

“Baby Shark” creators release Navajo version of viral video

By Russell Contreras
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Creators of the popular video “Baby Shark,” whose “doo doo doo” song was played at the World Series in October and has been a viral hit with toddlers around the world, have released a Navajo version of the tune.

Pinkfong, a brand of the South Korea company SmartStudy, announced it unveiled the new version after holding singing auditions with the Navajo Nation.

Lóó’ Hashkéii Awéé, which loosely means Navajo Baby Shark, is the 20th language version of Baby Shark, SmartStudy marketing manager Kevin Yoon said in an e-mail.

The project was launched after Navajo Nation Museum director Manuelito Wheeler reached out to SmartStudy in September about translating “Baby Shark” into Navajo. The museum previously had lobbied for Navajo versions of the movies *Star Wars* and *Finding Nemo* that were eventually made.

During the “Baby Shark” auditions, Wheeler was the confidence-building coach, and two Navajo language instructors provided coaching with the correct Navajo language pronunciations. Hopeful actors for the roles of Navajo Baby Shark, Mommy Shark, Daddy Shark, Grandma Shark, and Grandpa Shark, drove in from around the Navajo Nation.



Yoon said the company hopes its latest project will spark interest in the Navajo language among the tribe’s younger generation.

“The Navajo Nation Museum has advised and helped us through the whole localization process, and the translated lyrics have been supervised by Navajo language experts,” Yoon said.

SmartStudy has translated the “Baby Shark” tune of the viral video in 19 languages, including English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, German, Arabic, and Bahasa-Malay.

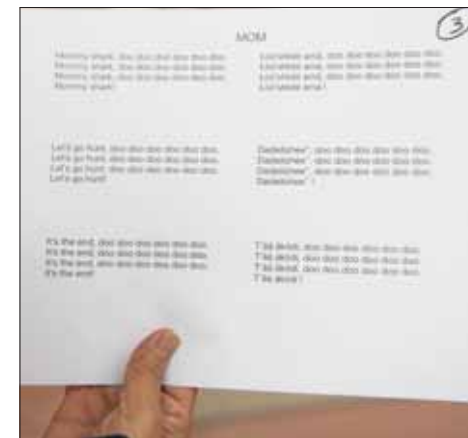
The Navajo Nation is the largest Native

American reservation in the U.S. The Navajo word for shark is *lóó hashkéhé*, which translates to “angry fish.”

The original “Baby Shark Dance” video has garnered more than 4 billion views on YouTube.

“Baby Shark” has been around for a few years, but took the world by storm last year when the song and video went viral with the nursery-school set, with little kids imitating the hand-clapping dance that went along with the video.

Books, plush toys, and other merchandise inspired by the song became hot-ticket items for the holidays and the



EARWORM TRANSLATED. Katrina Begay practices lines with her daughter Drew at “Baby Shark” auditions held at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Arizona. Begay and her daughter travelled from Rock Point, Arizona, to audition for the roles of Mama Shark and Baby Shark in the Navajo version of the tune. The “Baby Shark” tune of the viral video has been translated into 19 languages, including English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, German, Arabic, and Bahasa-Malay. (Alma E. Hernandez/Gallup Independent via AP)

“Baby Shark” tour was soon hatched.

A second North American leg of the “Baby Shark Live” concert tour is launching in March.

During the World Series, Washington Nationals fans adopted “Baby Shark” as the team’s rally song.

Nickelodeon has a “Baby Shark” cartoon series in the works.

Russell Contreras is a member of the race and ethnicity team at The Associated Press.

Pop culture in 2010s marked gains in diversity, inclusion

By Jocelyn Noveck
AP National Writer

NEW YORK — When the family-friendly Hallmark Channel recently pulled, under pressure from a conservative group, a set of ads featuring a kiss between two happy brides at the altar, backlash was swift — to say the least.

Within hours, stars like Ellen DeGeneres and William Shatner were tweeting in protest to their many followers, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) advocates were mobilizing a boycott via social media. This was on a Saturday; by Sunday evening, Hallmark had reversed its decision, and apologized for what it acknowledged as a mistake.

Whatever it says about corporate missteps, the episode also says something about how our popular culture has changed in a decade, with diversity and inclusion concerns taking center stage, says Sarah Kate Ellis, president of GLAAD, which advocates for LGBT people in Hollywood and played a key role in Hallmark’s reversal.

“This decade has been about diversity and inclusion — at least the starting of the conversation,” says Ellis. “Communities who have been left out of the seats at the table for decades and decades are finally starting to find their voice, and their footing.” And a major element, obviously, is the power of social media: “It enables us to connect with each other, find each other, and organize,” Ellis says.

Speaking of viral protests, this was also the decade of #OscarsSoWhite, the hashtag launched in 2015 when none of the 20 nominees in Oscar acting categories were actors of color. Incredibly, the same thing happened in 2016, forcing the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to launch a major membership overhaul aimed at diversifying its overwhelmingly white, male, older ranks.

The following year, *Moonlight*, about the coming-of-age of a young, gay black man, won best picture (after *La La Land* was ... oh, never mind) and the winner list was more diverse. But true racial diversity in entertainment remains an elusive goal.

“Things have certainly improved,” says Gil Robertson, president of the African American Film Critics Association. “Ten years ago, you didn’t have an Ava DuVernay, a Jordan Peele, a Shonda Rhimes, a Kerry Washington,” he says. “And my god, you couldn’t have even imagined ‘Pose,’” he says, referring to the Ryan Murphy TV series set in the ’80s ballroom culture with the biggest LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) cast ever assembled for a scripted show.

“The door has opened,” he says, adding that inroads have also been made for Asian-American actors and stories, but less so for Latinos. “Has the industry reached the place that we want it to be? No, but things have gotten better.”

In her speech at the 2018 Oscars, soon after the Harvey Weinstein scandal launched the #MeToo era, Frances McDormand urged women to demand an “inclusion rider” in contracts to help achieve gender parity. Almost two years later, evidence of progress for women in front of and behind the camera is slow but steady. The entry of streaming giants like Netflix has accelerated the pace of change, says Stacy L. Smith, director of the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative at the University of Southern California.

An example: last year, 39 of the top 100 Hollywood films were led or co-led by a female character, Smith says; in 2007 the number was 20, so it has essentially doubled in a decade. And there is progress behind the camera, too. “We’re really seeing changes, slow but real significant movement in some of these institutions.”

And yet there are areas sorely lacking: representation of female characters over 40 in films, for example, and women of color. And trans women characters are rarely seen in major films.

“Every group should be able to see themselves onscreen,” Smith says.

A long way since “Ellen”

It’s hard to imagine that back in 1997 when DeGeneres came out on her TV show, the words “I’m gay” were so groundbreaking. “We were all but non-existent in popular culture a few decades ago, and now we’re very much grounded in popular culture,” says Ellis, of GLAAD.

While no milestone this past decade matches the import of that “Ellen” moment, the decade began with the launch — actually in 2009 — of both “Glee,” which put a spotlight on LGBT youth, and “Modern Family,” which introduced the couple of Mitchell and Cam, two dads who adopt a Vietnamese daughter. “These were really big moments,” Ellis says. Another was last year’s best-actor Emmy for Billy Porter for “Pose,” the first openly gay black man to win the award.

Inroads also were made in children’s programming. “Doc McStuffins,” the Disney Junior children’s cartoon, featured a family led by an interracial, lesbian couple, and the Disney Channel kids’ show “Andi Mack” introduced a key gay character.

Caitlyn Jenner’s revelation in 2015 that she was transgender helped shine a light on that community, and popular shows like “Orange Is the New Black” and “Transparent” featured transgender characters.

Beyond #OscarsSoWhite

America is increasingly diverse. Movie audiences are increasingly diverse. And diverse movies make money, because people like to see stories and characters that reflect their own lives.

Despite all this, says Darnell Hunt, an author of the annual “Hollywood Diversity Report,” progress toward racial diversity in the film industry has been frustratingly slow, lagging well behind TV.

Looking at the decade as a whole, Hunt notes despite some “notable progress” in the TV industry, there hasn’t been much progress in terms of people of color in executive suites, which are still dominated by white men. And in film, the situation is worse.

“As the country becomes more diverse, the under-representation becomes more severe,” he says.

And while his research has found there has been progress over the decade for female directors in the top 200 films, Hunt says there’s been “zero progress” in numbers of directors of color over the same period. And so, he says, a film like *Black Panther*, with a star-packed black cast and a black director (Ryan Coogler), is more of an outlier than an example of real change.

The next Bigelow?

For women in Hollywood, one statistic remains particularly shocking: In the entire history of the Oscars, only one woman has won the best-director Oscar. It happened at the dawn of this decade with Kathryn Bigelow’s 2010 trophy for *The Hurt Locker*.

There is, though, reason for some measured optimism, on that score and for women as a whole, says USC’s Smith. She says that 2019 has emerged as the strongest year for female directors of top 100 films, with 12% to 14% of them featuring a woman behind the camera. That compares to 4% pretty much every year from 2007 to 2018, she says.

The change reflects better hiring practices on the part of studios. “The hiring is what is so important,” Smith says. Particularly cheering, she adds, is the slate of superhero movies planned for 2020. The year “is going to be huge,” Smith says. “Five superhero movies will be directed by women. Not one, but five.”



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