

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

# **Korean Wave and Social Changes in Language and Discourse in Indonesia**

***Sonezza Ladyanna***

*Hankuk University of Foreign Studies*

Email: [sonezzaladyanna@hufs.ac.kr](mailto:sonezzaladyanna@hufs.ac.kr)

## ***Abstract***

*Generally, research on social change in Southeast Asian countries shows that large-scale social changes occurred as a result of colonialism, including the end of the colonial period, state formation, and ideological changes. However, in this article, I will explain how social change occurred after the major changes associated with the end of the colonial period, named after the media developed rapidly connecting pop cultures from one nation to another, such as the Korean Wave, which was massively transferred to Indonesia by the media post-2000s. Korea, as one of the developed countries that have no colonial history with Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries in Asia, brings a new color of social change to Indonesia through the Korean Wave, which was previously heavily influenced by the West.*

***Keywords:*** *social change, Korean wave, language, discourse*

## Introduction

Many scholars analyze the large-scale social change about colonial problems, ideological change, and globalization. Large-scale social changes in developing countries occur due to colonialism and economic class changes due to technology transfer from developed countries to developing countries (McMichael, 2017, p. 78). However, times have changed, and social changes due to the history of colonialism to ideological differences continue to develop and have other colors due to technological developments and social media. The dialectical dynamics between systemic culture and agents of change, capitalism, and creative activism are so complex that social change can unexpectedly occur (Harrebye, 2016, p. 219).

The development of technology and online media has brought the Korean Wave to almost all parts of the world and has had a significant impact, especially in Indonesia. K-pop has even become a trending topic on social media, Facebook and Twitter, beating other international news increasing the dynamics of this pop culture circulation in Indonesia (Jung, 2011). Several phenomena as a result of the Korean Wave in Indonesia are the increasing familiarity with Korean actresses and actors, the number of Indonesian language fan clubs and online forums about the Korean entertainment industry, the understanding of Indonesian consumers with entertainment of Korean like cellular ringtones and DVDs; and the emergence of Indonesian translated versions of Korean comics and books, the printed tabloids focusing on Asia; and the seemingly endless array of K-pop concerts in Indonesia (Nugroho S. A., 2014).

Therefore, I analyze the effects of the Korean Wave on social change in Indonesia, especially in terms of language and discourse. I think that the Korean Wave has succeeded in persuading the younger generation of Indonesia to shift their lifestyle to Korea from Western (Hollywood and Europe). This has other impacts that are a domino effect on the selection of market products such as cosmetics, fashion, and technology, which in turn has an effect on education and discourse in the media, ultimately affecting cooperation between the two countries.

## Method

The writing of this article is based on observations made on the phenomena that are happening in Indonesia today through observations in the mass media and long-distance interviews with middle school curriculum compilers in West Sumatra Province, Indonesia. In addition, the author's experience and observations that have been made in studies related to the use of language in public spaces are also a source of data in this analysis. This qualitative research uses inductive reasoning, which uses existing data and hypotheses to formulate a conclusion (Mack, 2005).

The 21st century is a century of success for East Asian popular culture, as evidenced by the success of Japanese television dramas and animation and the Korean Wave (Hallyu) replacing the West as the center of melodramatic imagination (Shim, 2008, p. 31). The success of the Korean wave that emerged from the historical environment of decolonization even disturbed the Euro-American hegemony (Youna, 2022, p. 28). In Indonesia, Korean drama is a product of the Korean entertainment industry that has a significant impact.

Although it has been since the late 1990s, broadcasts on Indonesian television channels began in the 2000s, such as *Drama Full House*, *Winter Sonata*, and *The Endless Love to Dae Jang Geum*. The broadcast of the drama *The Endless Love*, which almost coincided with the moment South Korea as the host of the 2002 World Cup, became the momentum of the massive Korean Wave in Indonesia. Then, with the increasing access of Indonesian people to social media, the social distribution of K-pop is increasingly migrating (Jung & Shim, 2013). The success of "Gangnam Style," popularized by Psy, broadens the reach of K-pop fans in Indonesia in terms of age range (Mayasari, 2013). So, K-Pop fans in Indonesia are teenagers, children and adult age groups, and some parents. After that, things related to Korea, such as commercial products, cultures, food, and lifestyle, became a trend for Indonesian people.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Social Changes in Language and Discourse in Indonesia Due to the Korean Wave

After more than two decades of the Korean Wave being known by the Indonesian people, new things, especially related to language and discourse, which are the forerunners of social change, have almost become commonplace in social life in Indonesia,

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

especially for the young generation of productive age. These changes can be seen from the changes in the slang language used by the younger generation, the orientation of learning foreign languages, and the discourse in the mass media. These changes impact lifestyle changes, at most minor differences in product selection and the direction in fashion, education, and people's choice of technology in Indonesia.

### 1.1 The change in the slang used by the younger generation

First, I will discuss the change in the slang used by the younger generation. Before the 2000s, English was a foreign language that influenced slang among the younger generation in Indonesia. This correlated with television and favorite shows at that time, namely the entertainment industry products from Hollywood and Europe. From songs and movies to Western dramas, they are the idols of the younger generation, so they affect language, lifestyle, and choices of fashion, cosmetics, and others. However, since Korean dramas and K-pop have become the entertainment industry for the Indonesian people, or what we know as the Korean Wave, entered Indonesia, there has been a change in the slang used by the younger generation, from English to Korean.

In the 80s to 90s, apart from local languages, vocabulary from English was widely used as slang for young people in Indonesia at that time. Starting from greetings to cursing, at that time, young people used slang with English variants, such as *mawning* 'morning,' *beybeh* 'baby,' *wuatb* 'wish you, all the best,' *luv* "love," *stupit* 'stupid,' and *efway* 'fuck you'. At that time, foreign songs, dramas, and films that were popular and considered hits for young people were English songs, dramas, and films imported from America, Europe, and Australia (America and Europe were more important), so the topic of conversation for young people was entertainment. It also revolves around the American and European entertainment industries.

After the 2000s, being in the midst of young people, we will get a different atmosphere of conversation; not only the topic but the most striking is the origin of the slang vocabulary used. Vocabulary from the Korean language became the choice of words used in Indonesian youth slang after the 2000s. The most used words include *pabo*, *cinca*, *araso*, *ya*, *ne*, *ani*, *sarange*, *cagi*, *oppa*, *nunna*, *mogo*, *joa*, *anjoa*, and of course greetings

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

*anyeong*. They use it mixed with everyday Indonesian, and of course, it is different from the rules for using language based on ethics and manners as in formal Korean.

Two utterances that can show social changes due to the Korean Wave can be seen in one of the utterances "Honey, I love you so much". Before the 2000s, young people said "*Beybeh*, I love you so much " after the 2000s "*Cagi, cinca sarange*". Regardless of the grammar system and language ethics, the use of the two foreign languages functions as slang for young Indonesians. After the entry of the Korean Wave, Korean became the choice of young people in using slang for their conversational familiarity.

## 1.2 The change in the discourse in the mass media

The tendency of discourse in the mass media that changed after the Korean Wave became public consumption in Indonesia, shifting entertainment from Hollywood to Europe or the West. News coverage of K-pop and Korean dramas, complemented by analyzing actors, lifestyle, culture, and social life in Korea, has become a commercial mass media topic. The topic of discourse in the Indonesian mass media, usually dominated by news from the Western entertainment industry, is shifted by the dominance of the case of the Korean entertainment industry. In commercial advertisements, songs, and Indonesian dramas, we can find the use of the Korean language, not only by Korean actors and artists but also by Indonesian artists and actors.

In commercial advertisements in Indonesia, Korean terms are used to promote local Indonesian products. Apart from using the Korean language, some of these commercial advertisements also use Korean actors and artists as models in these advertisements. Several Indonesian products advertised through Korean actors and artists include *Luwak White Coffee* with actor Lee Min Ho, *Mie Sedaap Korean Spicy Chicken* with actor Siwon Super Junior, *NU Green Tea* with actor NCT 127, *Tokopedia* with actor BTS, *Ajaib* with actor Kim Seon Ho, *Blibli* with actor Park Seo Joon, *SimInvest* with actor Hyun Bin, and *Scarlett* with actor Song Joong Ki.

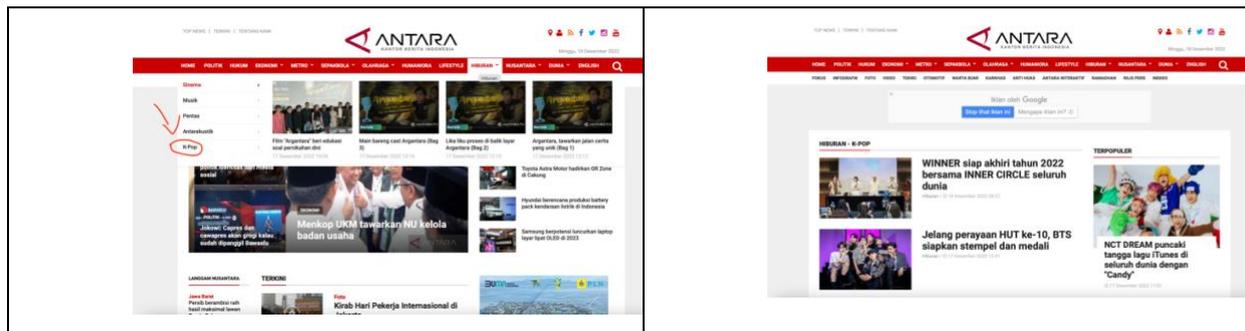
Actor Siwon Super Junior uses Indonesian and several terms in Korean that are already popular among Indonesians, such as *daebak* and *omo*. The language used in the discourse delivered by Song Joong Ki, Lee Min Ho, NCT, Kim Seon Ho, Park Seo Jun, and

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

Hyun Bin is in Korean, and the broadcast shows the translation in Indonesian. In the past, several advertisements in Indonesia that used famous foreign artists or figures usually used artists from America or Europe. Thus, the language in the advertisement discourse varies from English.

In Indonesian songs, both romance and comedy genres songs consist of terms and even phrases in Korean, such as the song "Address False," popularized by Ayu Tingting, "Bucket List," popularized by Ghea Indrawari, as well as several bilingual (Indonesian-Korean) songs sung by Indonesian singers and Korean singers. Indonesian dramas and films have also started to use Korean in some dialogues; some Indonesian movies use Korean backgrounds and settings, as was the case with the 2012 *Hello Goodbye* film directed by well-known Indonesian director Titien Wattimena and top Indonesian actors such as Atiqah. Hasiholan and Rio Dewanto.

There are also special columns to discuss K-Pop in the current mass media, such as in the mass media *Antara*. The Public Corporation for the *Antara* National News Agency (or abbreviated as Perum LKBN *Antara*) is a news agency in Indonesia, owned by the Government of Indonesia and was established on December 13, 1937. After the increasing public tendency towards K-pop, *Antara* created a particular column for K-Pop news pop in the entertainment category as shown below.



Sources: <https://www.antaranews.com/hiburan/k-pop>

There are no particular sub-categories for other areas, so news from different regions is categorized according to fields, for example, cinema, music, acoustic, and stage.

### 1.3 The change in the orientation of learning foreign languages

Intervention in the practice of discourse is an important factor in changing the

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

order of contemporary discourse and will ultimately change the social order (Fairclough, 2006, p. 200). Interventions in the order of discourse, including oral and written, as seen in the change in slang language in the younger generation due to the Korean Wave in this study, became the opening for more significant changes. Fairclough also states that changes to the order of discourse will eventually impact changing courses in the education (Fairclough, 2006, p. 218). In my research, the changes in the orientation of foreign language learning in secondary schools further impact the Korean Wave in Indonesia.

Before the Korean Wave, as with the influence of westernization in language education in developed countries, English and other international languages from the west were foreign languages taught in schools. Then, after the 1990s, Japanese began to be also taught in public schools in Indonesia, not as a compulsory foreign language such as English but as a preferred foreign language such as German and French. However, after the Korean Wave, the high interest of students in using terms from the Korean language in everyday conversation as they were adapted from Korean dramas made the Education Office in Indonesia include Korean as the preferred foreign language to be studied during school hours.

Thus, Korean language lessons are included in additional language lessons in high schools. Korean students who are currently studying in Indonesia and Korean citizens who are volunteers are often used as teachers in the category of native speakers in addition to professional instructors. Several vocational high schools also include Korean language lessons in their curriculum to prepare ready-to-use workers so that graduates can compete to find work in Korean companies in Indonesia and Korea.

Teaching Korean at universities in Indonesia is also growing. Previously, only the University of Indonesia and Gadjah Mada University were the only two universities with Korean language majors in Indonesia and were not the favorite majors in the Indonesian national university entrance examination. However, since the Korean Wave has become a thing that has spread in Indonesia, many students want to learn the Korean language and culture, so Korean study centers and Korean language course institutions (for students and prospective workers) are proliferating, even some universities outside Java Island (Indonesian center government) began to open Korean language education.

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

The growth in number of private Korean language course institutions has also increased. Foreign language course institutions in Indonesia can be divided into two: one for improving foreign language proficiency and the other for preparation for work abroad. Before the 2000s, to be precise, before the K-Pop boom in Indonesia, Korean language teaching took place at work preparation courses abroad. However, at present, Korean language course institutions without preparation services for working in Korea are also increasingly easy to find in various cities in Indonesia. For Korean Language Course Institutes to prepare to work in Korea, there are more than 150 LPK (Job Training Institutions) organized in the Pelbakori (Association of Korean Language Training Institutes in Indonesia) (Nugroho A. , 2021). LPK, affiliated with Pelbakori, aims to prepare workers who are ready to be sent to South Korea, especially as workers.

Changes in the orientation of people's interest in learning foreign languages are a form of social change. The Korean wave has changed the direction of the Indonesian people's interest in learning foreign languages, which English and Japanese have mastered. Public interest, especially the younger generation, to learn Korean with motivation not to work as migrant workers is increasing. The public's enthusiasm, especially women, for Korean drama shows has led them to know everything about Korea and has had a tremendous impact on people's behavior (Effendi, Malihah, & Nurbayani, 2016).

## **2. Social Change and Korean Wave in Indonesia**

The development of this educational center is, of course, also related to the growing cooperation between the Korean and Indonesian governments, as well as a large number of investments from Korean investors in the industry and economy in Indonesia. However, we cannot forget the "service" of the Korean Wave in popularizing Korean products in Indonesia, so it significantly impacts the development of Korean investors and products in Indonesia. This phenomenon is not excessive if it is said to be like a domino effect, where the Korean Wave enters Indonesia. Consumers in Indonesia are interested in and adapting social actions in dramas and song video clips, so the need for Korean products (cosmetics, fashion, electronics) increases in Indonesia. There was a market change in Indonesia that attracted the attention of investors and the government, then had an impact on education

to produce potential workers in bridging Indonesia-Korea cooperation.

Previously, the Indian and Japanese entertainment industries were well known in Indonesia but did not bring about significant social changes in Indonesian society as did Korea. Almost no use of the Indian language or learning of Indian languages is found due to the consumption of Bollywood films in Indonesia. For Japan, the use of some Japanese terms is not often found in youth slang. If we discuss Japanese products, such as Japanese motorcycle manufacturers, that dominate the streets of Indonesia, it is certainly not caused by factors such as the Korean Wave. Japanese yields have been widely circulated long before young Indonesians knew Japanese J-pop dramas.

So, social changes in Indonesia due to the Korean Wave deserve attention. Indonesian people are predominantly Muslim, some of them think that there is tension between Islam and K-Pop, but some believe that there is no tension between identity as Islam and being fond of the K-Pop (Mulya, 2021). They carry out worship well and accept K-Pop enthusiastically (Yoon, 2019). This is not surprising when it is associated with Indonesia's background, which is accustomed to assimilating various foreign cultures. Moreover, the three factors of 'Asian identity', policies emphasizing 'unity in ethnic diversity', and 'local consumers xenocentrism' promote cross-national cultural hybridity of the Korean wave in Indonesia and Malaysia (Lee, Jung, Nathan, & Chung, 2020).

As I argued in this article, the Korean Wave brought changes to the use of slang among teenagers and young people of productive age in Indonesia, even changed the curriculum for foreign language learning in schools, and changed the topic of discourse in the mass media. These changes have the impact of increasing Indonesian market demand for Korean products, such as cosmetics, electronics, and four-wheeled vehicles. The consumptive social act of the individual is the primary basis for social change (Phillips, 1996, p. 148). Youth and adult groups are affected groups as agents of significant social change in society. Apart from creating a K-Pop community, they also imitate Korean culture, or the habits of their idols featured in Korean Wave broadcasts (Ri'aeni, 2019). The increasing demand for Korean products is also caused by the desire of Korean Wave fans to imitate the actions and social interactions in drama scenes and music videos.

Three main elements in the theory of social change must stand in definite relation

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

to one another, first about structural determinants of social change, second about processes and mechanisms of social change, and third about directions of social change, including structural changes, effects, and consequences (Haferkamp & Smelser, 1992). Suppose this theory is related to the findings in this study. In that case, behavioral changes and Indonesian society in spoken language, education, and discourse due to the Korean Wave are structural determinants of social change. Then, the social movement of the people in choosing a foreign language, diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Korea, which are increasing massively, as well as business activities between the two countries, are processes and mechanisms of social change. Changes in slang for young people, changes in foreign language curricula and education, and changes in discourse in the mass media are directions of social change, including structural changes, effects, and consequences.

## Conclusion

Thinking that pop culture can be a tool for social change has been debated because pop culture is often only related to particular groups (Jenkins, Peters-Lazaro, & Shresthova, 2020, p. 10). However, this is different from the Korean Wave because Korean dramas have stories that intersect with many groups of people. In Indonesia, as I have stated in this article, the Korean Wave has become a tool for social change, especially in youth slang, foreign language education in schools, and discourse in the media. It is undeniable that the media has also become the leading actor in cultural globalization-delivering people's cultural products (Wuryanta, 2012, p. 84). Even though the media distributes many types of modern cultural products, not all that is distributed to the public brings social change, like the current Korean Wave phenomenon. This topic needs to be studied further to enrich the study of social change.

**Note: *This research is support by HUFS Fund 2023***

## Reference

- East Asian Pop Culture Analysing the Korean Wave*. Hongkong: Hongkong University Press.
- Effendi, M. N., Malihah, E., & Nurbayani, S. (2016). Impact of Korean Drama in Indonesia Through the Spread Moral Values for Young Generation. *Proceedings of the 1st UPI*

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023  
*International Conference on Sociology Education (UPI ICSE 2015)* (pp. 478-481).  
Springer Nature.

Fairclough, N. (2006). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Haferkamp, H., & Smelser, N. J. (1992). Introduction. In H. Haferkamp, & N. J. Smelser, *Social Change and Modernity* (p. 3). Berkeley: University of Californis Press.

Harrebye, S. F. (2016). *Social Change and Creative Activism in the 21st Century The Mirror Effect*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jenkins, H., Peters-Lazaro, G., & Shresthova, S. (2020). Popular Culture and the Civic Imagination: Foundations. In H. Jenkins, G. Peters-Lazaro, & S. Shresthova, *Popular Culture and the Civic Imagination Case Studies of Creative Social Change*. New York: New York University Press.

Jung, S. (2011). K-pop, Indonesian fandom, and social media | Jung | Transformative Works and Cultures. *Transformative Works & Cultures*, 8.

Jung, S., & Shim, D. (2013). Social distribution: K-pop fan practices in Indonesia and the 'Gangnam Style' phenomenon. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17(5).

Lee, Y. L., Jung, M., Nathan, R. J., & Chung, J.-E. (2020). Cross-National Study on the Perception of the Korean Wave and Cultural Hybridity in Indonesia and Malaysia Using Discourse on Social Media. *Sustainability*, 12(5).

Mack, N. W. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*. North Carolina: FHI.

Mayasari, F. (2013). When Tourist Audiences Encounter Each Other: Diverging Learning Behaviors of K-pop Fans from Japan and Indonesia. *Korea Journal*, 53(4), 59-82.

McMichael, P. (2017). *Development and Social Change a Global Perspective*. London: Sage Publications.

Mulya, T. W. (2021). Faith and fandom: young Indonesian Muslims negotiating K-pop and Islam. *Contemporary Islam*, 15, 337-355.

Nugroho, A. (2021, March 2). *Nasional*. Retrieved from Konten Jateng:  
<https://www.kontenjateng.com/nasional/pr-65507550/pelbakori-dukung-bp2mi-perangi-mafia-pengiriman-pmi-ilegal?page=all>

Nugroho, S. A. (2014). Hallyu in Indonesia. In V. Marinescu, *The Global Impact of Siuth Korean Popular Culture* (pp. 19-32). London: Lexington Books.

Phillips, J. (1996). The Future of Social Work with Older People in a Changing World. In N. Parton, *Social Theory, Social Change and Social Work*. London: Routledge.

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

Ri'aeni, I. (2019). Pengaruh Budaya Korea (K-Pop) Terhadap Remaja Di Kota Cirebon. *Communications*, 1(1), 1-15.

Wuryanta, E. W. (2012). Di antara Pusaran Gelombang Korea (Menyimak Fenomena K-Pop di Indonesia). *Ultima Comm Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 4(2), 79-94.

Yoon, S. (2019). K-POP fandom in veil: Religious reception and adaptation to popular culture. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 13(1), 1-20.

Youna, K. (2022). Introduction: Popular Culture and Soft Power in the Social Media Age. In K. Youna, *The Soft Power of the Korean Wave Parasite, BTS and Drama*. Oxon: Routledge.

Volume 19 No. 2, September 2023

- Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. 2013. *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press.
- Nurgiyantoro, Burhan. 1995. *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press.
- Permata Sari, Angie. 2017. "Gagasan Nasionalisme Pramoedya Ananta Toer dalam Karya "Tetralogi Buru" (Skripsi). Semarang: Universitas Diponegoro Semarang.
- Pratista, Himawan. 2017. *Memahami Film*. Yogyakarta: Homerian Pustaka.
- Rohim. 2010. "Penelusuran Ideologi dalam Novel Ayat-Ayat Cinta: Sebuah Analisis Tematis dan Estetis" dalam <https://www.neliti.com> diakses pada 27 Januari 2023.
- Sari, Sabrina Indah. 2019. "Transformasi Transtruktural dari Novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* Karya Ahmad Tohari ke Film *Sang Penari* Karya Ifa Ifansyah" (Skripsi). Padang: Universitas Andalas.
- Stanton, Robert. 2007. *Teori Fiksi*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Toer, Pramoedya Ananta. 2005. *Bumi Manusia*. Jakarta: PT Lentera Dipantara.
- Winusari, Ni Nyoman, Gde Artawan, dan Sutama, I Made. 2018. "Struktur Naratif Novel *Bumi Manusia* Karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer: Sebuah Sosiologi Sastra" dalam <https://ejournal-pasca.undiksha.ac.id> diakses pada tanggal 30 Desember 2022.
- [http://ensiklopedia.kemendikbud.go.id/sastra/artikel/Pramoedya\\_Ananta\\_Toer](http://ensiklopedia.kemendikbud.go.id/sastra/artikel/Pramoedya_Ananta_Toer) diakses pada 27 Januari 2023.
- <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/hiburan/20190824225816-220-424389/hanung-kenang-pram-sempat-tolak-rencana-film-bumi-manusia> diakses pada 12 April 2023.
- <https://www.liputan6.com/amp/3538333/alasan-sutradara-bumi-manusia-pilih-igbaal-ramadhan-jadi-minke> diakses pada 13 April 2023.