket, speechless) oh  
 08 H (laughs) yes  
 09 S °?that's what they live?° off of; °yeah.°  
 10 P huh?  
 11 S like live off of like tourists [that kinda]  
 12 P [uh yeahyeah] they look for that;=  
 13 S =trapping them; like me (hands to her hat, pointing to her costume)  
 14 A (laughs)  
 15 S I'm like number one wic- uh<sup>21</sup> vic- victim (careful pronunciation)  
 16 ohmygod my English (to herself more)  
 17 P like a costume that I: (.) it wasn't like me- like typically like  
 18 memorable specifically memorable or anything but it's like a costume  
 19 that I always wanted was the the scream mask where like if you push it  
 20 the blood [like comes down]

After having established that they all know about this tourist trap in America and how to navigate it, Peniel offers a narrative featuring a target group member of such scam tactics: young naïve tourists. He explains that “they obviously didn't know” (1.2), indicating that the credulity of his young Korean friend was to be expected due to their inexperience with mobility and tourist traps at major American tourist sites. Just like in Eric's enactment of his younger brother, the non-present Other becomes the butt of the joke, here through the enactment of the

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<sup>21</sup> Sounds like the German “äh” (more open vowel).

Korean trainee's incompetency to navigate an unfamiliar cultural space. Harry aligns with Peniel's position of someone who can observe and ratify someone else's social mishaps, by laughing at his story, distancing himself from the naïve Korean tourist. Stefanie indexes her in-group membership as well by showing again that she is in the know through providing more details of these people living off tourists (cf. l.11) to then jokingly allude to her tourist-costume: "trapping them; like me" (l.13). Ashley reacts by laughing at her joke, showing that she understands that Stefanie is not being serious and refers to her costume and not herself (cf. l.14). Stefanie then produces a turn in which she makes a common German mistake with the English v-sound (cf. l.15), since in German the letter "w" is pronounced like the English "v". Yet, she notices the mistake right away and while showing that she is not a native speaker, she is able to immediately self-correct her English pronunciation and assess it: "I'm like number one wic- uh victim (careful pronunciation) ohmygod my English (to herself more)" (l.15-16). The other participants do not show any noticing of her little pronunciation slip and just continue their conversation.

One example for an other-positioning of the podcast participants as transnational experts by a listener and the establishment of different fields of expertise (USA vs. Canada) and thereby an intragroup differentiation with regard to their North American affiliations is when a sent-in listener question asks for their experiences with multicultural and multilingual identity formation processes. First, Junny speaks up about the situation of being an immigrant in Canada while the others take up the role of the novice. He specifically positions himself as being able to make general assertions about multiculturalism in Vancouver. The sequence is taken from the episode with Lim Kim.

(7)25:54 Canadian vs. American intragroup differentiation<sup>22</sup>

01 A (reading listener question) hey get real fam how has your identity  
 02 impacted your life; in what ways do you think multiculturalism is a  
 03 big aspect of your identity, if you identify as someone who is

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<sup>22</sup> *Lim Kim on identity crisis and her new single "Veil" S3 Ep. #12*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC30ZqjnUSw&t=1130s>



04 multicultural or multilingual.  
 05 P hm.  
 06 J mhm;  
 07 A mhm  
 08 (.)  
 09 J .pt I mean (.) .h if you're canadian? u:h it's like multicultural for  
 10 th- like f:- like hundred percent.  
 11 A/LK hm  
 12 P yeah=  
 13 J so,  
 14 P =cause it's like f:ra:nce?(slowly, unsure, gz to J)  
 15 J yeah. well- yeah we have that but [then there's just so]  
 16 P [°and like england? oh°]  
 17 J many: like different people [from]=  
 18 P [oh]  
 19 J =each different country=espEcially (.) I don't know about toronno=like  
 20 theother areas? but vancouver was very diverse,(gz to LK next to him)  
 21 LK mhm; (nodding)  
 22 J so: I remember just always (.) just being able to (chuckles, hand  
 23 gesture circling both hands in air around his head/ears) listen to  
 24 a bUnch of languages in school.  
 25 P mhm  
 26 LK mh:m.  
 27 J yeah. [°and like cultures;°]  
 28 P [how many lang]uages did they like offer you to learn?  
 29 J to learn? It [was spanish french]=  
 30 P [yeah °at school.°]  
 31 J =and english. [°so°]  
 32 P [oh] okay;  
 33 J yeah.  
 34 LK/A mhm  
 35 J but then there was uhm (.) once you get to like year: like grade  
 36 eleven? which is like your senior- like (eyes turned upwards, hand in  
 37 air) before your senior year? (.) you can take a test where uh for me  
 38 I'm since I know korean you can take uh korean test and not take a  
 39 language elective. (.) .h so there's a bunch of those for like a lot  
 40 of [other people]  
 41 P [hm. interesting]  
 42 J who are from different countries?  
 43 A mhm  
 44 LK hm

Junny frames his response to the question as a Canadian response: “if you’re Canadian u:h it’s like” (l.9). He does not make assertions about his personal identity and life experiences but instead begins by explaining the “Canadian standpoint”, claiming expertise for Canada. Peniel confirms Junny as Canadian expert by positioning himself as novice through offering a very vague and insecure guess at what makes Canada multicultural, thereby implicitly asking Junny for a reason for Canada’s supposed multiculturality: “cause its like f:ra:nce?” (l.14) He also adds on another phrase, in lower volume, while Junny is already responding (cf. l.15) to his turn: “and like england?” (l.16). By using the discourse marker “like” and raising his pitch

toward the end of both phrases (cf. 1.14, 16), as well as elongating the word “France”, and not fully formulating his argument, he frames his epistemic stance as insecure and chooses Junny as expert who can validate his guess and give a more grounded explanation to why Canada is “completely multicultural”. Without explaining what France (or England) has to do with Canada’s multiculturalism, Peniel only alludes to some possible connection and then leaves it up to the Canadian expert to elaborate on the point he made previously. Junny responds by using the personal pronoun “we” to position himself as part of a Canadian collective, acknowledging Peniel’s implicit point of French culture and language making Canada multilingual and -cultural, and then broadens the scope of Canada’s multiculturalism: “yeah. well- yeah we have that but then there’s just so many: like different people from each different country” (1.15, 17, 19). Peniel takes up Junny’s response by accepting his information as new and factual and even a form of other-correction of his tentative claim for what Junny meant with calling Canada multicultural. This is indicated by the discourse marker “oh” (1.16, 18), which serves as a “change-of-state marker” (Bolden, 2006, p. 664). Junny then limits his area of expertise to Vancouver where he lived: “I don’t know about toronno=like the other areas? but vancouver was very diverse” (1.19-20). Not only does he make explicit that he cannot speak for “other areas” apart from Vancouver, but he also frames his assertions as applying to the past by using the past tense when describing Vancouver, pointing at his current distance to it. This past gets further characterized as his personal experience as a student in school, making clear that he bases his expertise on personal memories: “so: I remember just always (.) just being able to listen to a bunch of languages in school.” (1.22-24). He accounts for his claim of expertise by bringing up his privileged epistemic access through personal experience with Canadian multiculturalism and the school system (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022). He then continues to answer more questions about language classes at a Canadian school and systematic adjustments to the many multilingual students which he uses as proof for his claim of Canada being “a

hundred percent multicultural” (cf. 1.9-10). His interlocutors confirm him as undisputed Canadian expert by not challenging the validity of his answers and instead asking him further questions, which Yu and Wu (2021) mention as a discursive move to self-position as novice. Just like in the examples 1 and 4, Junny immediately self-translates his terms for referring to school years in awareness of his out-group American addressees, which not only serves practical communicative purposes, but also fulfils the function of social indexing (cf. Harjunpää & Mäkilähde, 2016, p.165) regarding American and non-American belonging. While in the other two examples the translation happened for the non-Korean audience from Korean into English, in this case Junny translates his Canadian reference of the school year “grade eleven” (1.35-36) into the American one: “which is like your senior- like before your senior year?” (1.36-37).<sup>23</sup> In the other examples, the out-group recipients were located outside the co-present group of interlocutors. In the present example for an intragroup differentiation within the transnational Korean space, Junny is othering his fellow podcast speakers (cf. Diagram 2, “7”) by positioning them as American experts and Canadian novices and himself as Canadian expert and American novice. He first interrupts himself after setting out to refer to a specific school year in a Canadian high school with “year”, possibly attempting to use the American or a “neutral” term but then going back to the Canadian term: “once you get to like year: like grade eleven?” (1.35-36) He raises the pitch toward the end of the phrase, framing it as something that might not be understood by his out-group interlocutors and therefore possibly becoming a source of trouble for their understanding. He then immediately self-translates, adapting to his American audience: “which is like your senior- like (eyes turned upwards, hand in air) before your senior year? (.)” (1.36-37) His insecure epistemic stance toward which reference term to use, especially the American way of referring to school years, is marked through the frequent use of the discourse marker “like”, little pauses, physical signs of thinking

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<sup>23</sup> (cf. BrainNinjasWP, *11 differences between Canadian and American Schools* 2022)

(cf. l.36-37), and the rising pitch toward the end of the phrases he is most insecure about. He first translates his Canadian “grade eleven” (l.35-36) into “senior year” (l.37) and then self-corrects into “before your senior year” (l.37), with the latter being produced with a rising pitch and a pause after, allowing for corrections or confirmations by his American addressees and thereby positioning them as American experts and himself as American novice. After no one interferes, he proceeds to describe how Canada’s multiculturalism is reflected in the school system, shifting from a generic “you” (l.35, 37) to a first person “I” (l.37, 38): “for me I’m since I know Korean you can take uh Korean test and not take a language elective.” (l.37-39). In this turn, Junny first sets out to provide the necessary context of his personal example with making a statement about his identity as Korean “I’m” (l.38), but then restarts his sentence that now mentions his Korean language skills instead, this time framing them, and his presupposed Korean roots, as a known-fact: “since I know Korean” (l.38). By bringing up himself as an example for how the many multilingual students are accommodated to in the Canadian school system, which enabled multilingual students to waiver mandatory language electives, he positions himself as typical multicultural Canadian with Korean ethnicity. His migrant background is framed as a sign of his authentic Canadian belonging.

Right after, Peniel takes up the next-speaker right, assuming the position of the American expert, especially as representative for Korean Americans, and answers the initial listener question from the American point of view.

45 P I feel like every like korean american probably had like a identity  
46 crisis at one point (.) (gz to A, gz back to front)  
47 A °hm° (nodding, without looking at him)  
48 J mhm=  
49 P =cause it’s like, (.) you know like at home and everything if they’re  
50 korean  
51 J mhm  
52 P uhm a lot of people: they go to like you know like korean church is  
53 like every like friday night sunday morning (hand movement, from side  
54 to side) and the:n you go to school and then it’s like like where I  
55 was it was a like like a very like white area, (chuckles)  
56 J uh (others nodding)  
57 P so then yeah I go to school and then everyone’s like white  
58 J [mhm]  
59 P [and] then I’m hanging out with like my school friends and I’m like

60 (nasal quality, higher pitch) "I'm white"(.)  
 61 J pf (laughs)  
 62 P (chuckling) and then (gz to A next to him, she's putting hand to her  
 63 forehead looking down) but then (laughing) like you know there was  
 64 like a little bit of like (.) I guess like a identity crisis kindof?  
 65 J yeyeah cause wherever you went you kindof feel like a little left out  
 66 in each side? I kinda felt like that. cause like if I was with koreans  
 67 I felt I was kinda detached from the culture a little, and then if I'm  
 68 with (.) like my caucasian friends or like youknow western friends? I  
 69 feel like (.) youknow I'm so I have this like korean a little bit of  
 70 Korean in me like take off=taking off my shoes and stuff like that  
 71 A mhm  
 72 J so I felt (.) I didn't know where (hand movements from side to side) I  
 73 was? like where I was supposed to be?  
 74 P y[eah;]  
 75 J [for] a certain time?

Just like Junny, Peniel makes a general assertion about the group identity of Korean Americans (cf. 1.45-46) and then turns his gaze to Ashley, who is sitting next to him and who is already established as a fellow American and Korean American in particular. She aligns with him and confirms his claim through making an agreeing sound and nodding, taking up her role as co-expert (cf. 1.47). He proceeds to explain the in-betweenness and fluidity of Korean American identities (cf. 1.49-60), moving between Korean spaces at home and in religious institutions and American spaces at school and in their peer-group. Junny, who mainly took up the role as receiver of information as novice to the Korean American experience (cf. 1.48, 51, 58, 61), aligns with Peniel's description, claiming the same in-betweenness between Korean and Western spaces and the effects on his fractured sense of identity and belonging:

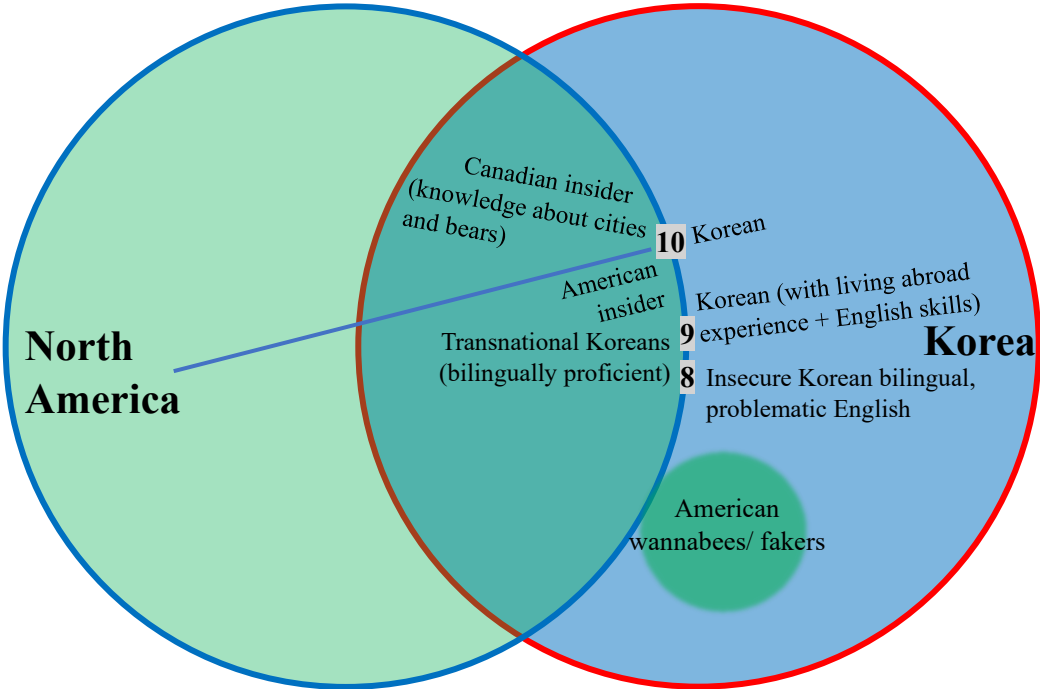
yeyeah cause wherever you went you kindof feel like a little left out in each side? I kinda felt like that. cause like if I was with Koreans I felt I was kinda detached from the culture a little, and then if I'm with (.) like my caucasian friends or like youknow western friends? I feel like (.) youknow I'm so I have this like korean a little bit of Korean in me [...] (1.65-73)

Peniel, Ashley, and Junny thereby co-construct themselves as transnational Koreans who belong to both Korea and North America, with a strong sense of in-betweenness, fluidity, and polycentricity (Park & Lo, 2012).

**6.2 Negotiations along the axis of transnational Korea vs. Korea (A Korean Guest: Lim Kim)**

After having examined how the podcast in-group members co-construct a transnational Korean space and group-identity (6.1), illustrated with an overlapping space that is between as well as equally part of both the North American and Korean circle in the diagrams, I now want to look at guests who are located on the margins of this social space. To do so, this section (6.2) will focus on a Korean guest, who disaligns with other-positionings of her as a transnational Korean, while having socially established qualifiers for an elite transnational Korean status through early study abroad experiences in America and Canada.

The three examples that will be analyzed in this section (ex.8,9,10; cf. Diagram 3) are all taken from the same episode (Choi et al., 2022a), featuring Peniel, Ashley, Junny, and Lim Kim. The latter is a Korean musician who has lived in Canada and the United States as a student for several months respectively.



**Diagram 3:** Lim Kim on the transnational Korea vs. Korea axis

Only Ashley and Lim Kim have met before once professionally and parts of the conversation have a very interview-like style with the focus on Lim Kim. As the designated conversation

leader of the episode, Ashley does the usual introduction in English. After that, Peniel discreetly reminds her to switch to Korean for their guest (cf. 1.1-2). In the following sequence, Peniel positions himself as authentic, capable bilingual speaker, who can easily “hybrid it up” (1.12) to accommodate their guest, Lim Kim, who displays insecurity in her English-speaking abilities.

(8) 1:08 Lim Kim Disclaiming her English<sup>24</sup>

01 P ?°gotta? transition into° korean. (gz to A)

02 A (.) no she speaks [english? ] (gz to LK)

03 J [no she's gon]na speak engl[ish right?]

04 LK [(while they're saying that, moving her head as if a little unsure  
05 lifts both hands)]

06 P [°she said°] she's more

07 c[om[fortable;]

08 LK [may[be I]=

09 J [oh]

10 LK =[could °mix?°] (lifts hands, palms open to bottom, head side to side)

11 A [I mean like ]she's ?gonna? mix it up (gz from LK to P)

12 P okay we're gonna hybrid it up=

13 A [=yeah; ]=

14 J [alright;]

15 A (puts hand on P's shoulder right next to her) =you translate okay?

16 P what?

17 (All laughing)

18 A you're in charge of translating; [.h ] (looks on script)

19 P [I'll] try,

20 A (.) mhm (gz to LK) .pt ahm have you heard of dive studios before? did  
21 [you know ?of us?]

22 LK [yeah of course]

23 P [다이버스튜디오 들어보]신적있어요/teuleoboshinjeok isseoyo?<sup>25</sup> (translates A)

24 A °oh really?° (turns to P, sounds dissatisfied/ unamused, J fingers to  
25 root of nose/embarrassed, LK chuckles)

26 P [°whatwhatwhat°]

27 LK (chuckles) [동시통역/dongshitongyeok]<sup>26</sup> (nods) (laughter)

28 A? yeah ?어 네/eo ne<sup>27</sup>? (several people laugh)

29 LK uhm yeah of course I love the show and I was really surprised that you  
30 guys reached me (chuckles)

31 A mhm, (J gives thumbs up)

32 LK so yeah I was so excited to be here.

In line 2 and 3 both Ashley and Junny position Lim Kim within their group of authentic bilinguals. As becomes recurrent throughout the ensuing conversation, she rejects this

<sup>24</sup> *Lim Kim on identity crisis and her new single “Veil” S3 Ep. #12*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC30ZqjnUSw&t=1130s>

<sup>25</sup> Korean translation of 1.20: “have you heard of Dive Studios before?”

<sup>26</sup> Engl.: simultaneous interpretation.

<sup>27</sup> Engl.: oh/uh yes.

positioning, here simultaneously while they are discussing her ability to speak English (cf. 1.4-5). In lifting both hands and moving her head to display insecurity in her English language abilities, while they position her as English speaker, she performs what Park (2011) describes as a common Korean practice of “disclaiming English” (p. 267). Peniel responds by explaining why he thought they would speak with Lim Kim in Korean: “she said she’s more comfortable” (1.6-7). Again, Lim Kim displays insecurity and a problematization of her English skills with lifted hands, moving her head from side to side and saying: “maybe I could °mix?°” (1.8-10), still suggesting that she might be able to have at least parts of the conversation in English, while framing her English skills as problematic. Park explains such a strategic framing with language ideologies concerning English in South Korea:

denying a close connection with English by such self-problematizations can be a useful way of carefully avoiding risky social positions in interaction such as being seen as bragging about one’s competence in English - a characteristic captured through the duality of the term “to disclaim” (i.e. ‘to reject or deny’ vs. ‘to renounce or give up’). (Park, 2011, p. 268)

Disclaiming one’s English is a common interactional strategy for Koreans to influence how their interlocutors interpret their display of English: “thus preempting charges of showing off one’s ability in English or being pretentious.” (Park, 2011, p. 268), which is associated with negative figures of personhood like American wannabees or fakers (Choi, 2019; cf. Diagram 3: small green circle within Korean circle outside transnational Korean space). I argue that Lim Kim’s rejection of being positioned as transnational Korean is an extension of such avoidance techniques of “risky social positions” (Park, 2011, p. 268) that are available to Korean English speakers. The other participants adjust to Lim Kim’s allegedly problematic English skills by offering to use both languages depending on how she feels more comfortable (cf. 1.11-14), positioning themselves as capable of flexibly adjusting to both codes. Before Peniel offers to “hybrid it up” (1.12), Ashley still positions Lim Kim as being able to use both linguistic codes: “I mean like she’s ?gonna? mix it up” (1.11). She responds to Lim Kim’s disclaiming of her



English by inviting her to just use both codes with them and then playfully nominates Peniel as designated translator (cf. 1.15, 18), who expresses slight discomfort in response to that (cf. 1.16) but accepts it (cf. 1.19). Here, in turn, Peniel enacts discomfort and insecurity in his Korean skills by delaying his acceptance to take up the role as translator, first expressing his surprise (cf. 1.16) and then saying that he will “try” to do it, with a slightly rising pitch towards the end of his turn (cf. 1.19). These are all semiotic resources to convey affect that Park (2011) mentions as examples for how Korean speakers disclaim their language skills for interactional purposes. After Ashley poses the first question directed to Lim Kim in English (cf. 1.20-21), Peniel humorously enacts the dutiful Korean interpreter, immediately translating the question into Korean (cf. 1.23) in overlapping talk with Lim Kim’s beginning of an English response (cf. 1.22). In her case study on codeswitching as a means to constitute co-membership in an ethnic group identity, Lo (1999) writes: “Reciprocal acts of codeswitching can thus constitute validations of contingent self- and other- attributions of co-membership in a speech community.” (p. 462) While Ashley and Junny react unamused at first, Lim Kim acknowledges Peniel as proficient Korean translator and authentic bilingual by reacting to him in Korean, labelling and recognizing what he is doing as simultaneous interpreting (cf. 1.26) and confirming him in his position as Korean expert. Her validation of his co-membership in the Korean language-community is especially powerful as she positions herself as confident native Korean speaker and “a hundred percent Korean” (ex.9, 1.10), not only through self-categorization, but also through rejecting other-positionings as in-group member of Canadian, American, or even transnational Korean group identities (cf. ex.8,10). After first responding to Peniel in Korean she then switches into English to answer the question seriously (cf. 1.29-30). She is contradicting her own self-positioning as insecure bilingual by demonstrating the ability to easily switch between both languages and not needing a translator.

In the following sequence, Lim Kim explicitly categorizes herself (Kang, 2004) as “a hundred percent Korean” (l.10), emphatically distancing herself from the transnational identity positions that her interlocutors claim for themselves and offer her as well.

(9)21:34 Lim Kim Self-categorizing as 100% Korean<sup>28</sup>  
01 A alright so today we're gonna talk about identity=  
02 P [=oh we're] just starting? (laughs)  
03 J [=nice]  
04 J oh yeah let's go (all laughing)  
05 A yes: identity anduhm how it-f it affects our experiences in life (gz  
06 to script, looks up to LK) YOu would (.) identify yourself as just a  
07 korean; right, not like korean american? or [°korean°]  
08 LK [yeah just(.)]  
09 P [°?korean? canadian?°]  
10 LK a hundred percent [Korean]  
11 J [°hundred] percent [Korean?°] (chuckles)  
12 A [°a hundred] percent [Korean°]  
13 LK (chuckles) [yeah]  
14 A okay. (nodding, gz to scrip) yeah. [.h]  
15 P [with] a little bit of:(.)  
16 J english [speaking]=  
17 P [°just°] yeah  
18 J =abilities=  
19 P =.pt foreign exchange  
20 LK (eyes up, then looks more sure) yeah [foreign exchange,]  
21 A [°foreign exchange°] (chuckling)  
22 P [experience]  
23 LK [home staying]  
24 P+LK (laughing)  
25 A [oh you were home staying?]  
26 J [oh you were homestay;;]  
27 LK yeahyeah (turns to J) [in mAPle rIdge;] (pointing with thumb to J)  
28 J [°we were going by?°]oh in maple ridge you were  
29 [HOmestaying]=  
30 LK [yeahyeah]  
31 J =in maple ridge;  
32 A [ah:]  
33 LK [yeah]  
34 J (mouth open)(.) WOW (LK laughs) (.) she could've probably lived in my  
35 aunt's house you never know

After Ashley, and Peniel in overlapping talk (cf. l.7,9), offered her a co-membership in their transnational Korean in-group by offering her belonging to America or Canada, Lim Kim immediately self-categorizes as exclusively Korean (cf. l.10). While Junny and Ashley readily accept her self-positioning (cf. l.11,12,14), Peniel apparently finds it necessary to still point to some kind of other-Korean influence or even non-Korean characteristic, without seeming to

<sup>28</sup> *Lim Kim on identity crisis and her new single “Veil” S3 Ep. #12*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC30ZqjnUSw&t=1130s>

know how to put it in words: “with a little bit of:” (l.15). His unfinished sentence ends with a pause in which his interlocutors allow him time to finish his turn. Junny then offers a possible ending for Peniel’s unfinished sentence, which reveals what he considers a possibly relevant addition to Lim Kim’s identity as Korean: “English speaking abilities” (l.16, 18). Peniel confirms Junny’s candidate before he has finished it (cf. l.17) and then produces another one: “foreign exchange” (l.19). In bringing up Lim Kim’s English language skills and her mobility as an add on (“with a little bit of:” l.15) to her claim of being just Korean, they construct “being Korean” as not necessarily including English speaking skills and experiences with mobility or living abroad. Especially the former echoes language ideologies associating poor English-speaking skills with monocultural Koreans (Lo & Kim, 2012). It also reflects models of personhood that link mobility and intercultural adaptability to transnational Korean subject positions and not “just Koreans” (Park & Lo, 2012; Lo & Kim, 2012). However, just like in the previous example in which Lim Kim disclaimed or problematized her bilingual proficiency, she again distances herself from the vulnerable position of having complex cultural belongings within the context of transnational Korea by emphasizing her unambiguous Korean citizenship (cf. l.8,10,13). Lim Kim is constructing herself as Korean with a clear cultural belonging throughout the whole episode through different strategies. Besides the ones presented in the previous two examples, she also rejects other-positionings as co-expert with regard to Canada, which would again possibly construct her as transnational Korean, making her vulnerable to the scrutinizing eye of the Korean public (Lo & Kim, 2012; Lo & Choi, 2017; Choi, 2019). An example for such a disalignment with an other-positioning of her as co-expert will be presented in the following, excerpt, that can be found before the one I just analyzed. In this sequence, Lim Kim and Junny discover their shared connection to the Canadian town Maple Ridge.

Ashley reads a short text about Lim Kim’s background and her experiences of early study abroad in a Canadian middle and American high school in New Jersey. She interrupts

herself to ask Lim Kim where exactly in Canada she has lived. They discover that Lim Kim has lived in a little Canadian town near Vancouver to which Junny has personal connections to.

Claiming expertise for Maple Ridge, Junny tries to position Lim Kim as co-expert.

(10) 5:15 Junny positioning Lim Kim as co-expert about Canada

01 LK a:h I was near Vancouver?=  
02 J (immediately widens eyes)=W[HA:T?]  
03 A [o:h]  
04 LK (no eye-contact with J, first doesn't react to his exclamation) in- it  
05 [was a little]  
06 J [(muffled sound of J laughing into hand)] (visibly trying to contain his excitement)  
07 LK (starts laughing timidly too, hand in front of mouth)(.)  
08 P oh damn [(A starts laughing)] you' [re okay bro?]  
09 J [?'i'm? so sorry] I'm so sorry (.)  
10 I'm so [sorry continue I'll just] (in LKs direction, clasps hands together and looks down, everyone laughing)  
11 A [so excited (laughing)]  
12 (everyone laughing)  
13 P [damn] (laughing)  
14 LK [yeah] it was a [little]  
15 P [oh.] okay=  
16 LK =town called maple ridge, (as soon as she says name of town, J's expression shocked, mouth open, this time silently)  
17 P [°maple ridge°]  
18 A [°maple ridge°]  
19 J [(gestures hands to head, then to side in LKs direction and back to himself)]  
20 LK [(turns to him) you know junny?]  
21 J (nods, thumbs up)  
22 LK you [KNOW?] (surprised, louder)  
23 J [go on] go on [go on]  
24 LK [rEally?] (gz to the other two again)  
25 J please go on yeah=  
26 LK =oh my gOd;  
27 J yeah.  
28 LK (looks to front for a sec.)(.) yo that's it though (turns back to J)  
29 J oh that's it? oh okay;  
30 [(everyone laughing out loud)]  
31 J [can I talk now? ?...choking?] (excited, quite fast, pointing to  
32 himself) I'm from van[couver,]  
33 LK [yeah]  
34 J my uh my aunt lives in maple ridge;  
35 LK [really?] (clasps hands together in disbelief)  
36 J [so I] went there a lot; she moved back to uh the-a small town where  
37 my parents live now, [but they]  
38 LK [okay,] (still hands together, nodding)  
39 J =lived in maple ridge for a while.  
40 P that's such a:  
41 J it's a very=  
42 P =canadian name (laughs) (everyone laughing)  
43 J maple ridge? (laughing)  
44 everyone laughing  
45 A [maple ridge?]

As soon as Vancouver and Maple Ridge are mentioned, Junny emphatically indicates his personal familiarity with the places Lim Kim is talking about (cf. 1.2,16). Through his gestures in line 19 he aligns with her, indicating them having some kind of connection or understanding with each other, while Peniel and Ashley are the outgroup novices who are still occupied with taking in the unfamiliar place name (cf. 1.17-18). Lim Kim finally turns her focus to Junny (cf. 1.20), as a response to his verbal and bodily reactions expressing his strong affective stance (Park, 2011) toward what she shared about herself. Recognizing them as indicators of their possible shared connection to Maple Ridge, she asks him whether he knows the town (cf. 1.20). He encourages her to continue talking about it after confirming his personal familiarity through nodding and giving a thumbs up (cf. 1.21). When she makes clear that she finished answering Ashley's original question, Junny takes up the speaker right to explain his previous excitement during Lim Kim's explications, revealing his privileged insider access to the place Lim Kim was talking about with a close relative living there: "I'm from vancouver, my uh my aunt lives in maple ridge;" (1.32,34). He explains his personal connection in more detail (cf. 1.36-39) while Peniel is still processing the sound of the name of the town (cf. 1.40, 42). "The Americans", Peniel and Ashley, are positioned as novices concerning things Canadian, while Lim Kim and Junny take up the roles as experts about a specific place in Canada. This dynamic intensifies in the following sequence (starting 1.46) where Junny tries to claim expertise for himself and Lim Kim, which she rejects for a moment.

46 J no but like- so you must like know the golden a:h (eye contact with LK  
47 again) uhh (closes eyes, thinking hard) (.) (more to  
48 himself:)°what is it? no what is it called?° (to LK) it's like a big  
49 park. near maple ridge  
50 LK u::h (thinks, looks up) (.)  
51 J okay, (turns to other two) there's a lot of bears and stuff (.)  
52 P BEArs?  
53 A [bears?]  
54 LK [bears?]  
55 J [OKAY so it's] cri-(.) okay I don[ 't(.)]  
56 A [hh] (sound of disbelief/chuckle)  
57 J WHAt? (laughter, sounds of disbelief by others) what's going on?  
58 (readjusts his sitting position) cause my aunt's place like her  
59 backyard?

60 LK [yeah;]  
61 P [there's] [bears in the backyard?]  
62 J [?she had like?] bears like jus[t you know]=  
63 LK [bears?]  
64 J =come into her backyards [and stuff]  
65 LK [oh really?]  
66 P [what the]  
67 J yeah; (to LK) maybe you're in like the more the suburban like the more  
68 city:: area of maple[ridge]  
69 LK [o:h;]  
70 J yeah  
71 LK I don't know cause like there were not many korean-s? (looks to J as  
if asking him)  
72 J oh yeahyeahyeahyeah;  
73 LK when I was there?  
74 J right [there still]  
75 LK [so] yeah  
76 J no [koreans there]  
77 LK [yeah exactly] so: (.) yeah [I'm not sure]  
78 J [that's cool]  
79 LK [?where that part ... up?]  
80 J [°bears roam around in your (mumbling)?°]

In line 46 Junny positions himself and Lim Kim as co-experts about Maple Ridge, expecting her to know about a big park near the town (“so you must like know” (1.46)) and selecting her as recipient of his turn through eye contact. He then struggles to remember the name of the park and initiates a word search (cf. 1.48-49). After failing to self-repair, he invites Lim Kim to help him out by directing his description of the park to her, positioning her as able to offer assistance in this matter (cf. 1.48-49) as opposed to Ashley or Peniel, who are present too. Lim Kim takes up the assigned speaker right and position as possible assistance in the word search by verbally and non-verbally indicating that she is thinking with him about it (cf. 1.50). After giving her a second to think, Junny ends the unsuccessful word search, with an “okay” (1.51) and then shares more information about the town, this time directing it to Peniel and Ashley through a shift in gaze: “there’s a lot of bears and stuff” (1.51), thereby further positioning them as novices. However, it is not just Ashley and Peniel who react surprised to this new information about Maple Ridge. Lim Kim aligns with them in their disbelief about bears in the Canadian town, thereby repositioning herself alongside the “novices” by equally reacting surprised and doubtful to the information Junny shared (cf. 1.52.54). Junny now finds himself in the position

of having to account for his claim (cf. 1.55, 57-59) after he was not only questioned by who he positioned as outgroup American people, but also his former Maple Ridge co-expert. He responds by making it personal. Instead of talking about a big park near the town, he narrows it down to his aunt's backyard (cf. 1.58-59), once more stressing his privileged access to information about this place (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022). Lim Kim again joins Peniel in his surprise about bears coming to Junny's aunt's garden in Maple Ridge (cf. 1.63, 65-66). Especially in line 65, Lim Kim aligns with Ashley and Peniel as receiver of information: "oh really?", thereby further rejecting Junny's positioning of her as co-expert. Junny reacts by again stressing the truth of his claim, directed to Lim Kim in particular through gaze: "yeah;" (1.67). He then recasts her as expert by providing a possible reason for her not knowing about the bears (cf. 1.67-68). Lim Kim adds on to Junny's account for her state of not knowing: "I don't know cause like there were not many Koreans?" (1.71), hinting at her maybe not living in the same area as Junny's Korean aunt and thereby realigning with Junny. At the same time, she positions herself as relative novice and him as actual expert who can validate her tentative information about the place that they both have a personal connection to (cf. 1.71). Junny takes up this assigned role by validating her information (cf. 1.72). Lim Kim proceeds to tie her statement to her personal experience in the past ("when I was there" 1.73), stressing the limitations of herself as source of information about Maple Ridge. Junny again confirms her claims adding that they still hold true, accepting and demonstrating his expert position (cf. 1.74, 76). Lim Kim now aligns with him, confirming his claim more confidently (cf. 1.75, 77), while Peniel is still processing the "bears roaming around" (1.80) in the background. At this point Lim Kim is reestablished as co-expert and Junny brings up specific place names in that area.

81 J [are you familiar] with surrey? (to LK)  
 82 LK (.) (visibly thinking)  
 83 J have you heard of surrey before? or like coquitlam,  
 84 LK (.) oh [coquitlam]  
 85 J [burna] burn[aby,] (A exchanges side glances with P)  
 86 LK [coquitlam] ye:a:h  
 87 J [yeahyeahyeah]so I I live in that area;

88 LK O:h [really?]  
 89 J [for a] long time yeah  
 90 A (starts her own parallel convo with P) hey how are you doing [today?]  
 91 LK [ah o]kay (.)  
 92 A good? yeah; (continues talking)  
 93 LK (starts laughing) there's a different conversation going on  
 94 J [nah I'm just like really happy to like meet people from vancouver or  
 95 like [just near]  
 96 LK [? actually the] first time for me to=  
 97 J =yeah right? you never  
 98 [talking over each other]  
 99 J hey excuse me (laughter)  
 100 (P+A continue to demonstratively talk with each other)  
 101 J hey (points at them) you americans (laughter)

After Lim Kim is successfully reestablished as co-expert about Maple Ridge, Junny asks her about different Canadian city names to explain where exactly he lived in that area (cf. 1.81-85), choosing her as sole recipient of his talk and in doing so excluding Ashley and Peniel. At first, Lim Kim does not seem to recognize the place names Junny mentions, but she still accepts her position as legitimate receiver of the question by visibly thinking about it (cf. 1.82). Besides Surrey (1.81,83), Junny offers two more candidates of Canadian cities Lim Kim might know (cf. 1.83,85). She finally recognizes Coquitlam (cf. 1.86) and they both engage in a little conversation about the area. Ashley protests against her and Peniel's exclusion as they are both not able to follow Junny and Lim Kim's insider conversation by first signifying their awkward position through facial expressions and exchanging side glances with Peniel (cf. 1.85) and then demonstratively starting her own conversation with Peniel (cf. 1.90). Junny at first ignores the distraction but then protests in 1.99 and 1.101, now explicitly labelling Junny and Ashley as Others who do not understand or share his excitement of his discovery of an in-group Canadian member: "hey (points at them) you americans" (1.101). After Lim Kim has been re-established as a Canadian knower, the focus has now turned away from the transnational Korea vs. Korea axis back to within, leading to an intragroup differentiation within the North American group identity as was the case in example 7, where Ashley, Peniel and Junny took up differentiating expert-positions with regard to migrant experiences in Canada and the United States. Lim Kim

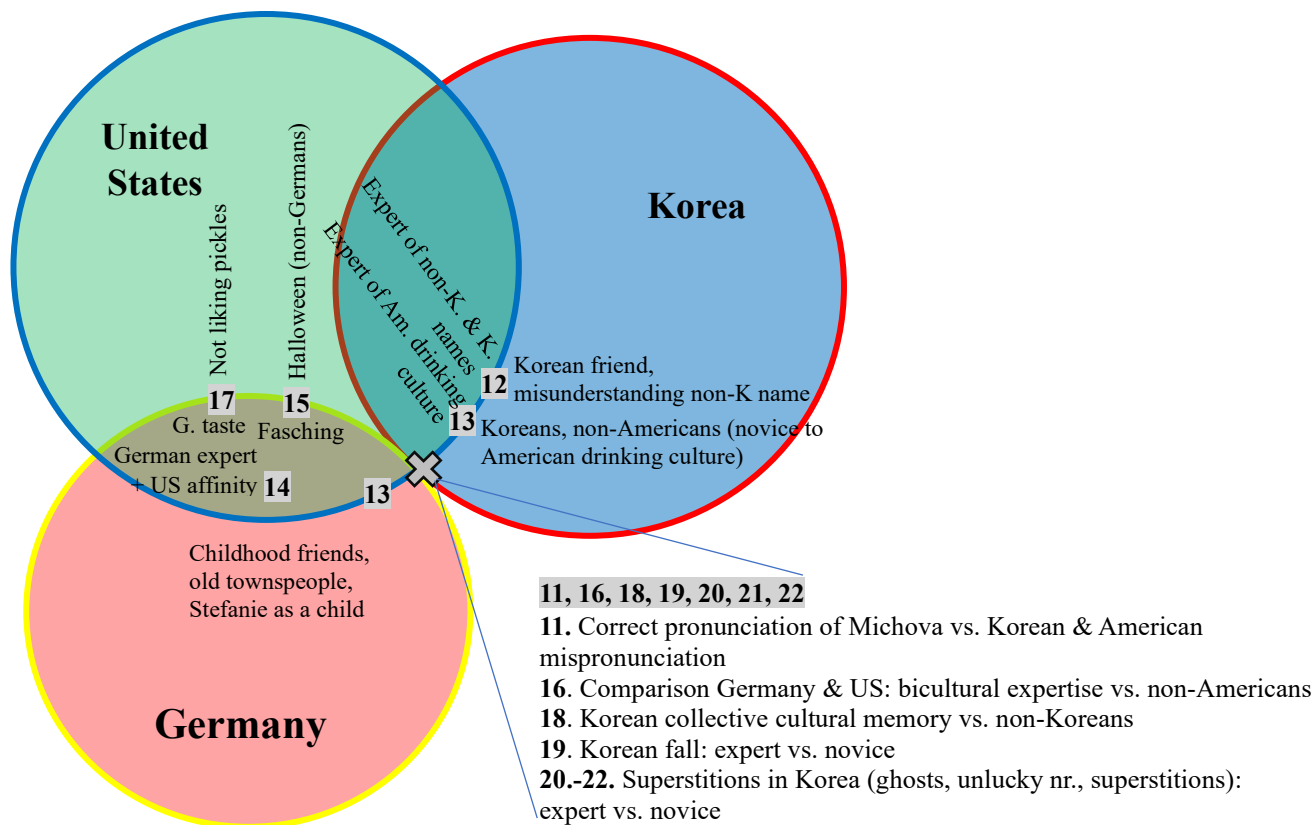


was present in that example too, however she remained uninvolved during that sequence, never claiming expertise for America or Canada herself.

### **6.3 A German Guest: Stefanie Michova**

This section will focus on another liminal figure, a German guest, this time with negotiations mostly on the margins of the Korean red but also the American blue circle (cf. Diagram 4).

Stefanie's belonging to different cultural spheres becomes the most complex and contested one in comparison to the other speakers as she brings in a third cultural tie (cf. Diagram 4, yellow circle) as well as roots outside of Korea. This episode (Choi et al., 2021) is therefore in many ways an exception to the other examples looked at so far, serving as an interesting point of comparison for the group dynamics that were found in the other episodes, with increased positionings with regard to cultural belongings (besides the twelve examples in this section, examples 5 and 6, discussed in section 6.1, are also taken from this episode). As Stefanie's positionings are especially complex, the analysis will be organized along the three different lines of the circles, with examples that can be mapped along the yellow line as sequences in which she is constructed as belonging to Germany (cf. ex.14,15,16,17). This is the uncontested positioning of her cultural belonging. Along the blue line, her belonging to the United States is negotiated and largely accepted, though with a lesser degree of epistemic authority (Takei & Burdelski, 2018) in comparison to the other participants (cf. ex.11,12,13,(14,16)). Lastly, along the red line her belonging to Korea is negotiated and challenged by the transnational Korean in-group members (cf. ex.18,19,20,21,22). Stefanie is constructed as only sharing a group-membership in the cosmopolitan, American group-identity but not accepted into the Korean circle, locating her in an overlap between the German and American circle outside the transnational Korean space as illustrated in the diagram (cf. Diagram 4 and 1).



**Diagram 4:** Stefanie on the margins of transnational Korea.

Stefanie Michova is a German model who has previously lived in Los Angeles for ten years and has been living in Korea for over a year at the time of the podcast recording. Born and raised in Germany, she is the only participant who is not ethnically Korean and who brings in another culture that is largely unknown to the other speakers. Yet, she still shares in-group experiences with North American and Korean spaces as she has studied and worked in the United States and South Korea, and has a long-standing relationship with a Korean partner, which she makes use of in the conversation with her North American Korean interlocutors. While being positioned as primarily German expert (cf. ex.14,15,16), she claims expertise for American (cf. ex.13,16) and even Korean culture (cf. ex.11,19-22), which gets challenged by Harry (cf. especially ex.20). Discrediting her as Korean expert, he repositions her as German expert. In other episodes the novice figure was usually located outside the present group of people, which does happen in this episode too (cf. ex.11,12,14). However, there is a clear positioning of the expert-novice roles within the present group quite often in this episode (cf. ex.11,13,14,15,17,18,20). The overall theme of the episode is Halloween and different holiday

customs and superstitions related to it. The participants, Peniel, Ashley, Harry, and Stefanie are dressed in costumes. Harry and Ashley as Squid Game characters, Peniel as a banana, and Stefanie as a tourist.<sup>29</sup>

### 6.3.1 Along the blue line – Belonging to the United States

The following two examples not only show typical strategies employed to construct a transnational identity as observed in other examples, they also illustrate Stefanie's affiliation with the Korean space and her possible construction as in-group member, as she is shown to be familiar with Korea but also able to follow highly Korean-specific narratives. Example 11 is mapped in Diagram 4 at the intersection between all three lines as it involves a discussion of the pronunciation of a non-Korean name, including a Korean, American, and an Eastern European/owner-approved version. It is also closely tied to example 12, which is mapped on the blue line, between the transnational Korean and Korean space, as Peniel makes efforts to reestablish himself as knower of non-Korean names and construct himself and his co-present interlocutors as different from clueless monocultural Koreans. Therefore, rather than simply illustrating the construction of Stefanie as belonging to the United States, these two examples show discursive moves that demarcate a line between monocultural Koreans and transnational identities (within the blue circle), which is a group-membership shared by all four co-present participants. The conversation starts out with Peniel asking Stefanie how her last name is pronounced by offering a candidate that was meant to be different from the Korean wrong version, but still turns out to be wrong.

(11) 2:16 Discussing the pronunciation of the name Michova<sup>30</sup>  
01 P it's actually m-(hesitant) michova; right?  
02 St it's=

---

<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, this in itself is already telling for the speakers' relative levels of epistemic authority with regards to Korea as it corresponds with their discursive construction of Korean expertise: Harry and Ashley's costumes are Korea-related, Peniel remains relatively neutral (banana), and Stefanie occupies a visiting foreigner-status to the Korean group-identity (tourist) with the lowest level of epistemic authority.

<sup>30</sup> *Crashing Hallelujah Night with Stefanie Michova | Get Real S2 Ep. #13*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfStNCONUvk>

03 P =cee aich  
 04 St it's mikova, but [in Korea(n)]  
 05 P [oh yeah] it's mikova; okayokay  
 06 St damn you should know this peniel (laughs)  
 07 P I'm sorry I messed it up but then in korea they call it mii-choba;  
 08 (Korean pronunciation)  
 09 St yeah  
 10 P right,  
 11 St and they usually also call me stephanie it's just miichoba (Korean pronunciation)

Peniel opens this sequence about the proper pronunciation of Stefanie's last name with a tentative self-positioning as knowledgeable about how her name is "actually" pronounced, asking with a tag question for her ratification and thereby positioning her as the actual expert (cf. l.1). At the same time, he positions himself as different from other Koreans who established their own way of pronouncing Stefanie's last name, by showing his knowledge of the actual "proper" non-Korean way of saying her name (cf. Diagram 4). This discursive move can thus be located on the transnational Korea vs. Korea axis at first. However, while Peniel successfully corrects the typical Korean mispronunciation, he still fails to correctly produce the European name and therefore fails in his demonstration of expertise, being recast as a novice through Stefanie's correction (cf. ex.11 on margins of the transnational Korean field and German/European field in Diagram 4). As already mentioned, there are three different candidates for the pronunciation of Stefanie's last name, with the 'ch'- and 'v'-sounds, and the placement of the word stress as variables. In Stefanie's ratified pronunciation, the word stress is on the second syllable, the 'ch' is pronounced as a 'k' and the 'v' as is common in English and German. In the Korean version,<sup>31</sup> which is explicitly brought up by Peniel (cf. l.7) after failing with his first attempt of pronouncing it correctly in English, the word stress is on the first syllable, the 'ch' is pronounced as a 'tsh/tʃ'<sup>32</sup> and due to the 'v'-sound not existing as such in Korean, it is replaced with a 'b'-sound<sup>33</sup>. In comparison to the Korean pronunciation, Peniel's

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<sup>31</sup> Her last name in Hangul (Korean version): 미초바 (michoba).

<sup>32</sup> In Hangul (Korean writing system) this sound would be represented as: 'ㅊ'.

<sup>33</sup> In Hangul: 'ㅂ'.

first candidate (cf. 1.1) corrects the “v/b”-sound confusion and word accent but still struggles with the “ch”-sound as English speakers would do. He draws on his English and Korean bilingual expertise to make an informed guess about how the non-English and non-Korean name should be pronounced, distancing himself from monolingual Koreans by correcting the typical mistakes a Korean would do, but failing to align himself completely with Stefanie. She playfully reprimands him, as they are longstanding friends (cf. 1.6), to which he responds by accounting for his mistake with how her name is pronounced in Korea (different word accent and ch/k and v/b sound) (cf. 1.7). Right after demonstrating how her name is to be pronounced properly, Stefanie herself brings up that there is a common Korean way of mispronouncing her name, maybe as a reaction to Peniel pronouncing the “ch” as Koreans tend to do, instead of the German “k”-sound (cf. 1.4). She does not finish her sentence as Peniel responds to her correction in overlapping talk, prefacing his uptake of her way of pronouncing her name with “oh yeah” (1.5), showing that he should have known that but remembers it now and distancing himself from the “typical Korean who does not know better”. In a next step he accounts for his mistake by referring to how she is called in the Korean space with the adjustments to the Korean sound system ( $v \rightarrow b$ ) (cf. 1.7). By bringing up how Koreans pronounce her name, Peniel locates himself and Stefanie within the Korean space and in regular contact with Koreans, however, different from monocultural Koreans. Stefanie adds on to this by mentioning another option for how “they usually also call” her (1.11), showing that she is personally familiar with how Koreans refer to her. She then confirms Peniel’s Korean option again by repeating the Korean version of her name (cf. 1.11), demonstrating her ability to imitate it at the same time.

Peniel continues to tell a story in which he positions himself as transnational Korean who is able to notice and correct a misunderstanding of Stefanie’s name by a Korean friend, reestablishing himself as not like monocultural Koreans who do not get non-Korean names (as he first tried to do (1.1f)).

(12) 2:30 A Korean friend as Other who misunderstands a Western name

12 P no yeah no I actually had a=um (.) .pt a friend and I was like (.)  
13 (thinks, points at S) wh- I was with you and then um: it's a friend  
14 that I called when we were together and I was like (.) (direct speech,  
15 slightly higher pitch, relaxed) yeah like I'm with stephanie and then  
16 they came and then they were like (.) (enacting confusion, pauses,  
17 thinking) h that's that's not stephanie that's mi choba (Korean) (A, S  
18 laugh silently)

19 H a:H they [didn't know ?her? last [name]]  
20 P [they did't they don't know her name]  
21 St [yeah]  
22 P yeah they don't know her name was stephanie. (.)  
23 A o:h;=  
24 P =so I was like (.) (slow:)that's her last name stephanie is her aactual  
25 name and they were like (hand in front of mouth) °oh my gosh really?°  
26 H that's kinda like saying that's not peniel that-that's shin;  
27 A [that's shin?] (laughing)  
28 [(all laughing), talking over each other]  
29 P [that's what they were saying pretty much]  
30 H [that's shin (pointing forward)]or that's kim (turning and pointing  
forward in different direction)  
31 P yeah;  
32 A exactly;  
33 P so yeah a lot of korean people just know her as mi choba (lifts hand  
34 with open palm upward in her direct. as if introducing her, laughing)  
35 St I guess it's pretty catchy so I'm like. (shrugging)I'm [fine with it I  
36 got so used]  
37 P [?yeah it's?  
38 stefanie mikova;]  
39 St yeah  
40 P alright

In his short narrative, Peniel assigns himself the role of a mediator in a cultural misunderstanding concerning names, being friends with “the foreigner Stefanie” and a Korean monolingual friend. The joke of the story is how the “clueless Korean” did not recognize that by saying “Stefanie”, Peniel was referring to who the Korean only knew as “mi choba” (l.17), which is an already discussed strategy for the construction of a transnational in-group as presented in examples 2 and 6. Korean names usually consist of three syllables, with the first syllable being the family name and the last two syllables being the first name. The full name is commonly used to refer to even friends. Peniel’s friend mistook Stefanie’s last name as her three-syllabic full name, interpreting the first syllable as her family name and the last two syllables as her first name, following the Korean system. Both Ashley and Stefanie respond with laughter to Peniel’s story, indicating their understanding of the joke of the story. Harry

catches on to what caused the misunderstanding and pointedly identifies the problem without fully explaining it, showing his understanding of the situation: “ah they didn’t know her last name” (1.19). He aligns himself with Peniel as transnational Korean, who is able to move between cultures and languages, without offering an explanation as would be warranted if someone was present who they believed not to be in the know as they are. This positions Stefanie as a knower of the Korean name system as well and suggests her possible co-membership in the transnational Korean group-identity. Peniel continues his story with representing himself as the one who explains their cultural misunderstanding to a Korean. The opposing positions of novice and expert become especially clear in his phrasing: “*they don’t know her name was stephanie so I was like*” (1.22,24). He proceeds to enact his past self as coolly correcting his friend’s mistake after noticing it, pointing out the mistake and telling them Stefanie’s correct name (cf. 1.24-25). He then reports his friend’s embarrassed reaction in direct speech, enacting their gesture and tone of voice (cf. 1.25). Just like Eric did with his story about his unsuccessful bilingual younger brother trying to speak Korean (ex.2) or Peniel with his naïve Korean fellow trainee’s helplessness on Times Square (ex.6.2), Peniel positions his present interlocutors alongside himself as experts in both Korean and Western spaces, able to get the joke of his narrative of a cultural misunderstanding involving both spaces, while someone outside the present group of people is brought up as an out-group/novice figure of awkward embarrassing Korean (or American in Eric’s case (ex.2)). Harry takes up his assigned role as co-expert by translating the cultural misunderstanding into a comparable mistake often made by English-speakers who do not know that the last name is mentioned first in Korean: “that’s kinda like like saying that’s not peniel that’s shin” (1.25). He demonstrates his bicultural knowledge and shows how funny the Korean’s mistake sounds to the English ear by using Peniel’s Korean family name as a counterexample for what it would sound like if you made the same mistake with a Korean name. This way he makes the joke more tangible to someone who

is more used to Korean names. The other participants align themselves with him through their laughter (cf. 1.27-28), showing that they get the joke and share his Korean perception of how funny the mistake sounds to them. Harry adds on another demonstration that is even more clear as it is unrelated to them personally. Someone who knows Peniel will know that Shin is not his first name even without knowing the Korean order of names. Therefore, the cultural misunderstanding that Harry tried to explain might not become clear enough with this example. He offers another even shorter analogy: “or that’s kim” (1.30), which is only comprehensible with basic Korean culture knowledge, as “Kim” is the most common family name in Korea. Mistaking it for a Korean first name would only happen to someone who is completely unfamiliar with the Korean context. What is also important to point out is that there is no full explicit explanation of the cultural context at any point in this whole sequence, which would be necessary for a complete outsider to understand Peniel’s story and the humor in it. This could be because the speakers either implicitly position the listeners as knowledgeable about Korean culture to at least a certain extent, like knowing that Kim is a stereotypical Korean family name, or they are unaware that their analogies are not enough for a complete outsider to get the point of the story. It is also important to note that in these first two examples (ex.11,12), Stefanie is treated as a possible in-group member of the transnational Korean space, through her involvement in a conversation that requires implicit Korean insider knowledge. However, this co-membership is challenged later on, as will be presented in other examples (cf. section 6.3.3).

As the episode’s overall topic is Halloween, much later in the conversation Harry asks Stefanie whether she remembers any costume that was especially memorable. Stefanie responds by bringing up her personal experience with living in America. While she claims expertise for America, she simultaneously positions her interlocutors as American experts with higher epistemic authority (Takei & Burdelski, 2018).



(13) 42:08 Ashley as confident American expert, Stefanie's complex status as co-member

01 St I mean I used to go: when I was living in LA to west hollywood they  
02 have like the west hollywood uh costume parade?  
03 H mh  
04 P oh dang  
05 St and people go all out;  
06 H right;  
07 A hmh  
08 St (looking to H) like am:azing (both hands up open palms to front)  
09 amazing amazing amazing costumes scary non-scary it's just so fun just  
10 to walk around  
11 H [wow]  
12 St [=I] mean unfortunately in america or in in the US you are not allowed  
13 to drink alcohol? in the street? (looks unsure)  
14 H [right]  
15 St [=is it] just a california thing or [everywhere in the US?]  
16 H [I think its] every:where  
17 St cause I'm like that would be fun you [have]=  
18 A [yeah]  
19 St =your beer and like walk around but  
20 A they just cover it in the paper (makes hand movement: cup) bag

**Stefanie chooses to talk about the costume parade in West Hollywood over Fasching in**

Germany, which they have discussed earlier in the conversation. This is exemplary for the whole episode in which Stefanie mostly tends to claim knowledge about America, while being positioned as expert for Germany by the other participants (mostly Harry). As I will show later (ex.14), she associates Germany with the past, being provincial and unmodern as opposed to America, being the cool, modern place, which could be one reason why she emphasizes her in-group status with the American space. Another reason could be that she is trying to align with her American interlocutors and connect with the group she is interacting with. After claiming knowledge about a festival in Los Angeles (cf. l.1-10), which remains uncontested by her audience, Stefanie makes a nomic statement on what is allowed in America with regards to the consumption of alcohol (cf. l.12-13). While claiming expertise for America to a certain extent, she still seeks validation from the other participants by raising her pitch toward the end of her turn and through her facial expression (cf. l.13), thereby acknowledging their privileged status as American experts, able to ratify her claims. Harry responds by accepting her statement without questioning it: “right” (l.14). Stefanie narrows the scope of her expertise down to

California and positions the other participants as experts for the United States as a whole, by asking them whether her claim really does apply to “everywhere in the US?” (l.15). Again, Harry responds with a hesitant affirmation, this time marking his epistemic stance as insecure through his word choice: “I think” and producing the word “everywhere” slowly and elongated (cf. l.16). At the same time, Ashley is responding positively and confidently to Stefanie’s question (cf. l.18), constructing herself as expert over Harry and Stefanie, able to answer questions about “everywhere in the US” without insecurity. She further reinforces her expert-status by giving more details about how Americans deal with such limitations in their consumption of alcohol in public spaces (cf. l.20) as a response to Stefanie lamenting not being able to drink beer on the streets in America (cf. l.17,19). By pointing out that Americans do in fact still drink alcohol in public spaces (cf. l.20), Ashley implicitly repositions Stefanie as relative outsider to the American in-group. Just before in the conversation, a similar gradation in expertise was discursively produced when the speakers were asked about Korea and Harry claimed expertise over Ashley through a similar framing of his epistemic stance as secure, right after she responded to the same question with a personal guess (cf. example 20, l.1-5).

### **6.3.2 Along the yellow line – Belonging to Germany**

While Stefanie’s belonging to Korea gets problematized in the episode, claims of knowledge with regard to America or Germany are accepted. The following sequence is an example of Stefanie remaining unquestioned as German expert. The group talks about Halloween costumes and Harry asks Stefanie whether she dressed up for Halloween, which introduces a sequence in which Stefanie’s affiliation to Germany is brought up for the first time and she is positioned as expert for German culture.

(14) 9:46 Stefanie as representative for Germany  
 01 H do you (pointing with thumb to S) dressed up for halloween?  
 02 St ahm I do now back in germany it wasn't really a thing? [others: oh] at  
 03 all [halloween]  
 04 H [oh really]  
 05 St cause we have carnival, (.)  
 06 H/P uhu

07 St which we it's like uh I guess a w-western christian- time its february  
08 march and we dress up in, but not scary h just in random costumes we  
09 do parades and it has like to do with .h also with the church  
10 something (.) so we have that instead of halloween but=  
11 P [°interesting°]  
12 St [=we you know] we grew up also watching american movies and we would  
13 see [others: right] like wow Halloween that's so cool so me and my  
14 friends on halloween we would go around our small town knocking on  
15 peoples' doors asking for candy and they're like wh:at do you want?  
16 (enacts confused person, laughing) like (looking at H)  
17 H [rightright]  
18 St (chuckling) [not even] dressed up we would just go around ask people  
19 for candy cause [we were like]  
20 P [it's not] even Halloween [(talking over each other)]  
21 H [they probably didn't]  
22 like prepare candy for the children cause it's not a thing  
23 St yeah and these grandmas [were like what do you want?] (laughter)  
24 A [°they're like wha:t?°] (H laughing)  
25 St like why are you here?  
26 P are you lo:st?  
27 St do you want free candy?

At first, Stefanie only talks about herself personally and creates a temporal opposition of her practice regarding the holiday now versus “back in Germany” (1.2), linking Germany to the past. Within the same turn she then makes a more general claim for how things were done in Germany, which is still described in the past tense: “it wasn’t really a thing at all” (1.2-3). Harry reacts with signaling his interest (cf. 1.4), taking up the role as novice, who is ready to learn from the expert. Instead of going back to the original question about herself, Stefanie proceeds to elaborate on the claim she made for Halloween in Germany, offering an explanation for it by bringing up a German equivalent holiday: “cause we have carnival” (1.5). Just like Junny in example 7 or Ashley in example 18 did with their use of the personal pronoun “we” to refer to the collective of Canadian or Korean people and positioning themselves as part of it, Stefanie positions herself as part of the German community by using the pronoun “we” throughout her whole account of how things are done in Germany (cf. 1.7,8,10). While claiming expertise about German customs, she distances herself from the Christian roots of the German holiday and marks her limitation as source of information with regards to it by prefacing it with “it’s like uh I guess” (1.7) and making vague, unspecific assertions like “it has like to do with .h also with the church something” (1.9-10). As German representative, though marking her personal

distance to the Christian church, she includes it in her “objective” account of German culture, taking up the role of the German expert. After generally explaining the German holiday equivalent to Halloween as her American Korean interlocutors know it, she shifts her focus, indexing it with the conjunction “but” (l.10), and then narrows it down to a “we” that only refers to herself and her German friends in the past (cf. l.12-14), contrasting them with the more generic German backdrop that she sketched out before. She starts out with a “we” that could still refer to the German collective of at least her generation: “we grew up also watching American movies and we would see like wow Halloween that’s so cool” (l.12-13). She positions her past self as part of a German collective that looked up to American culture from a distance. In her narrative, America is the far distant “cool place” that Germans can only access through movies and try to imitate in a naïve, comical way (cf. l.13-20). She then zooms in on a personal level, narrating how she and her German friends awkwardly tried to imitate the American “cool” practice of trick-or-treating in their “small town” (l.14) in Germany: “so me and my friends on Halloween we would go around our small town knocking on peoples’ doors asking for candy and they’re like wh:at do you want?” (l.13-15). Her old German self and her friends become the butt of the joke due to their outsider position of trying to adopt a foreign custom that they are not in personal contact with and bring it into a cultural context that is unfamiliar with it at large. Like Eric did with his brother and Peniel with his Korean friends, Stefanie assigns the role of the novice to her old self, with her present cosmopolitan self as expert, who is able to see how naïve her behavior has been. She too positions herself and the people present in an in-group of experts about American Halloween and by extension American culture, able to laugh at the people in the past in a small provincial German town. She is presenting her old self as comical in her attempt to imitate the Americans seen in movies, doing it wrong: “not even dressed up” (l.18). She is disaligning her present cosmopolitan self, who easily moves across borders in different spheres, with her monocultural old self embodying the

figure of a fake American, who tries hard but fails (comparable to the American wannabe figure in the transnational Korea context (Choi, 2019), cf. Diagrams 1 and 3). Her old self and her group of friends are cast as clumsy admirers and imitators of the cool distant Americans that are misunderstood by the German townspeople who react confused. Stefanie positions the old townspeople as completely clueless of things outside Germany or at least American culture, while her young self already oriented herself toward American culture and the distant, cool world it represents. Thus, in her story, Stefanie represents her present and to some extent even her old self in alignment with her American interlocutors, who are all in the know about American Halloween. In contrast, the townspeople in her story do not understand, only ever living in a provincial small town and being old-fashioned monoculturals. The out-group German townspeople become further attributed as being old: “yeah and these grandmas were like what do you want?” (1.23). Not knowing about American Halloween is being connected to being old and provincial and characteristic of the German past, while America is the cool, distant place with global reach that is admired and imitated. Harry and Peniel take up their assigned roles as co-experts and align with Stefanie’s position of judging her old self by pointing out things that went “wrong” in her American imitation “it’s not even Halloween” etc. (cf. 1.20-22), thereby confirming her cosmopolitan in-group position and validating her as American expert. Peniel adds to the story, assumes her stance towards the figures in her story (her old self and friends) and accepts her implicit self-positioning as someone who is knowledgeable and experienced and thus part of the American/cosmopolitan in-group now. Ashley too validates Stefanie’s present in-group position by participating in the construction of the story (cf. 1.24) as Peniel did in line 20 and Harry in line 21-22. She offers another candidate for the direct speech of “these old German grandmas” (1.23): “[°they’re like wha:t?°]” (1.24), adding on to Stefanie’s enactment of a story in which she was misunderstood in the German culture by old fashioned local people. She is thereby aligning herself with Stefanie as someone

who is in the know and able to make fun of the past situation. In Diagram 4, this example (14) was therefore mapped in the overlapping space between the American and German circles and could have also been discussed in the previous section (6.3.1), since Stefanie is positioned as German expert and while fulfilling that role, she emphasizes her American affinity and cosmopolitan alignment with her American Korean interlocutors. She therefore constructs her belonging to both spaces, with Germany as the place of her roots and familial heritage (past: childhood) and a present closer affiliation with American/cosmopolitan spaces.

A clearer demarcation along the yellow line and the construction of Stefanie's belonging to Germany can be observed in the following example, which can be found right after the previous one. Here, Harry brings it back to Stefanie's connection to Germany, positioning himself as novice with regard to things German and assigning her the role of the German expert, an actor of "something German" in the past (cf. 1.28).

(15) 10:44 Stefanie as "Fasching" expert  
 28 H so what is what is it called the other german thing that you did  
 29 St uhm it's called fasching but it's [basically car-]  
 30 P [huh?] (looking confused)  
 31 H [g/fahshing?]  
 32 St fasching yeah  
 33 A [°fasching°]  
 34 P [fasching]  
 35 St but its carnival  
 36 A mhm  
 37 St so that's like huge  
 38 P oh so fasching literally just translates into carnival?  
 39 St y::es I guess so (looks unsure) it's like the closest thing=  
 40 P =°to oh°=  
 41 St it has something to do with the the: christian church calendar;  
 42 A but you guys dressed up as like like  
 43 St not scary, ananything  
 44 H like for example what?  
 45 St [I was-]  
 46 P [°like/a?] tourist?  
 47 St yes that would be a very acceptable outfit (chuckles)  
 48 A so is it unacceptable to dress up as like the devil or:  
 49 St no you can wear anything  
 50 A oh really?=  
 51 St =no one really cares  
 52 A o:h;  
 53 St and you do like parades and then there's like huge like parade floats  
 54 and you go there and people throw candy down.  
 55 A mh:m;  
 56 St from the parades.

Stefanie now offers the original German name for the holiday (Fasching), instead of using a translation as she did at first (cf. ex.14, 1.5). Harry and Peniel interrupt her, trying to clearly understand the unfamiliar word (cf. 1.30-31). All three non-Germans try to imitate the German word, positioning themselves as curious out-group learners and asking Stefanie to assess their German pronunciation through their intonation (cf. 1.31-34), thereby self-positioning as novices. While Stefanie tries to continue with explaining what Fasching is (cf. 1.29,35,37), Peniel is still working on grasping the German term, asking her a technical linguistic question about the German word and in doing so nominating her as expert for the German language: “oh so Fasching literally just translates into carnival?” (1.38). To that Stefanie responds by hesitantly accepting the assigned role as German language expert, yet framing the information she offers as unreliable, again especially indexing her unreliability as expert in the matter Christianity: “y::es I guess so (looks unsure) it’s like the closest thing it has something to do with the the: Christian church calendar;” (1.39,41). Stuttering, vague word choices and her facial expression all work to mark her epistemic stance as unsure. Yet, she does not fully reject her assigned position as expert by still giving her opinion about a possible answer to Peniel’s question, which remains uncontested. However, with regard to what kind of costumes are culturally “acceptable or not”, Stefanie confidently takes up the role of someone who has the authority to make assessments about that matter (cf. 1.43-51) by evaluating a candidate that was offered by Peniel based on her present costume (cf. 1.46). Ashley then offers a candidate that could be considered “unacceptable” (1.48) due to the holiday being presented as having Christian roots, as opposed to what was just ratified by Stefanie (cf. 1.47). This sequence is a good example for cultural belonging being not only constructed through the demonstration and claim of expertise regarding factual knowledge, but also knowledge concerning cultural values (cf. Busch, 2009), because here Stefanie is elevated as a legitimate judge over what is proper and acceptable in Germany during a certain holiday. After clarifying the dress code, she gives

further details about how the holiday is celebrated in Germany (cf. 1.53-54, 56). The information she offers is readily accepted by her interlocutors as factual, with Ashley and Peniel marking their uptake (cf. 1.55,57) and Harry incorporating this new information into his wider framework by setting it in relation to what he is familiar with (cf. ex.16, 1.58; Vickers, 2010). Peniel aligns himself with Harry as now able to make a comparative judgment with their own culture, which is American in this case (cf. ex.16, 1.60).

(16) 11:29 Comparison of German "Fasching" with American Halloween  
 58 H [so kinda like similar;]  
 59 St yeah  
 60 P [yeah it's] kind of similar,=  
 61 St =and every like club of the town has like a different float?  
 62 A aha;  
 63 St and it just yeah it's like a huge thing and there's usually like a  
 64 night where people prepare skits like it's like a huge thing and of  
 65 course my dad (H: ooh) always had to be like the host of the whole  
 66 event  
 67 P Oh (laughter)

Stefanie confirms Harry and Peniel's estimation of German Fasching being similar to American Halloween (1.59) again indexing her bicultural expertise, not only from the German but also the American perspective, having the knowledge and authority to assess Peniel and Harry's conclusion by comparing a German and American custom. This example is therefore not only mapped on the yellow but also the blue line, positioning Stefanie within a transnational space between Germany and the United States as well as Peniel and Harry within the American circle (cf. Diagram 4). Stefanie goes back into detailing German Fasching parades, shifting from a general description back into her personal experience with it, justifying herself as a legitimate German expert in the matter through personal involvement (cf. 1.63-66).

Later in the conversation, there is a longer activity in which the participants discuss different kinds of American candy and rank them in an "ultimate candy tier list", which is the same context as the one example 5 (discussion of Pocky vs. Pepero) was taken from. In this sequence, it becomes clear that Ashley does not like pickles to which Stefanie reacts by playfully positioning herself as authority who can ban people from entering Germany, claiming



expertise of German taste and what you are expected to like in Germany. Before the transcribed sequence, the producer, who organizes the candies in a chart according to their assessment on a screen, brings their attention to Ferrero Rocher. Harry has already made clear that this is his favorite candy, while Ashley has made negative experiences with Ferrero Rocher and maggots. As soon as the brand is mentioned, she therefore expresses her disgust, shocking Harry, who then alludes to a similar disagreement they had outside the podcast concerning pickles (1.1; also cf. Bolden, 2006, discursive moves to demonstrate interpersonal connection). Stefanie asks for clarification what pickles have to do with Ferrero Rocher (cf. 1.3) and Harry explicitly shares that Ashley dislikes pickles, framing this as an accusation by pointing at Ashley with his index finger and through his intonation (cf. 1.4). He then finds an ally in Stefanie as she adopts a similar affective stance towards pickles and Ashley's distaste of them as Harry does (cf. 1.5). Stefanie proceeds with casting "not liking pickles" as an excluding factor to being allowed entrance to Germany (cf. 1.11,13).

(17) 26:17 Stefanie banning Ashley from Germany for disliking pickles  
01 H °its [pickles all over again]° (shakes head looking at A)  
02 A [I mean no I really] [like it?]  
03 St (turning to H, surprised) [why pick]les? (concerned voice quality)  
04 H she l- she (pointing with index finger at A) hates pickles;  
05 St (turning to A with widened eyes) whAAat?  
06 H see? (hand stretched out to A opposite) [exactly] (hand moves to S next to him than again stretched out to A)  
07 P [°she only°]  
08 St [°I think°]  
09 H °thank [you°]  
10 P [she only likes] the Korean pickles;=  
11 St =you're [never allowed to come to]  
12 P [like the sweet ones]  
13 St germany I think, (producer laughing) I'll make sure you're [banned]  
14 H [thank you]  
15 St [for entering] (laughing)  
16 A [oh no::: ] I wanna [go::: (whining)]  
17 H [°thank you°]  
18 St (laughs) °[i'm° kid]ding (laughing, softer voice, hand stretched out to A)  
19 H [it's an S]

At first, their strong affective stance towards Ashley's dislike is a personal agreement between Harry and Stefanie (cf. 1.1-6). Peniel takes up the role as mediator by adding the information,

that Ashley “only likes the Korean pickles” (1.10), clarifying that she does not dislike any kind of pickles, just the non-Korean ones. Like Harry, he not only demonstrates his knowledge of Ashley’s personal preferences and thus their familiarity with each other (cf. Bolden, 2006), but also that he is a knower of Korean vegetables and food, adding a description of its flavor and what makes it different from non-Korean pickles: “the sweet ones” (1.12). He thereby positions himself and Ashley as Korean, himself by knowing about Korean pickles and her by having a Korean taste. At the same time, in overlapping talk, Stefanie shifts the personal disagreement between Ashley and herself into a cultural one, making Ashley’s distaste for non-Korean pickles an issue prohibiting her from visiting Germany: “you’re never allowed to come to Germany I think” (1.11,13). She then adds on her personal investment as a German insider to ensure Ashley’s exclusion, based on her offense against German taste: “I’ll make sure you’re banned for entering” (1.13,15). She thus constructs herself as authority, legitimized through her membership in the German group-identity, to decide who is allowed to enter her home country. Harry aligns with her stance towards Ashley’s taste, which Stefanie playfully expressed through Ashley’s alleged exclusion from Germany (cf. 1.14,17). Just like in Kang’s study of Korean American camp counsellors (2004), the ethnic category of German becomes indexically linked to a certain stance towards pickles, with Stefanie as unquestioned authority constructing such a local meaning by making Ashley’s dislike of non-Korean pickles a reason for being banned from Germany. De Fina (2006), too, describes such a process of giving “situated meanings to categories describing race, ethnicity, and gender” (p. 353) in narratives, as a mechanism to discursively construct group-identities. Although it is clear that Stefanie does not have the literal legal authority to decide who is allowed entrance to Germany and although she frames her assertion as a joke (cf. 1.18) which is taken up as such with laughter (cf. 1.13,15,18), her position within the storyline of her joke is reflecting her authority as German expert and insider, who can make implicit pronouncements about German taste and who can exclude outsiders

from the German sphere. Ashley confirms her in that position of authority by taking up her assigned position in the storyline as sanctioned outsider through enacting sadness and discontent with her exclusion from Germany. She does so by the quality of her voice, her facial expression, and the elongation of her vowels: “oh no::: I wanna go::: (whining)” (l.16). She also brings up her desire to visit Germany, underlining her outsider status to the German space. Harry again thanks Stefanie for “punishing” Ashley for her taste in overlapping talk (cf. l.17).

### 6.3.3 Along the red line – Belonging to South Korea

While examples 11 and 12 suggested a possible in-group status of Stefanie within the Korean transnational space as it was offered to Lim Kim, Stefanie’s Korean belonging turns out to be the most challenged one by her Korean American interlocutors. In the following section, negotiations along the red line, demarcating belonging to Korea, will be examined.

At the beginning of the episode, the speakers take turns introducing their Halloween outfits and Ashley assumes a teacher role explaining the background story of her costume, which is a pop culture reference. She is dressed up as Younghee, a scary doll figure from Squid Game, which is a Korean Netflix show from 2021 that has become extremely popular worldwide. It is very likely that listeners know about Squid Game even if they do not know much about Korea, making her costume choice itself not exclusively recognizable to insiders of Korean culture. However, Ashley positions herself as Korean expert and insider by introducing the Korean character through singing its little trademark song in Korean (cf. l.1) and then providing a more detailed Korean culture context to the figure she enacts, which she expects the others not to know about.

(18) 5:30 Ashley claiming expertise for Korean culture, teacher role

- 01 A uh I’m dressed up as (sings:) 무궁화 꽃이 피었습니다/mugunghwa kkochi  
 02 piotsseumnida)<sup>34</sup>(ends with eye movements from side to side) (.) I’m  
 03 swirling my eyes around guys (laughter) (.) watch out  
 04 P she’s here to kill Harry (laughter from others)  
 05 St? mhm  
 06 A uh her name is yeonghee, a:nd she’s actually a really popular cartoon

<sup>34</sup> Engl.: “the Hibiscus flower has bloomed” (National flower of Korea), Squid Game song

07 character from our parents' generation (P looking surprised from side  
to side (to H))

08 P [really?]

09 H [ohh, she was]

10 A [like she] was in all the textbooks and stuff (P+H look impressed and  
11 surprised) and they remade her for the squid game because she wanted  
12 the: viewers to well the director wanted the viewers to be familiar  
13 with like um what we grew up with? so

14P+H mhm

15 A yeah I'm dressed up as yeonghee

16 P oh I didn't know the the doll was like the childhood stuff too I know  
17 all the games were but

18 H dang

19 P alright (takes mic. in hand) and uh I'm just a banana. (all laughing)

Peniel aligns with Ashley by demonstrating his understanding of the character's relationship

with the Squid Game character that Harry is dressed up as, knowing about its intentions (cf.

1.4). Still, Ashley proceeds to formally introduce Younghee with her name and then describes

her less known background story, claiming expertise and positioning her interlocutors (the ones  
present in the studio and the audience at home) as novices regarding the character's deeper

roots in Korean culture. She does not expect them to know the information that she shares with

them as she indicates with the adverb "actually" (1.6), marking the information that follows as

new. Her word choice positions herself and her interlocutors as part of a Korean in-group:

"from our parents' generation" (1.7). With the possessive pronoun "our" and in the context of

talking about a Korean named "really popular cartoon character" (1.6-7), she alludes to all of

them having Korean parents. Accordingly, it is Peniel and Harry who verbally react to Ashley's

explanation, confirming the information she shared as new, surprising, and interesting. They

accept her as an authoritative source of information, confirming her as expert and inviting her

to continue to teach them (cf. 1.8-9). Stefanie, whose parents are not Korean, remains verbally

uninvolved in this sequence. Confirmed in her role as expert, Ashley continues to teach the

others about Younghee's longer Korean history: "like she was in all the textbooks and stuff and

they remade her for the squid game because she wanted the: viewers to well the director wanted

the viewers to be familiar with like um what we grew up with?" (1.10-13). Again, Ashley uses

the personal pronoun "we" referring to Younghee as a part of the cultural repertoire of the

Korean collective which she and her recipients are a part of. This becomes clear as she does not expect Peniel and Harry to literally have grown up with Younghee in their “textbooks and stuff” (l.10), otherwise they would not need her explicit explanation. Still, they are part of a broader “we” that did grow up with this character, namely the Korean collective. Again, Stefanie does not verbally react to this information. The intended audience of the Korean show Squid Game was primarily Korean as the director drew on a shared cultural repertoire to achieve a certain effect with her characters, who are supposed to be familiar to the Korean audience from their childhood (cf. l.12-13), according to Ashley. She presents this information markedly from a Korean perspective and to a markedly Korean audience, subtly excluding Stefanie from her intended audience. It is thus no surprise that only Peniel and Harry take up their role as intended audience (cf. l.14, 16-18) by verbally accepting the new information, signaling that they are listening and affectively reacting to it (cf. l.18).

Shortly after, the participants talk about their favorite time of the year and Stefanie makes a remark on the brevity of fall in Korea (cf. l.6). With this material reference she indicates her personal living experience in Korea for the first time in this episode, while also showing that she has some kind of reference-point outside of Korea that makes this observation worth mentioning (cf. l.6).

(19) 6:51 Stefanie claiming expertise about Korean fall

01 A what about Winter then?

02 H I l- I like fall; myself.

03 P me [too]

04 H [the] intermediate seasons

05 P [yeahyeah fall and spring] (low voice)

06 St [it's so short in korea]= (gesture, shows short distance with hand, affective tone)

07 H =that's why (.) I; I love it

08 St h (laughs silently) (.) °.h [?think it's going to snow tomorrow?°]

09 P [no but it becAme short]

10 St really?=  
 11 H [°=it became short°]

12 A [it gets shorter and shorter mhm]

13 P [?it didn't used to be? this short] but now it's like yeah you gotta

14 appreciate it [while it]=

15 H [ye:::ah]

16 P =lasts cause it's gone like=

17 H =pumpkin spiced lattes,  
 18 A (was taking a sip, starts chuckling with mouth full, poses with her  
 cup)  
 19 H sweater and cardigans? oh[mygosh] (enacting type of person) (laughter)  
 20 P [damn]

Harry aligns with Stefanie's position as also being personally familiar with fall in Korea, making her explicated information the reason for his previous statement of loving fall and contextualizing the kind of fall he likes in Korea (cf. 1.7). Peniel recasts Stefanie as relative novice and claims expertise for himself by modifying the information she gave, prefacing his turn with a "no": "no it's became short" (1.9). He adds on to her assertion about the material weather conditions in Korea and shows that he has lived there longer with his observation about how the length of the season has changed over time. Stefanie takes up the role assigned to her by Peniel, readily accepting his information as valid and positioning herself as an interested learner: "really?" (1.10). Harry and Ashley align themselves with Peniel as co-experts, confirming his long-term observation with Stefanie as novice, who is positioned as the receiver of their turns (cf. 1.11-16). From the perspective of someone who is personally affected by the weather conditions in Korea, Peniel proceeds to teach how one should adjust to the increasing brevity of Korean fall: "but now it's like yeah you gotta appreciate it while it lasts cause it's gone like" (1.13-14, 16). Harry affectively confirms (cf. 1.15) and playfully adds on to this by offering detailed aspects of how the short Korean fall can be appreciated (1.17, 19). Stefanie has thus been subtly repositioned as novice to Korea after she attempted alignment with her interlocutors' Korean in-group status. The clearest rejection of an attempted claim to Korean expertise by her, however, can be found in the following example.

There are instances in the podcast where listener questions position the speakers as experts of Korea. In the following excerpt, Peniel reads out such a question from an American listener. In the thereafter ensuing conversation, Harry claims expertise for Korean superstitions. When Stefanie adds on to this, trying to align herself with him, he recasts her as German expert.

(20) 39:04 Hosts as Korean experts, Stefanie rejected as co-expert  
 01 P (reading listener question ab. sth that happened in 2016) were there  
 02 killer clowns in korea like the US (scratches his head) during the it  
 03 movie era?=what the f\* (beeped out in recording)  
 04 A I don't think so  
 05 H nahnahnahnah  
 06 St or those scary videos people just like standing in the streets  
 07 [dressed as clowns,]  
 08 A [yeah pranking] (wide eyed)  
 09 H [ah:]  
 10 A dude that's no you shouldn't do that;

While Ashley takes up the assigned role as Korean expert by offering her personal opinion (“I don’t think so” (1.4)), which she marks as a personal assumption, Harry gives a confident definite answer: “nahnahnahnah” (1.5), claiming expertise over Ashley. The same structure has been discussed in the analysis of example 13 (1.14-20), where Ashley claimed a higher epistemic authority regarding America than Harry. Stefanie slightly shifts the topic of the conversation to a related action people do in “those scary videos [...] in the streets” (1.6), moving the focus to an unspecified time and space. Ashley reacts emphatically to the new topic, expressing her fear of clowns (cf. 1.8, 10). Harry reframes the topic of the conversation back to Korea, claiming expertise about what is perceived as scary in Korea and teaching the others about it (cf. 1.16-17). At the same time, he positions the emotional stance that Ashley just expressed concerning clowns (cf. 1.8, 10, 15) as not typical Korean.

39:22  
 15 A °I frickin hate clowns;°  
 16 H clo- clowns are not like seen as s-scary beings in korea; (.) in korea  
 17 its more 귀신/guishin<sup>35</sup> like (makes hand movement from head down)  
 18 A [.h yeah (.)ghosts]  
 19 [like ?the? whi]te  
 20 P [yeahyeahyeah] (nodding)  
 21 A [처녀 귀신/cheonyeo guishin]<sup>36</sup> (nodding)  
 22 H [girl 귀신 (nods)] [°girl ghost?°] (turns gz to St)  
 23 St [=°oh guishin?°] [you're not] supposed to whistle at night? (gz to H)  
 24 H .pt(.) (looks unsure)  
 25 A [°yeah°]  
 26 St [in kor]ea,  
 27 H um is that a thing? (looks off screen to producer)  
 28 P I think not necessarily whistle but I think it's just like any like  
 29 high-pitched noise

<sup>35</sup> Engl: ghost

<sup>36</sup> Engl.: virgin/girl ghost

30 St cause it like attracts ghosts? (gz to Harry)  
 31 H ah it does? (gz to Stefanie)  
 32 St m[hm]  
 33 P [yah]  
 34 H wha-wh- does germany have like superstitions?  
 35 St superstitions? ah probably s-(eyes turned upward) like especially  
 36 around the number thirteen,  
 37 A [oO:h]  
 38 H [mh oh]=  
 39 St [like cats]  
 40 H [=that's north] american  
 41 S yeah its [very similar;]  
 42 A [a:h]  
 43 St very similar as america.

When explaining Korean culture to the others, Harry experiences difficulties with finding the English word for something that for him seems to be closely connected to the Korean context: guishin/ghosts. He uses the Korean word and then gestures to express what he is referring to, adding a visual attribute to it (“white” 1.19). Ashley jumps in and offers a translation, which gets validated by the others as a correct candidate (cf. 1.18, 20-22). She then demonstrates not only her linguistic expertise but also her cultural knowledge by adding a more specific Korean term in which the guishin gets a further attribute (“cheonyeo guishin” 1.21), signaling her understanding, confirmation, and co-expert position with Harry. He accepts her contribution and positioning as valid, providing a “code-switched reiteration” (Harjunpää & Mäkilähde, 2016, p. 193) by combining an English word that roughly translates “처녀/cheonyeo”<sup>37</sup> with the Korean word for ghost which, interestingly, he only translates in a next step and in a lower volume (cf. 1.20). The Korean “guishin” becomes accepted and reiterated as a valid term for a Korean cultural concept that they try to convey through it (cf. 1.21-23). Moreover, Harry highlights his affirming stance towards Ashley’s contribution (cf. 1.21), just as she did, through nodding. Together they modify the Korean ghost as being a young female virgin. Stefanie joins the club by adding another cultural rule which gets read as bound to the Korean context as this has just been the focus of conversation. However, the others react hesitant to accept Stefanie’s

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<sup>37</sup> Engl.: unmarried young woman/ girl/ virgin



claim about a certain social rule with a short pause ensuing after her claim (cf. 1.23-24). Especially Harry, who was primarily selected as next speaker through Stefanie's gaze and who is established as Korean authority, expresses his doubt nonverbally through his facial expression, and the audible opening of his mouth without saying anything (cf. 1.25). Stefanie adds on to her claim, specifying that she locates this specific cultural rule "in Korea" (1.26) and creating another slot for others to validate her claim and thereby accept her positioning as knowledgeable about Korean culture. Her slightly rising intonation allows for correction by others. This time, Harry expresses his doubt verbally, challenging Stefanie's claim for expertise by asking whether what she was saying really is "a thing" in Korea, directing this question to the producer off screen through his gaze and thereby selecting the producer as Korean expert instead (cf. 1.27). At the same time, in challenging Stefanie's assertion about Korean culture and her claim to expertise, he positions himself as someone who can judge whether information about Korea is true or not. Peniel then pitches in by modifying Stefanie's assertion, broadening it and leaving out any explicit cultural context (cf. 1.28-29). Stefanie aligns with him by taking up his modification and adding a logical reason to why someone should not make high-pitched noises at night. She produces her sentence with a rising intonation towards the end and looks at Harry (cf. 1.30), thereby asking him for validation and accepting him as authority in the matter. Her claim has now become unattached to Korea and has been modified into a general fact. Still, Harry responds vaguely by asking "ah it does?" (1.30), neither confirming nor denying Peniel and Stefanie's claim, thereby still not aligning with Stefanie or necessarily accepting her role as expert. Stefanie interprets Harry's question not just as an uptake but as an actual expression of doubt, as becomes apparent when she again stresses the truth of her claim through the particle "mhm" (1.32). Peniel joins her in confirming the truth of their general claim (cf. 1.33). Harry however reacts by bringing it back to a specific culture, Germany, positioning himself as novice and Stefanie as German expert by asking her about German superstitions (cf. 1.34). After she

tried making assertions about Korean culture alongside him, he repositions her as expert about Germany, just like he has previously done with regard to Fasching (cf. ex.14 and 15).

Throughout the episode, he actively casts her as German expert, accepts her positioning as knowledgeable about America, but challenges her positioning when she claims expertise about Korea, which she does not frequently do. With regard to Germany, Stefanie, who is the only one present with personal German connections, remains unquestioned and her assertions about German culture are taken as representative and reliable. As opposed to American or Korean culture, Ashley, Peniel and Harry do not construct themselves as belonging to German culture, therefore not claiming knowledge or challenging expertise with regards to Germany.

Accordingly, in this example (20), Harry reacts to Stefanie's description of German cultural beliefs with claims to knowledge about American superstitions, recognizing Stefanie's accounts of German beliefs as similar to North American ones: "that's north american" (1.40). Stefanie again aligns with him in that she confirms his claim twice, demonstrating that she too is able to tell the similarity to American culture (1.41,43), just like in example 16. However, she specifies her confirmation as pertaining to "America" and not necessarily the broader "North America" as Harry did. Their co-membership in the American "circle" does not appear to be perceived as a threat to the transnational Korean group-identity.

The producer off screen then asks the group about the Korean equivalent to the German and American unlucky number thirteen (cf. 1.44), to which all three ethnically Koreans, Ashley, Peniel and Harry, immediately respond, claiming expertise by self-selecting to answer the question.

(21) 39:59 Speakers as Korean experts (on the number 4 in Korea)  
44 producer off screen: °okay what's the bad number? in ?korea?° (doesn't have a microphone)  
45 P =four=  
46 A [=four yeah]  
47 H [=four caus]e it's 사/sa<sup>38</sup> (makes hand movement with it, open towards  
48 ground, four fingers out (pinky to index))

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<sup>38</sup> Sino-Korean number: four

49 St yeah. we live on the fourth floor (laughs)  
 50 A (reacts with concerned/teeth showing facial expression)  
 51 P like the the (draws sign in air)  
 52 H 사/sa: in [Chinese means death]  
 53 P [the Chinese character] right it's the same as dea[th, so]  
 54 A [yeah.]

Harry demonstrates his expertise and distinguishes himself from the other two by also offering the Sino-Korean word for four as an explanation for why it is perceived as an unlucky number in Korean culture, underlining his assertion by showing four (cf. 1.47-48). Before he can elaborate, Stefanie displays her personal connection to the Korean space by sharing that she is living on the fourth floor (cf. 1.49), adjusting to the Korean context where this is a situation worth telling as it is likely to be perceived as an issue. Showing that she knows the connotation of the number four in the Korean space, she distances herself from the position of the novice, which was previously assigned to her. Ashley reacts to Stefanie with the proper Korean affective response by showing concern through her facial expression (cf. 1.50), aligning with her and confirming Stefanie in her positioning as non-novice. Meanwhile, Harry and Peniel compete in giving the explanation about the Sino-Korean word for four and its connotation (cf. 1.51-53). Peniel does so by drawing the Chinese sign that it is derived from in the air (cf. 1.51), while Harry explains that “sa in Chinese means death” (1.52). In overlapping talk, Peniel gives the same information in slightly different wording, more specifically connecting the meaning to the Chinese character, “사/sa” originated from (cf. 1.53). Ashley simply confirms their information and shows that this is not new to her either, aligning herself with them (cf. 1.54).

Stefanie aligns herself with being familiar with the Korean space too by adding real-life impacts of the cultural belief concerning the number four in Korea: “so many apartment buildings here they don’t have the fourth floor” (1.55,57). She uses the indexical “here” to refer to Korea and contextualizes them all in the Korean space, including herself. Moreover, while producing the turn, she shifts her gaze to Harry next to her, who established himself as a sort of “gatekeeper” of Korean belonging, with the highest authority level (Takei & Burdelski, 2018)

concerning Korean expertise, allowing him to claim, assign, and deny expertise. Her turning to Harry while producing a discursive move that positions her within the Korean space after he denied her co-expert status concerning matters Korean, shows Stefanie's orientation towards him as ratifying authority and her search for acceptance. She does not question him in his position but seeks affirmation from him instead, still trying to construct herself as non-novice to Korea, as can be seen in the following discussion of Korean superstitions.

(22)40:10 Harry as main expert on Korean superstitions

55 St so many apartment buildings [here]=  
 56 H [yah]  
 57 St (turns gz to H) =they don't have (four fingers out, index to pinky))  
 58 the fourth floor  
 59 A [yeah]  
 60 H [or] they write F  
 61 P =F in[stead]  
 62 St [F] [and then]  
 63 P [it's like] one two three F: (.) five six [seven]  
 64 St [yeah]=  
 65 H =but they you know what? they also have something about funerals? like  
 66 when you attend a funeral?  
 67 P uhuh;  
 68 H uh (.) they advise you not to go straight home,  
 69 P oh [what the-]  
 70 H [they advise] you to like (makes circle-movement with index finger  
 71 in air) just go to a crowded area just walk around spend some time and  
 72 then go home.  
 73 St how come?  
 74 H cause like the bad- (.)  
 75 P oh it [latches on to you or whatever?]  
 76 H [ghost (.) it'll latch on] to you? so it's better to like  
 77 (circle movement with hand in air) dilute it a little bit  
 78 [?before ...other people?]  
 79 St [(laughing)?rub? off the ghost] with some other people (Ash. was  
 80 drinking, starts laughing, tries to hold liquid in)  
 81 P [you take it] (playful movement to Ash, as if tag game)  
 82 H [or throw] throw a little bit of salt in front of your house so the  
 83 ghost can't get in; like stuff like that about funerals.  
 84 (talking over each other)

Stefanie makes another attempt to align with her interlocutors in their display of Korean expertise by showing her knowledge and personal observations of the effects of the negative associations with the number four in the Korean space. She is turned to Harry while doing so, but again it is Ashley who confirms her observation ("yeah" (1.59)) instead, while Harry modifies it in overlapping talk with her: "or they write F" (1.60). Peniel aligns with him by

confirming his information through a slight add-on: “F instead” (1.61), latching onto Harry’s turn and constructing his co-expertise. Just like in example 19, when Stefanie made an assertion about fall in Korea, her claim is not just accepted but modified by her co-participants, who make efforts to demonstrate their higher epistemic access in comparison to her and construct an “epistemic asymmetry” (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p.2) concerning Korean topics. Stefanie reacts by taking up Harry’s and Peniel’s modification of her claim for Korean apartment buildings as something she was aware of, however she does not get far in adding on more information herself (“F and then” (1.62)), before Peniel takes over the speaker right again in overlapping talk: “it’s like one two three F (.) five six seven” (1.63). Once more, Stefanie aligns with him in his knowledge status: “yeah” (1.64). By repeatedly taking up their modifications as something that she has already been familiar with, she “cancels the newsworthiness of” (Yu & Wu, 2021, p. 282) their shared information and thereby contests their “efforts of expert identity building” (p. 282) or at least refuses to align with the role of receiver of information and Korean novice. Now instead of proceeding to add on more details or modifications for the fourth floor in Korean apartment buildings, Harry latches on to Peniel’s and Stefanie’s overlapping turns (cf. 1.63, 64) to introduce a new Korean superstition concerning funerals, reclaiming highest epistemic authority with regards to Korean culture: “but they you know what? they also have something about funerals? like when you attend a funeral?” (1.65-66). Peniel aligns with his assigned role as receiver of information and validates Harry as Korean expert, first by signaling his uptake, “uhuh;” (1.67), and then by reacting surprised to the content of Harry’s turn: “oh what the” (1.69), with the turn initial “oh” signaling a change in his mental state (Bolden, 2006). Harry proceeds to describe the Korean cultural rule that “they advise you” (1.68,70) and Stefanie aligns with Peniel in their other-positioning as receiver of information by asking Harry for more information about the logic behind this superstition: “how come?” (1.73). Harry proceeds to answer her right away but gets stuck for a moment

searching for the right words: “cause like the bad- (.)” (1.74). Peniel jumps in and offers a candidate for a possible answer, Harry was trying to formulate: “oh it latches on? to you or whatever?” (1.75), framing his candidate as a guess based on Harry’s beginning of an answer to Stefanie’s question. He does so by introducing his turn with the discourse marker “oh” and raising the pitch towards the end of the phrases “it latches on?” (1.75) and “or whatever?” (1.75), thereby inviting Harry to ratify his candidate and signaling his insecure epistemic stance. In overlapping talk, Harry comes up with his own answer for his word search: “ghost” (1.76), and then picks up and incorporates Peniel’s candidate in his now fully formulated response to Stefanie’s question: “it’ll latch on to you, so it’s better to like dilute it a little bit” (1.76-77). Stefanie responds by laughing and making fun of the logic behind the Korean belief that it is better to not go straight home after a funeral: “?rub? off the ghost with some other people” (1.79). Ashley, who has remained largely uninvolved in this sequence, now reacts by laughing (cf. 1.80) and Peniel takes up Stefanie’s joke by enacting a tag game: “you take it” (1.81). While showing interest in traditional Korean cultural rules and beliefs, they do not take them very seriously. Harry, however, remains serious and adds another detail to how Koreans traditionally take precautions for protecting themselves from evil spirits after funerals: “or throw throw a little bit of salt in front of your house so the ghost can’t get in; like stuff like that about funerals” (1.82-83). Afterwards, Harry continues to teach the others about related rules and customs, some of which all three of them recognize. At no point is Harry questioned as reliable source about Korean culture.

## 7. Discussion

So how are cultural belongings co-constructed in the podcast and what role does the sociocultural context of transnational Korea play in that process? While I do not suggest that whenever someone claims knowledge for themselves or others about something they necessarily construct the knower as belonging to or being part of that community, I do claim that the conjunction of various such positionings leads to a certain construction of that individual as part of certain group identities. Following Davies and Harré's (1990) and Beeching et al.'s (2018) conceptualization of selfhood, I argue that recurrent claims of in-group knowledge over various interactions construct the self as belonging to that community. In the podcast, such positionings with regard to Korea, the United States/Canada, and Germany can be found so frequently, that by just looking at some examples from four different episodes, the co-construction of a third social transnational space with certain characteristics can be observed. This new space is distinct from simply belonging to "just Korea" or "just America" through its concurrent belonging to Korea and North America, while at the same time being in-between and distinct from both. This largely coherent mapping of cultural belongings in the podcast (cf. Diagram 1) emerges through discursive moves that produce self- and other-differentiations on both the North American and Korean front, stressing the speakers sameness and at the same time their otherness to what is constructed as Korean or American/Canadian. This leads to complex positionings of being Korean (ex. 4,5,18), but not "that" kind of Korean (e.g. example 6,12) and American (ex.13,16) but not "that" kind of American (e.g. ex.1,2,3), as illustrated in the following table.

**Table 3:** Figures of personhood and characteristics along the transnational Korean space

<u>Other: American</u>	<u>(Authentic) Transnational Korean</u>	<u>Other: Korean</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-Asian American who doesn't know how to behave in Korea (ex.3)</li> <li>- Korean American with lost Korean heritage (ex.2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adaptable cosmopolitan (ex.1,3,6,8)</li> <li>- Authentic bilingual, successful returnee (Lo &amp; Choi, 2017; Choi 2019): good Korean AND English without accent, controlled lang.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gullible, helpless, naïve Korean traveller (ex.6)</li> <li>- Wannabe Americans, fakers (implicitly ex.8,9)</li> </ul>

	production (bilingual proficiency) (ex.1,2,8)	
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Each discursive move that positioned someone as in- or out-group member of a specific cultural community attached meaning and specific characteristics to these groups, creating a set of signs allocated to each distinct space in the map (cf. diagrams), i.e. when Stefanie links liking pickles to being German (ex.17) or when fear of the number four is connected to the Korean group-identity (ex.21).

**Table 4:** Sets of signs linked to cultural spaces in the podcast

Germany	USA	Korea
Ex.13:old, unmodern, provincial Ex.14: US as role model (movies) Ex.15: Fasching (Christian roots, parades etc.)  Ex.17: pickles are liked  Superstitions (ex.20-22): 13, cats	Ex.6,13,14: Cosmopolitan, cool, modern Ex.3: more drastic, physical expressions of affect Ex.15: Halloween, trick-or-treating, scary costumes Ex.4: Disney+, Netflix  Superstitions (ex.20-22): 13, killer clowns, cats	Ex.3: more reserved, controlled expressions of affect Ex.4: Wacha (왓차), WAVVE (웨이브), TVING (티빙) Ex.5: Pepero Ex.11: misunderstanding non-K names Ex.13: increasingly short fall Ex.17: Korean sweet pickles Ex.18: Squid Game, characters from K childhood Superstitions (ex.20-22): 4, cheonyeo guishin/ virgin ghost, not going straight home after funeral etc.

The heightened occurrence of such moves in the podcast episodes points at an apparent sensed need to constantly prove the self as authentically and legitimately belonging to more than one culture and ethnicity, warranted by the specific characteristics of transnational Korea as outlined in section 4 and maybe also the public nature of the medium. Due to the complexity of the positionings speakers performed with regards to cultures, it was not always possible to clearly allocate each data example on one line or axis of differentiation, especially positionings of Stefanie proved to be unclear and constantly shifting, partly due to the inclusion of a third culture in her case (cf. Diagram 4). Lim Kim’s positioning regarding a membership in the



transnational Korean community turned out to be ambivalent as well, with her momentary rejections of other-positionings as Canadian knower (ex.9,10) as well as alignments with Junny's positioning of her as Canadian insider (ex.10), while still maintaining a lesser degree of epistemic authority relative to Junny. Her distancing from the transnational Korean identity can be seen as a strategy to navigate the precarious transnational Korean position, reflecting language ideologies and associated unwelcomed models of personhood.

A closer look at exemplary discursive moves that make up these ever-changing subjectivities has revealed fine differentiations, negotiations, and movements between these different fields and group identities within the ethnographic context of transnational Korea. Gradations of memberships between the speakers are not only observable at the margins of the margins (Stefanie, Lim Kim), but also within the established group of transnational Koreans (ex.5,7,10). Such in-group differentiations are found to be characteristic of Korean diaspora communities (Kang, 2004; Kang & Lo, 2004; Lo & Kim, 2012; Choi, 2019). As for such "gradations of citizenship" (Lo & Kim, 2012, p.256) in the podcast interactions, Harry appears to be largely constructed as the highest epistemic authority (Takei & Burdelski, 2018) when it comes to Korea. His construction as "'owner[]' of that knowledge domain" (Van Braak & Huiskes, 2022, p. 2) is achieved through his unchallenged and often unsolicited pronouncements about Korea (ex.20,22) and about what belongs to Korea (ex.4,5). He is also positioned as Korean expert by being oriented to for ratification of Korean knowledge and co-membership (ex.20-22) and by being the one who most clearly rejects Stefanie's claims to knowledge about Korea (ex.20) as well as most actively positioning her as German expert instead (ex.15,20). When it comes to matters Korean, Ashley and Peniel give way to him as higher authority (ex.5,20). Conversely, with regard to America, Harry gives way to Ashley as relative higher authority in turn (ex.13). Ashley is oriented to for confirmation when it comes to things American (i.e. Peniel in ex.7,13), but also when it comes to questions concerning Korea,

especially by Harry, who accepts and aligns her with himself as Korean co-expert (ex.18,19,20). Both Ashley and Peniel assume a relatively high epistemic authority when it comes to America, while Peniel tends to give way to Ashley and Harry with regards to higher authority concerning Korean knowledge (ex.18,20,22). Eric was only featured in two of the analyzed examples (ex.1,2) talking with Ashley and Peniel, where he was readily accepted as equally belonging to both Korea and America. It would be interesting to see how his dynamic with Harry would have been with regards to their relative epistemic authority in terms of Korea or the United States. As for Stefanie and Lim Kim, Stefanie gives her interlocutors higher authority not only with regards to Korean but also American knowledge (ex.13), while her German expert status is welcomed and unchallenged. She positions herself mostly as American knower, constructing the US as a modern, cosmopolitan center as opposed to provincial Germany, which gets linked to her past (ex.6,13,14,16). She constructs Germany as her place of origin and childhood, while stressing affinity with America. Lim Kim, on the other hand, is clear in her in-group status as Korean throughout her guesting episode, while she is hesitant to accept co-membership to Canada or America (ex.9,10).

Concerning an intragroup differentiation within the North American group-identity, this can be seen in the episode with Junny, who grew up in Canada. It appears that a differentiation between Canadian and American belonging only becomes relevant when the in-group status within the transnational Korean space of everyone present is established or not the focus of attention (ex.7,10), as can be seen for example when Junny explicitly labels Ashley and Peniel as “you americans” (ex.10, 1.101) after he reestablished Lim Kim as Canadian co-member. A differentiation between Canada and the USA does not threaten the co-membership in the transnational North American Korean in-group.

While the “blue line” (cf. Diagram 3 and 4) around the North American space largely appears to be open for everyone, including marginal figures in the transnational Korean space

(Lim Kim, Stefanie), as constructed in the podcast, the “red line” around the Korean circle, including the transnational Korean part, turns out to be closed off for certain subject positions (cf. Diagram 1 and 4). This can be seen in a comparison of Stefanie’s and Lim Kim’s cultural positionings in their respective episodes, reflecting a racialized notion of what it means to be Korean and who can belong. While Lim Kim is other-positioned as co-expert of Canada and offered co-membership in the transnational Korean group identity on the basis of their shared “authentic bilingualism”, experiences of mobility, and cultural knowledge, Stefanie’s attempts to self-position as knowledgeable on things Korean are rejected or remain mostly unconfirmed. Other-positionings in her case usually pertain to her German affiliation that does not affect the group-identity memberships of the other speakers that they claim for themselves and each other. The speakers’ rejection of Stefanie as Korean co-expert, but their acceptance of her as German and American expert reflects wider Korean discourses and beliefs on essentialized notions of ethnicity and race, influencing what it means to be Korean and for whom it is possible to belong to Korea, even on the margins within the heterogenic landscape of transnational Koreans. As transnational Koreans find themselves in a fragile space in which their Koreanness or Korean belonging habitually becomes contested and needs to be proven constantly (Lo & Choi, 2017; Choi, 2019; Park & Lo, 2012), accepting a white Other as member of their transnational Korean in-group could further ambiguate their Korean citizenship by blurring another line, namely that of race. Therefore, a “white” person claiming knowledge and through that maybe even some kind of belonging to Korea constitutes a possible threat to the construction of belonging to Korea for the transnational Koreans, while her positioning as German or American expert and construction of German or American belonging does not affect or threaten the transnational Koreans’ identity construction. This line of argument would also account for Lim Kim’s completely different treatment, being invited to categorize herself as more than “just Korean” (example 9), maybe even Korean or Canadian

American, even though she lived in Jersey and Maple Ridge for only half a year for early study abroad, while Stefanie has migrated to Korea at least a year earlier and has been active in the Korean (and American) space professionally and privately for a decade prior.

## 8. Conclusion

In view of an increased interconnectedness of people and people groups in today's 'digital age', transnational social acts in new modes of human interactions question traditional understandings of belonging to certain nation- and culture-bound group-identities. Such sociocultural developments need to be reflected in fields of research interested in the very sites of social reality constructions, namely conversations (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991; Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 1996). For this reason, this interactional sociolinguistic study investigated a specific small part of social reality construction in one such digital and transnational new domain: in podcast conversations publicly available on YouTube. Their concurrent embeddedness in global discourses and social phenomena such as the Korean Wave as well as being steeped with local Korea-specific scales and ideologies is one of the findings of this thesis that contributes to research on transnational (Korean) identity constructions. While the world is believed to gradually lose its borders, traditional local ideologies continue to persist and can be found in the very specific discursive moves of individual speakers socialized in concrete social spaces, as was shown in the data examples of this thesis. Such discursive moves in a small community rooted in the specific ethnographic context of transnational Korea has been the focus of this study, whose scope was limited to claims to knowledge that were tied to the abstract group identities Korean, American, Canadian, and German. Systematizations of such moves have shown how the speakers relationally position themselves as belonging to more than one cultural community, creating and defining their own transnational new space that is both part of and in-between other larger cultural spaces. While doing so, they still moved within the allowances and constraints of 'transnational Korea', drawing on discourses and established personas within the Korean context, while constituting themselves as "authentically belonging" and constructing different types of Other at the same time. Furthermore, one of the main findings has been the troubling effect of a German

American immigrant speaker, whose co-membership in the Korean group identity was largely denied while having the factual social capital basis for it, which can be explained with persisting racial imaginings of Koreanness. This investigation of the construction of cultural identities and belongings of a German abroad followed suggestions for possible future research in transnational German studies made by Pence and Zimmerman (2012). It has also shown that such research will have to consider local ideologies and ethnographic constraints applying to the social space that the German abroad navigates and tries to build relations to.

Different from other “naturally occurring” instances of human interactions and conversations traditionally examined in interactional linguistics, the analyzed conversations were watched and listened to (and still continue to be) by hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world on various platforms, influencing their perception of Korean, American, and German identity as well as many other identity markers represented in the podcasts, in addition to the consumers’ self-perception and construction of their own group-memberships and identities. This will, of course, have an effect on the speakers’ behavior in the recorded interactions, distinguishing them from private social interactions. This, together with the editing of the videos before their upload, poses possible limitations of the study, as the exact changes or effects to the data are not transparent to me as a researcher. However, the editing appears to be limited and the conversations naturally flowing because of the familiarity of the speakers with each other and the camera. Moreover, as pointed out, the influence of such media makes it still highly relevant to the portrayal and construction of the represented group identities, exactly because of its broader audience online, while the co-presence of only a handful of people still creates the dynamic of a local natural conversation between individuals.

As the subject matter is highly complex, qualitative studies of different participant groups in similar transnational spaces influenced by other specific sociocultural contexts and

ideologies could be the focus of future studies in the field of research on transnational identity formations in today's digitized and globalized world.

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## Appendix: Transcription conventions

Based on Jefferson (2004)

[ ]	simultaneous/overlapping talk
=	latching, no gap between words or lines (pair of equal signs)
(.)	pause
CAPS	higher volume than surrounding talk
°...°	reduced/low volume
word	stress prominence on marked syllable
wo-	abrupt ending before a word is complete
word.	lower pitch toward end of phrase/unit
word;	slightly lowering pitch toward end of phrase/unit
word,	slightly rising pitch toward end of phrase/unit
word?	rising pitch toward end of phrase/unit
?...?	uncertain hearings/unintelligible talk
wo::	prolonging of sound before the colon(s)
( )	description, not transcription
.h	audible inbreath
h	audible outbreath
.pt	audible mouth opening
gz	gaze
한글/romanization	representation of Korean words, English translations provided in footnotes