



The Adoption of Korean Slang by Indonesian Students Learning the Korean Language: A Social Identity Approach

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Abstract. The pervasive global influence of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) has significantly boosted the popularity of the Korean language, leading to a growing number of Indonesian students engaging in Korean language learning. Beyond formal grammatical structures, the informal register, particularly Korean slang, has become an integral part of contemporary Korean communication. This study investigates the adoption of Korean slang by Indonesian students learning the Korean language, specifically through the lens of a social identity approach. Drawing on Social Identity Theory, this research explores how learners' identification with various social groups—such as fellow Indonesian Korean language learners, K-pop/K-drama fan communities, and an imagined Korean native speaker community—influences their exposure to, comprehension of, and active use of Korean slang. A mixed-methods approach, combining survey questionnaires administered to Indonesian university students learning Korean and in-depth interviews, was employed to gather data on slang usage patterns, motivations, perceived social benefits, and challenges. Preliminary findings suggest a notable correlation between a strong social identity within Korean-related communities and a higher propensity for slang adoption. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of sociolinguistic dynamics in second language acquisition, highlighting the role of social affiliation in informal language learning and offering insights for Korean language pedagogy in an era shaped by cultural globalization.

Keywords: Korean slang, Social identity, Indonesian students, Korean language

1 Introduction

The impact of Hallyu has been felt by Korean language teachers abroad. Korean pop culture, including dramas and songs, which have had a fast effect on the spread of Korean culture and language, has been chosen as the main content in Korean language classes [13]. Since the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Korea and Indonesia in 1973, their diplomatic efforts have led to cooperation in the field of edu-

cation. This collaboration has stimulated academics to study and use the Korean language and culture through several study programmes, like the three-year Diploma Programme at National University (1995), as well as the Bachelor Programme in Korean Language and Literature at Universitas Indonesia (2006), Universitas Gadjah Mada (2007), the Indonesian University of Education (2015), and National University (2016) [16]. According to [14], to facilitate their adjustment and reduce the likelihood of experiencing culture shock in their new nation, prospective Indonesian students should become as well-versed in the Korean language and culture as possible before studying there. They will be more likely to engage with Koreans and have a more successful time studying in Korea if they do this.

In sociolinguistics, language is viewed as social behavior employed in communication, playing a vital part in expressing human intents and primary concepts and allowing individuals to express themselves in societal interactions [17]. This vital role in societal interaction means that language is constantly evolving, often by adopting new terms from other cultures as those cultures become part of the local social landscape. [20] indicated that the introduction of Korean culture into Indonesia initiated the use of loanwords, leading to the incorporation of Korean terms, as evidenced in Indonesia's online national dictionary. This source lists ten examples: *bancan* 'a side-dish made of rice', *bibimbap* 'a specialty made of rice, meat, and vegetables', *bingsu* 'a shave-ice dessert', *gocujang* 'red chili paste', *hanbok* 'traditional Korean dress', *kimchi* 'Korean speciality with spicy pickles made from vegetables', *mandu* 'Korean dumplings', *manhwa* 'Korean comics', *mukbang* 'live broadcasts or videos showing people eating large amounts of food', and *oppa* 'older brother'. The adoption of loanwords is not merely accidental but is often intentional, signaling membership in specific cultural or subcultural communities and asserting a distinctive generational identity.

Recent studies indicate that Generation Z's use of foreign terms often transcends simple translation. Words are frequently altered, shortened, blended, or otherwise modified to conform to phonological and morphological patterns prevalent within their speech community [10]. The changes are both linguistic and social, carrying implications that are shared among peer groups. A borrowed term may signify deep understanding, cultural appreciation, or alignment with particular global trends. Loanwords in Gen Z languages serve as indicators of social identity and cultural capital [19]. The utilization of Korean on social media platforms, including Instagram and Twitter, has increased alongside the emergence of the *hallyu* phenomenon.

Social media language exhibits significant diversity, encompassing both standard and non-standard forms that often deviate from established linguistic conventions. At present, the use of social media is predominantly characterized by teenagers. This results in the development of various new languages among adolescents. Slang is a popular type of language among youths today [18]. This extensive use of Korean terminology on social media highlights a larger sociolinguistic trend: utilizing foreign phrases not only diversifies the expressive toolset of Generation Z but also allows for subtle demonstrations of cultural understanding and cosmopolitanism. According to [19], using foreign vocabulary not only broadens their expressive toolset but also allows for subtle demonstrations of cultural awareness and cosmopolitanism. For example, Filipino Gen Z speakers may use Korean phrases like "oppa" or Japanese ones like

"kawaii," both of which have rich social implications related to pop culture affiliations [10].

In Indonesia, Generation Z's enthusiasm for incorporating loanwords into daily speech is particularly evident in urban areas, where English, Korean, Japanese, and even Arabic words frequently intermingle with Bahasa Indonesia in both spoken and written forms. In addition, loanwords derived from Korean culture, such as *oppa* and *aegyo*, have entered colloquial Indonesian conversations, signifying admiration and affection. The widespread popularity of K-pop and Korean dramas among Indonesian youth particularly influences this phenomenon. Moreover, words from Korean pop culture, like *oppa* (older brother, used affectionately) and *aegyo* (cute gestures), have been embraced among Indonesian Gen Z, often appearing in conversations both online and offline. Ultimately, the incorporation of terms like *oppa* and *aegyo* into Indonesian youth language shows how loanwords contribute directly to the formation of slang.

Slang is defined as informal language typically used in everyday conversation among teenagers, intended to be understood only by those who grasp its nuanced, in-group meaning. Every language has its own slang, and Korean is no different. According to [7], Slang plays a crucial role in daily discourse, especially in casual settings. It is a dynamic feature of language that reflects social identities, cultural trends, and the dynamic nature of human communication. Korean slang, also known as 속어 / 은어, is a collection of words, sentences, or expressions used by Koreans in everyday conversation. Slang is typically informal and is used both in writing and speaking. Sometimes, Korean slang can sound like standard, established words because many words share similar syllables. [18] mentioned that slang is helpful as an expression of the wearer's familiarity. The use of slang can also indicate that one is a member of a community group that is different from others. As young people who enjoy K-pop or K-dramas, they naturally have a greater interest in learning and understanding Korean slang, wanting to understand what their idols are saying. Furthermore, many young idols now possess a slang style that keeps up with the times. According to [18], teen slang evolves and undergoes changes over time. In the millennial age, slang is based on increasingly original and inventive patterns of adjective twisting, cutting, and abbreviations, acronyms, and shortening.

Furthermore, understanding a new word in a foreign language is a source of pride. Understanding and applying slang will help someone be perceived as a native speaker and make it easier to socialize with the local community. The millennial generation employs language as a means of self-expression and social identity formation [9], [11] and [14]. Mulyana (2008) as cited in [15] defines slang as words or terms that possess specific meanings, exhibit uniqueness, and deviate from or contradict their conventional meanings when used by individuals from particular subcultures. Slang words fulfil various roles in communication, offering speakers a flexible means for diverse social and emotional expressions. [3] identify six primary functions of slang words: addressing, initiating relaxed conversation, expressing impressions, showing intimacy, revealing anger, and humiliating.

The presence of social media will impact the rapid use of slang. Slang is increasingly commonly used in all communication activities, especially non-formal communication. Limited vocabulary can also make it difficult for a person to convey their meaning to others. Therefore, to prevent this from happening, one must know and understand how to use words in communication. [8] posits that slang represents a deliberate variation of language, particularly utilized by teenagers to strengthen friendships and establish group identity. The development and utilization of this non-standard vocabulary, or slang, is inherently connected to social identity and group affiliation.

This article examines the types of slang in Korean and their usage. The study investigates the relationship between Korean slang usage and identity affirmation among Indonesian students. Analysing language practices reveals how the appropriation of this linguistic repertoire affirms an individual's membership in self-identified groups, such as Korean language learners or the global K-pop fandom. This exploration highlights the role of non-native language registers in constructing and negotiating social identity within both digital and real-world communities

2 Literature Review

The study, *The Adoption of Korean Slang on X by Indonesian Students: A Social Identity Approach* [6], is situated within a broader academic context concerning the role of social media, cultural exchange, and identity construction in the digital age. Specifically, the research builds upon and addresses gaps in existing literature related to personal identity, K-pop fandom, and language use online.

Social media platforms are vital spaces for cultural interchange and identity building, which the digital age has profoundly altered. Platforms like X (previously Twitter) are more than just communication tools for Generation Z, sometimes known as "digital natives," as they are vital places for creating and examining a cohesive self that blends online and offline experiences. The work currently in publication emphasizes this blurring of borders by highlighting that people might adopt new speech patterns and self-presentations in digital contexts to align with the media they consume. In particular, these platforms serve as crossroads for local and global cultures, constantly bringing in foreign phrases and trends that permeate users' daily digital lives and, in turn, influence how they use language.

The emergence of K-Culture, driven by K-pop, K-dramas, and variety programs, is a notable illustration of this worldwide cultural influence. It incorporates new linguistic components into young people's everyday conversations. A key site for this phenomenon is X, which makes it easier for online communities to form around shared interests. Notably, Indonesia has been identified as a top country for tweets about K-pop. Non-Korean fans purposefully use Korean language phrases like "aigoo" or "daebak" in their online interactions, according to research on K-pop fandom, including studies on Malaysian followers. The purpose of this language adoption goes beyond simple communication. To set themselves apart from casual listeners and establish an authentic "fan" persona, they frequently use it as a potent indication of group identity

and affiliation. According to these results, being a K-pop fan requires some self-identity alteration, frequently in the form of assuming different online personas.

Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory underpins the relationship between linguistic adoption and group membership. Social Identity Theory states that people have a sense of belonging in their social groupings and use language to express group identity. SIT is challenging to apply to fluid, global internet groups. While developing a shared identity remains important, the SIT assumption that positive group distinctiveness invariably leads to intergroup conflict ("us versus them") is less accurate in online identity-building. The intricacy of identity negotiation in a globalized environment necessitates additional frameworks. Berry's Acculturation Strategies (maintaining ancestry while engaging with other groups) and Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity (a "third-space" identity where two cultures combine to generate a new, mixed identity) generally match participant responses. The literature supports social media's significance in cultural and linguistic adoption, but a more in-depth look is needed to understand these complicated identity processes.

This study addresses a gap by analysing the use of Korean slang on X among Indonesian university students, highlighting cultural connection and belonging. A notable research gap persists in comprehensively understanding the long-term socio-cultural impact of this linguistic phenomenon, especially regarding its potential effects on local language and national identity. The identified gap is as follows: Although the existing literature thoroughly examines the reasons behind K-pop fans' adoption of Korean linguistic terms—such as social identity, belonging, and authenticity—there is a scarcity of in-depth research that specifically addresses the consequences or negotiation of this adoption in relation to the user's primary national or cultural identity and local language (Bahasa Indonesia).

3 Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research design employing a survey questionnaire to gather data systematically. The questionnaire was administered to Indonesian university students who were actively engaged in learning the Korean language. The instrument was designed to capture specific variables, including patterns of Korean slang usage, underlying motivations for its deployment, perceived social benefits associated with its use, and any challenges encountered. A total of 71 participants completed the survey, representing students from diverse academic study programs and varying age demographics, ensuring a foundational breadth in the sample population for subsequent quantitative analysis.

This study is grounded in the theoretical framework of Social Identity Theory (SIT), a fundamental concept in social psychology. Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, posits that an individual's self-concept is primarily shaped by their affiliation with social groups. Social identity, as defined by Tajfel, refers to an individual's perception or comprehension of their identity derived from their affiliation with specific groups. Tajfel posits that social groups, including class, family, culture, and education, serve as fundamental sources of individual pride

and self-esteem. These groups offer a social identity, specifically a sense of belonging within the social context. Thus, group membership serves as an essential framework for individuals to develop and affirm their personal identity. [4] posits that identity is not static. Identity is shaped and redefined by social, economic, political, and cultural contexts.

This theory posits that humans categorize the world into "us" and "them" through social categorization processes. This phenomenon is referred to as the "in-group (us)" and "out-group (them)" processes. This theory posits that members of an "in-group" tend to identify negative traits in individuals from the "out-group," thereby enhancing their own self-image [17]. Social Identity Theory functions through three core psychological processes that determine how individuals connect with groups and shape their self-concept. The initial process is Social Categorization, in which individuals systematically organize the social environment by classifying people, including themselves, into distinct social groups (in-groups and out-groups). This classification results in Social Identification, wherein an individual embraces the identity, norms, and behaviors associated with their selected group. Social Comparison refers to the process through which individuals evaluate their in-group positively in relation to relevant out-groups, aiming to establish or uphold a favourable social identity. These processes are evident in diverse contexts of human interaction and affiliation, including identification with a sports team or political party, as well as broader expressions of nationalism.

4 Findings

4.1 Findings

There are several distinct categories related to Korean slang that have been identified: exclamation slang, word shortening slang, and texting slang [7]. As seen in Table 1, Exclamation slang is primarily used to express strong emotions or call out (exclaim) a specific feeling or reaction.

Table 1. Exclamation Slang

Korean Slang (Romanization)	Common English Equivalent	Meaning and Usage Context
헐 (<i>heol</i>)	OMG / Wow	An exclamation is typically used immediately after encountering something surprising, shocking, or unbelievable.
대박 (<i>daebak</i>)	Fantastic / Amazing / Jackpot	Used to describe something astounding, remarkable, or awe-inspiring (literally means "big hit").
화이팅 (<i>hwaiting</i>)	Fighting! / You can do it! / Good luck!	A shout-out is used to give encouragement, support, or boost morale. It is a Korean phonetic borrowing of the English word "fighting."

짱 (<i>jjang</i>)	The Best / Cool / Great	Means superb, fantastic, or number one. It can be used alone as a spontaneous exclamation of approval or praise.
콜 (<i>kol</i>)	Call / Sure / Deal!	Frequently used as a quick response to agree to a challenge, bet, or proposal, but can also be used for more trivial activities.

Adapted from *Korean slang guide* by [6]

Meanwhile, shortening words as listed in Table 2 is the most commonly observed, typically involving the abbreviation of two words which are then combined to form a single, new word. Numerous examples of this can be found in everyday usage. In fact, due to their frequent and prolonged use, these terms have become so integrated into the lexicon that they are often perceived as original, long-established words.

Table 2. Shortening Words Slang

Korean Slang (Romanization)	Literal Components/Derivation	English Meaning	Usage Context and Explanation
꿀잼 (<i>kkuljaem</i>)	꿀 (<i>kkul</i> , honey) + 잼 (short for 재미있다, <i>jaemiitda</i> , fun)	Very Fun / Excellent	Used to express that something is delightful, interesting, or entertaining ("honey-fun").
노잼 (<i>nojaem</i>)	No (English) + 잼 (<i>jaem</i> , fun)	Boring / Not Fun	The direct opposite of 꿀잼. Used to express that something is unpleasant, not funny, or dull.
남사친 (<i>namsachin</i>)	남 (<i>nam</i> , male) + 사 (<i>sa</i> , four) + 친 (<i>chin</i> , friend)	Just a Male Friend	Used for a male who is only a platonic friend, not a boyfriend. (For a female friend, the term is 여사친 <i>yeosachin</i>).
남친 (<i>namchin</i>)	Short for 남자 친구 (<i>namja chingu</i> , male friend)	Boyfriend	A typical abbreviation for a male partner. (For a girlfriend, use 여친 <i>yeochin</i> , short for 여자 친구 <i>yeoja chingu</i>).
모쏨 (<i>mossol</i>)	모태 (<i>motae</i> , mother's womb) + 솔로 (<i>sollo</i> , solo)	Never-Been-Dater / Single Since Birth	Refers to someone who has never been in a romantic relationship (literally, "solo since the womb").
금사빠 (<i>geumsappa</i>)	Short for 금방 사랑에 빠지는 사람 (<i>geumbang sarange ppajineun saram</i>)	One Who Falls in Love Easily	Describes a person who quickly or easily develops romantic feelings for others.

Korean Slang (Romanization)	Literal Components/Derivation	English Meaning	Usage Context and Explanation
맛점 (<i>matjeom</i>)	Short for 맛있는 점심 (<i>masinneun jeomsim</i>)	Delicious Lunch	A concise way to say "delicious lunch" or, often, used as a casual greeting before lunch.
치맥 (<i>chimaek</i>)	치킨 (<i>chikin</i> , chicken) + 맥주 (<i>maekju</i> , beer)	Chicken and Beer	This is a popular South Korean combination and cultural staple often enjoyed at social gatherings.
베프 (<i>bepeu</i>)	Short for 베스트 프렌드 (<i>beseuteu peurendeou</i> , Best Friend)	Best Friend (BFF)	An abbreviation of the Konglish phrase "Best Friend."
셀카 (<i>selka</i>)	Short for 셀프 (self) + 카메라 (<i>kamera</i> , camera)	Selfie	A shortened term meaning "self-camera," used for taking a photo of oneself.
짤 (<i>jjal</i>)	Simplified form of 사진 (<i>sajin</i>)	Picture / Image / Meme	A common term for a general image or photo, particularly used for internet images or memes.
아점 (<i>ajeom</i>)	아침 (<i>achim</i> , breakfast) + 점심 (<i>jeomsim</i> , lunch)	Brunch	A combination of the words for breakfast and lunch.
칼군무 (<i>kal-gunmu</i>)	칼 (<i>kal</i> , knife) + 군무 (<i>gunmu</i> , group dance)	Perfectly Synchronized Dance	Used to describe a K-pop group's exact and cohesive choreography ("knife-like group dance").
셀럽 (<i>selleop</i>)	From the English word Celebrity	Celebrity / Celeb	This is a shortened Konglish term popular among younger generations.
당근 (<i>dangeun</i>)	Literally means "carrot"	Of Course / Certainly	Used to mean "of course" because it sounds similar to the word for "naturally" (당연하지 <i>dangyeonhaji</i>).
미친 개쩐다 (<i>michin gaejjeonda</i>)	미친 (<i>michin</i> , crazy) + 개 (<i>gae</i> , dog/very) + 찐다 (<i>jjeonda</i> , awesome)	Insane / Extremely Awesome	A highly emphatic expression used to describe something as very cool, amazing, or incredible.

Adapted from Korean slang guide by [6]

Table 3. Korean Slang for Describing People and Relationships

Korean Slang (Romanization)	English Meaning/Context
바람둥이 (<i>baramdongi</i>)	A playboy or womanizer.
남사친 (<i>namsachin</i>)	A male friend (platonic).
남친 (<i>namchin</i>)	Boyfriend (short for 남자 친구, <i>namja chingu</i>).
여친 (<i>yeochin</i>)	Girlfriend (short for 여자 친구, <i>yeoja chingu</i>).
음란마귀 (<i>eumranmagwi</i>)	Someone with a dirty mind (literally, 'lust demon').
변태 (<i>byeontae</i>)	Pervert .
얼짱 (<i>eoljjang</i>)	A good-looking person (often used for internet celebrities; literally, 'best face').
사랑꾼 (<i>sarangkkun</i>)	A lover or someone who is very affectionate and good at expressing love.
훈남 (<i>hunnam</i>)	A handsome, attractive, and often warm-hearted man .
까도남 (<i>kkadonam</i>)	A cold and arrogant man who is also often sensitive or prickly.
뇌섹남 (<i>noeseknam</i>)	A brigit and brainy man (literally, 'brain-sexy man').
왕따 (<i>wangtta</i>)	An outcast or someone who is severely bullied or excluded (short for 왕따돌림, <i>wangttadolrim</i>).
엄친아/엄친딸 (<i>eomchina/eom-chinddal</i>)	Someone good at everything (literally, 'your mother's friend's son/daughter'—a person whose achievements you are compared to).
베이글녀 (<i>beigeulnyeo</i>)	A cute woman (baby-faced) but sexy (short for "Baby face + Glamorous body").
모솔 (<i>mossol</i>)	Someone who has never been in a relationship (short for 모태솔로, <i>motae sollo</i>).
선수 (<i>seonsu</i>)	A player or flirt (literally 'athlete'; implies someone highly skilled at dating).
셀럽 (<i>selleb</i>)	Celeb (short for 'celebrity').
얼빠 (<i>eolppa</i>)	Someone who is superficial or only cares about a person's physical appearance (literally, 'face idiot').
콩어빵 (<i>bungeoppang</i>)	Two people who look exactly alike (like two peas in a pod; named after the fish-shaped pastry).
급사빠 (<i>geumsappa</i>)	Someone who falls in love easily or quickly.
그린라이트 (<i>geurinraiteu</i>)	Green Light : used when a crush shows a clear sign of mutual interest.
갭/갭이다 (<i>gap/gapida</i>)	The superior person or the top dog in a group/situation.
썸 (<i>sseom</i>)	Something refers to the ambiguous, "more than friends, less than dating" stage between two people.
몸짱 (<i>momjjang</i>)	Someone with an incredible physique or a well-proportioned, attractive body.

Adapted from *Korean slang guide* by [6]

Table 4. Miscellaneous Korean Slang Terms

Korean Slang (Romanization)	English Meaning/Context
반사 (<i>bansa</i>)	Reflect / Back at you (often used in playful exchanges, like "no, you!").
만렙 (<i>manleb</i>)	Max Level / Expert (Used when someone is exceptionally skilled or knowledgeable in a specific area; derived from gaming).
셀카 (<i>selka</i>)	Selfie (short for "self-camera").
비번 (<i>bibeon</i>)	Password (short for 비밀번호, <i>bimilbeonho</i>).
뿔치지마 (<i>ppeongchijima</i>)	Stop lying / Do not bluff me (literally, "do not shoot a blank").
노답 (<i>nodap</i>)	No Answer / Hopeless (Used to describe a situation or person that is unfixable or has no solution; derived from "No + Answer").
드립치다 (<i>deuripchida</i>)	To crack a joke / To mess around (derived from the English word "dribble" or "drive").
썰 (<i>sseol</i>)	Story / Anecdote (often used for interesting or personal stories shared online).
간지난다 (<i>ganjinanda</i>)	To be stylish / To be cool (Used to describe someone's cool style or vibe).
포스 있다 (<i>poseuitda</i>)	To have charisma / To have presence (Derived from the English word "Force," often referring to a powerful aura).
전다 (<i>jjeonda</i>)	Awesome / Amazing / Sick (A strong term meaning "super cool" or "mind-blowing").
평타 (<i>pyeongta</i>)	Average / Mediocre (Often used in gaming for a 'normal attack,' meaning something is just standard).
리즈 (<i>rijeu</i>)	Prime / Glory Days (Refers to a person's most successful or best-looking period; thought to be derived from the English football club Leeds United's peak in the 1990s).
불금 (<i>bulgeum</i>)	Fiery Friday / TGIF (Refers to the excitement and energy of Friday night, similar to "Thank God It is Friday").
고퀄 (<i>gokwol</i>)	High Quality (short for high-quality, often used for goods or media content).
덜츠노노 (<i>daelcheunono</i>)	Do not talk nonsense (A term used to reject an argument or nonsensical talk).
언플 (<i>eonpeul</i>)	Media Play / PR Stunt (Short for 언론 플레이, <i>eollon peullei</i> —manipulation of the media).
짤 (<i>jjal</i>)	Picture / Image / Meme (A simple term for a general image or photo).

Adapted from *Korean slang guide* by [6]

Table 5. Korean Slang Related to Food and Dining

Korean Slang (Romanization)	English Meaning/Context
맛점 (<i>matjeom</i>)	Delicious lunch (Short for 맛있는 점심, <i>masinneun jeomsim</i>).
아침 (<i>ajeom</i>)	Brunch (A combination of 아침, <i>achim</i> (breakfast), and 점심, <i>jeomsim</i> (lunch)).
치맥 (<i>chimaek</i>)	Chimaek (Chicken and beer; a classic, popular combination).
피맥 (<i>pimaek</i>)	Pimaek (Pizza and beer; a similar popular combination).
소맥 (<i>somaek</i>)	Somaek (Soju and beer; a standard mixed alcoholic drink).
소콜 (<i>sokol</i>)	Sokol (Soju and Cola; a mixed drink).
폭탄주 (<i>poktanju</i>)	Bomb shot / Bomb drink (A potent mixed cocktail, often featuring a glass of soju dropped into beer).
먹방 (<i>meokbang</i>)	Mukbang (A live eating broadcast or show where the host consumes large amounts of food).
일차 (<i>il cha</i>)	First Round (The first stop of a multi-part social gathering, usually involving the main meal).
이차 (<i>i cha</i>)	Second Round (The second stop, often for secondary drinks, karaoke, or another activity).
삼차 (<i>sam cha</i>)	Third Round (The third stop of the gathering, usually a final stop for more drinks or conversation).
회식 (<i>hwesik</i>)	Company dinner / Work outing (A required or encouraged dinner/drinking session with coworkers and superiors).
맥날 (<i>maeknal</i>)	McD's (A common abbreviation for McDonald's).
스벅 (<i>seubeok</i>)	Starbucks' (A common abbreviation for Starbucks).

Adapted from *Korean slang guide* by [6]**Table 6.** Korean Slang Related to Emotions and Feelings

Korean Slang (Romanization)	English Meaning/Context
꿀잼 (<i>kkuljaem</i>)	Very Funny / Super Entertaining (Literally 'honey-fun'; indicates high enjoyment).
노잼 (<i>nojaem</i>)	No Fun / Boring (The opposite of 꿀잼).
솔까말 (<i>solkkamal</i>)	To speak honestly / Tell me frankly (Short for 솔직히 까놓고 말해서, <i>soljikki kkanoko malhaeseo</i>).
더럽게 (<i>deoreopge</i>)	Terribly / Extremely bad (Literally 'dirtily'; an intensifier used for negative things).
극혐 (<i>geukhyeom</i>)	Utter Disgust / Extreme Hate (Short for 극한의 혐오, <i>geukhan-ui hyeomo</i>).

Korean Slang (Romanization)	English Meaning/Context
깜놀 (<i>kkamnol</i>)	Surprised / Shocked (Short for 깜짝 놀라다, <i>kkamjjak nollada</i>).
안습 (<i>anseup</i>)	Tear-jerkingly shameful / Pathetic (Used to describe an unfortunate or embarrassing situation that makes you want to cry, literally 'sad eyes').
근자감 (<i>geunjam</i>)	Baseless Confidence (Short for 근거 없는 자신감, <i>geungeo eomneun jasingam</i> ; extreme, often unwarranted self-confidence).
케미 (<i>kemi</i>)	Chemistry (Used to describe the strong connection or spark between people, often in relationships or on screen).
웃프다 (<i>utpeuda</i>)	Funny but Sad (A feeling of finding humor in a tragic or unfortunate situation).
멘붕 (<i>menbung</i>)	Mental Breakdown / Panicked (Short for 멘탈 붕괴, <i>mental bunggoe</i>).
행쇼 (<i>haengsyo</i>)	Be Happy / Be well (Short for 행복하십시오, <i>haengbokasipsio</i> ; a sign-off wishing happiness).

Adapted from *Korean slang guide* by [6]

Korean Texting Slang

The last type of Korean texting slang is widely utilized in messaging apps like KakaoTalk. This form of slang is commonly used to swiftly express emotions or activities like laughter, crying, and apologizing. Its format is intended for the convenience of typing, frequently employing simply the first consonants of the original words. As a result, this type of slang is regarded as highly informal and is mainly limited to digital communication situations.

Table 7. Korean Texting Slang

Korean Slang (Romanization)	Original Word/Characters	English Meaning	Usage Context and Explanation
ㅋㅋㅋ (<i>kkk</i>)	ㅋ (<i>k</i>) = 키웃 (<i>kieuk</i>)	LOL / Haha	Used to express laughter. The repetition of ㅋ intensifies the amusement (e.g., ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ for big laughs).
ㅠㅠ (<i>yuyu</i>) / 투투 (<i>tutu</i>)	ㅠ (<i>yu</i>)	Crying Face / Waaah	Used to express sadness, distress, or sympathy. (The characters visually represent eyes tearing up).
ㅇㅋ (<i>ok</i>)	OK (English)	OK	A simple, common abbreviation used to signal agreement or acknowledgment.
ㅇㅇ (<i>oo</i>)	응 (<i>eung</i>)	Yes / Yep	A very casual, short form used to confirm or say "yes."
츄ㅋ (<i>ck</i>)	축하 (<i>chukha</i>)	Congrats	An abbreviation used to offer congratulations (short for 축하해요, <i>chukahaeyo</i>) quickly.

Korean Slang (Romanization)	Original Word/Characters	English Meaning	Usage Context and Explanation
ㅈㅈ (jj jj)	ㅈㅈ (jj)	Tsk-Tsk / Shame	Used to express disappointment, pity, or judgment toward someone who has done something foolish or regrettable.

Adapted from *Korean slang guide* by [6]

The total sample size of this study comprises 71 Indonesian students currently engaged in learning Korean. The gender distribution data indicate a significant bias toward female respondents, a common characteristic in studies concerning Korean language acquisition and cultural engagement. Females constituted 80.3% of the sample population. Male respondents constituted 19.7% of the total. The gender mismatch is a critical contextual factor for the study, indicating that the observed patterns of slang adoption primarily reflect the social identity and linguistic practices standard among female students. The respondents predominantly belong to the typical age range of university attendees, suggesting that the sample is composed mainly of young adults. The predominant age group was 19 years, representing 31% of the sample population. Subsequently, students aged 20 comprised 19.7%, while those aged 21 accounted for 14.1%. The concentration of respondents aged 19 to 21 years (64.8%) indicates that slang adoption is most prevalent among students in the early to middle stages of tertiary education (see Fig.1). The students' major programs exhibited a diverse academic background, with a predominance of specific programs related to language or culture. English Language and Korean Language were the most common majors, each comprising 18.3% of the total. Additional notable fields comprised Travel Business at 11.3% and Social Science at 8.5%. The significant presence of language-focused majors, particularly in English and Korean, indicates a foundational level of linguistic interest and proficiency that aids in learning and integrating Korean slang.

Berapa lama Anda belajar Bahasa Korea?
71 responses

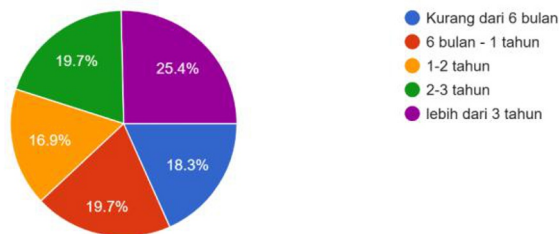


Fig. 1. The length of learning the Korean language

As shown in Fig. 2, the participants had varying levels of experience learning Korean, indicating a diverse group in terms of competency and exposure. The most significant proportion of respondents, 25.4%, reported having studied Korean for more than three years, indicating a large number of long-term learners. However, the next most frequent category was the newest learners, with 19.7% studying for 6 months - 1 year, and a similar proportion (18.3%) studying for less than 6 months. The remaining groups were the mid-level learners, with 19.7% studying for 2-3 years, and 16.9% studying for 1-2 years. The data suggests that slang adoption is being studied across the entire language learning spectrum, from students who have just begun their journey and rely heavily on cultural sources, to advanced learners who have maintained interest and exposure over several years."

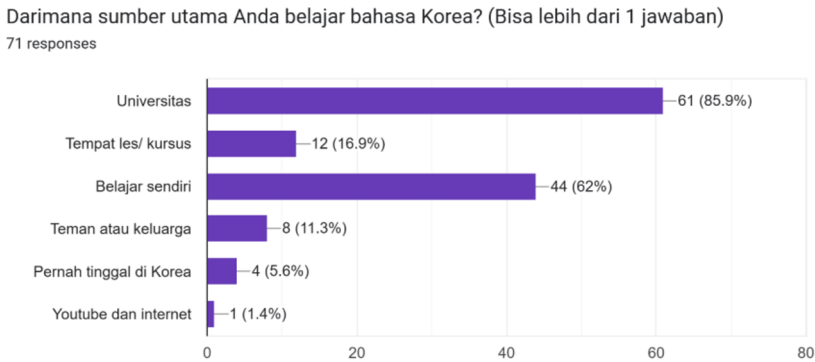


Fig. 2. The primary source of learning the Korean language

To better understand the context of slang acquisition, respondents were asked to indicate their key sources for learning the Korean language, with many options available. The findings reveal a reliance on both formal institutions and self-directed initiatives. Formal University education emerged as the most significant source, reported by 85.9% of the participants, confirming their status as registered students. Notably, however, Self-directed study was reported by a substantial 62% of respondents. This method indicates that while the foundation of their learning is academic, the majority actively supplement this with their own independent methods, which is a critical pathway for the informal acquisition of slang. The remaining sources included Private lessons/courses at 16.9%, Friends or family at 11.3%, and a minor 5.6% who had lived in Korea (see Fig.3). The high prevalence of self-directed learning suggests that students are frequently engaging with non-curricular content, which likely acts as the primary vehicle for the widespread adoption of Korean slang terms observed in this study.

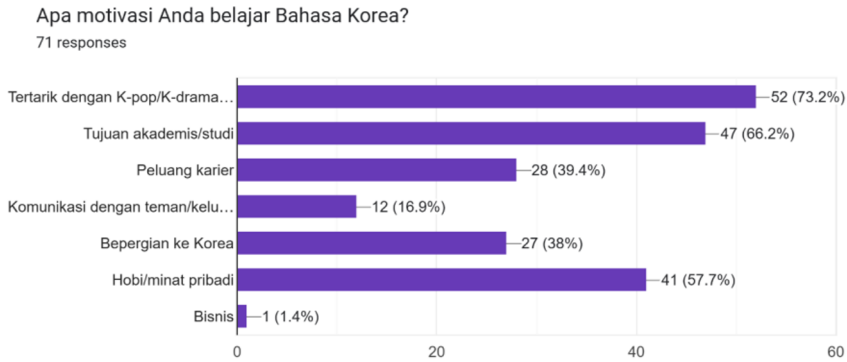


Fig. 3. Motivation for learning the Korean language

Analysis of the participants' motivation to learn Korean revealed that cultural engagement is the most potent driving force, directly supporting the focus of this social identity study. Interest in K-pop/K-drama was the most frequently reported motivation, with 73.2% of respondents choosing this option. This finding is significant because consuming K-culture media is the primary setting in which students encounter and integrate slang, directly linking their in-group identity as fans to their linguistic goals. Cultural interest was the most popular, followed by Academic/Study Purposes (66.2%). This indicates that while many students are mandated to study the language, a significant number are also motivated by personal cultural interests. The third most prevalent motivator was Personal Hobby/Interest, accounting for 57.7%, highlighting the significance of intrinsic, non-academic factors. Other significant factors included Career Opportunities at 39.4% and the desire to travel to Korea at 38%. The dominance of K-pop/K-drama interest over even academic and career goals suggests that the primary reference group for these students is rooted in cultural affinity, providing a strong basis for adopting the unique linguistic markers—i.e., slang—that identify membership within that social group (*see Fig. 4*).

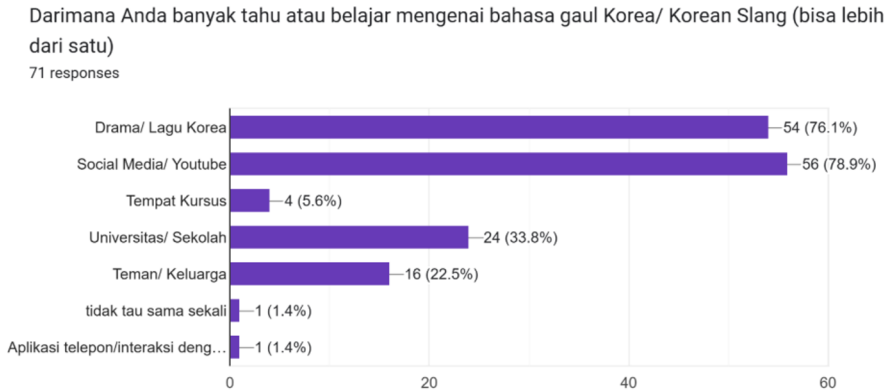


Fig. 4. The source of learning Korean slang

To determine the main pathway for the adoption of Korean slang, participants were requested to identify their primary sources of learning, with the option to select multiple responses. The findings indicate that informal, culturally rich media serve as the primary channels for language acquisition, thereby supporting the Social Identity Approach by showing that slang is predominantly learned outside of academic contexts. The two primary sources were closely aligned: social media/YouTube emerged as the leading source, cited by 78.9% of students, closely followed by Korean Drama/Music at 76.1%. The significant dependence on informal, self-selected media sources indicates that slang is not an obligatory component of the curriculum, but rather a linguistic marker embraced through voluntary participation in the K-culture in-group. In stark contrast, only 33.8% of respondents identified University/School as a source for slang, indicating that formal education has a notably limited influence. Additional sources comprised Friends/Family at 22.5% and private courses at a minimal 5.6%. The distribution of sources establishes a direct link between the high motivation derived from K-pop and K-drama, as evidenced by prior data, and the increased rate of slang acquisition through media consumption. This finding suggests that the motivation to connect with a Korean cultural identity serves as the mechanism influencing the adoption of its specialized vocabulary.

4.2 Discussion

Self-Perceived Slang Understanding

The results regarding students' self-assessed understanding of everyday Korean slang demonstrate a high degree of confidence in their knowledge. The vast majority of respondents agreed with the statement "I understand the meaning of most common Korean slang words/phrases." Specifically, 50.7% reported Agree, and an additional 12.7% reported Strongly Agree, making the combined rate of agreement 63.4%. This high self-efficacy aligns perfectly with the earlier findings on motivation and source of acquisition; because students are primarily learning slang through voluntary exposure

to cultural media (K-Dramas, social media), they are highly familiar with the lexicon of their social in-group. Conversely, the Neutral category was significant at 28.2%, suggesting a substantial minority remains uncertain about their level of mastery. Only a small fraction reported Disagree or Strongly Disagree (a combined 8.4%), indicating that for most learners, the informal K-culture curriculum has been effective in teaching the specialized vocabulary needed for successful identity signaling within their peer group.

Actual Slang Usage and Social Identity

The study's most significant finding, which validates the Social Identity Approach, is the high rate of self-reported slang usage among the participants. When asked if they use Korean slang with fellow Indonesian learners, a substantial majority reported agreement. Specifically, 46.5% selected Agree, and 8.5% selected Strongly Agree, resulting in a combined positive adoption rate of 55.0%. This finding demonstrates that the adoption of Korean slang extends beyond mere understanding (as previously indicated) into active linguistic performance within the peer group. The use of this specialized lexicon serves as a key identifier of the in-group social identity shared by Indonesian students engaged in K-culture consumption and language study. However, the high percentage of students who selected Neutral at 33.8% is also notable. While less than half reported using the slang consistently, this ambiguity suggests that usage may be highly contextual or reserved for specific sub-groups within the broader learning community. Conversely, the combined rate of disagreement was minimal, indicating that active rejection of slang usage is rare. The data thus confirms that for over half of the respondents, adopting Korean slang is a normative behaviour that signifies membership and shared cultural knowledge with their peers.

Slang Use and Self-Confidence

The relationship between slang use and self-perceived competence is strongly positive, indicating that the adoption of this specialized lexicon serves a function beyond mere communication—it boosts linguistic self-efficacy. When asked if using Korean slang increased respondents' confidence in their Korean ability, a clear majority of respondents agreed. Specifically, 43.7% reported Agree, and 14.1% reported Strongly Agree, resulting in a combined agreement rate of 57.8%. This finding is highly significant for the Social Identity Approach. Using in-group language markers, such as slang, acts as a social affirmation of their identity as competent Korean learners and connected members of the K-culture community. By successfully deploying this informal, culturally embedded vocabulary, students feel validated and more assured of their overall linguistic skills. While a substantial minority remained Neutral at 32.4%, only a small fraction (8.5%) disagreed. These findings highlight that for the majority of students, the use of slang enhances their linguistic confidence, providing significant psychological advantages associated with belonging to a cultural in-group.

Slang as a Cultural Prerequisite

Saya percaya bahwa mengetahui bahasa gaul Korea penting untuk memahami budaya Korea modern.

71 responses

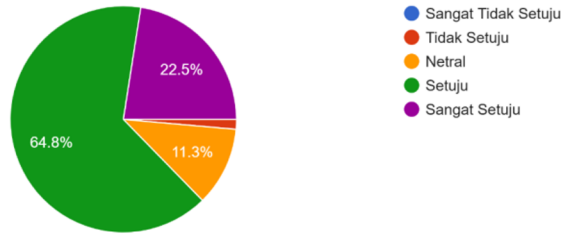


Fig. 5. Slang and Korean culture understanding

The respondents strongly agreed that Korean slang is an essential tool for understanding culture, thereby establishing a direct connection between linguistic proficiency and cultural literacy. 64.8% of students said they agreed with the statement that understanding Korean slang is essential to comprehending contemporary Korean culture, and 22.5% said they strongly agreed. This is a really high percentage of students. This yields an astounding 87.3% total agreement rate (see Fig.5). This finding serves as a potent conclusion, showing that the students have internalized the idea that slang is not just a linguistic choice but also a cultural necessity for interacting with and navigating the contemporary Korean cultural landscape, especially the elements that inspire them (K-pop/K-drama). This viewpoint's almost universal approval demonstrates that Indonesian students see adopting slang as a valid and essential step toward fully assimilating into the culture they respect. The fact that almost none of the respondents disagreed and that just a small minority (11.3%) stayed neutral highlights how deeply slang is ingrained in their learning goals.

Familiarity with Specific Korean Slang Terms

To assess the scope of slang adoption, respondents were asked to rank their acquaintance with a list of common Korean slang terms. The results show an incredibly high level of recognition for almost all terms examined. For the majority of slang words, the rating of "Very Familiar" was dominant, often exceeding 60 responses. Specifically, widely popular terms such as "대박 (Daebak)," "레알 (Real/Real)," "짱 (Jjang)," and "헐 (Heol)" exhibited the highest recognition rates, with the "Very Familiar" category virtually overshadowing all others. This result strongly suggests that the slang most frequently featured in K-dramas, K-pop, and social media has been successfully integrated into the students' active and passive vocabulary.

The only term that demonstrated a noticeable drop in "Very Familiar" responses, showing a wider distribution across "Quite Familiar" and "Less Familiar", was the phrase related to "애교 & 노래 (Aegyo & Norae)," indicating that some specific, situational, or older slang expressions are less uniformly understood than the highly

pervasive interjections and modifiers. Overall, the data confirms that Indonesian students, driven by cultural motivation, have not just adopted a few slang words but possess a broad and high level of familiarity with a diverse range of Korean informal lexicon.

Contexts of Slang Usage

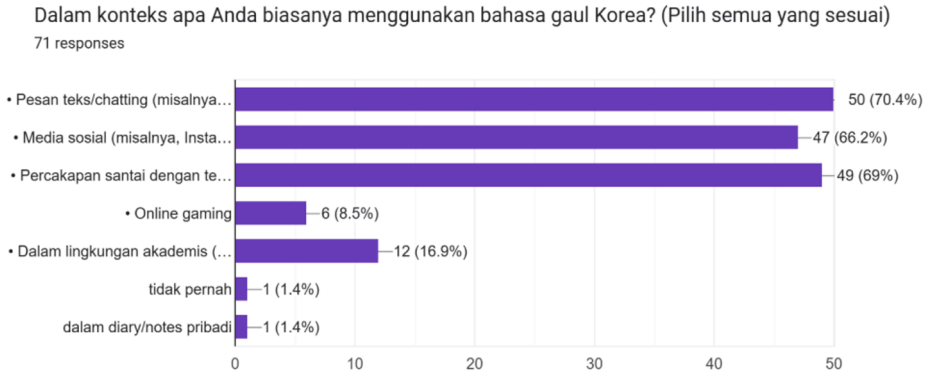


Fig. 6. Situation of using Korean slang

Respondents were asked to list the situations in which they utilize Korean slang in order to comprehend the limits of slang adoption. The findings unequivocally show that consumption is mostly limited to peer-related, digital, and informal contexts—all of which are traits of social identity in-groups. The top three contexts were closely clustered: social media was chosen by 66.2% of respondents, casual talk with friends came in second at 69%, and texting/chatting was the most common, reported by 70.4% of respondents. These three extremely informal categories show that slang is mainly used as a language marker for efficiency and identity signaling within the immediate peer group. In stark contrast, only 16.9% of users reported using it in academic settings (*see Fig. 6*). This finding demonstrates that kids are aware of and respectful of the diglossic difference in language use, saving informal slang for situations where formal, school-mandated Korean is not required. There was little usage in other specialized situations, such as online gaming and personal notes/diaries. The idea that Indonesian students' adoption of Korean slang is a phenomenon motivated by socio-cultural bonding rather than academic requirement is supported by the concentration of slang use in informal spoken and digital contact.

Slang In-Group Connection and Social Prestige

Menggunakan bahasa gaul Korea membantu saya merasa lebih terhubung dengan sesama pembelajar bahasa Korea asal Indonesia.

71 responses

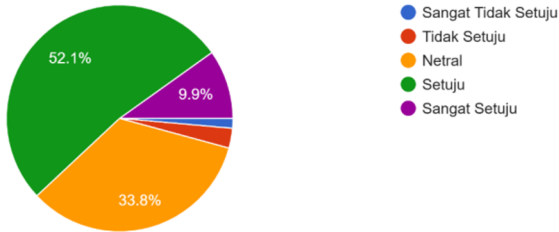


Fig. 7. Korean slang to connect with other Korean language learners

Saya ingin dilihat oleh orang lain (baik orang Indonesia maupun Korea) sebagai seseorang yang mahir dan "mutakhir" dalam bahasa Korea.

70 responses

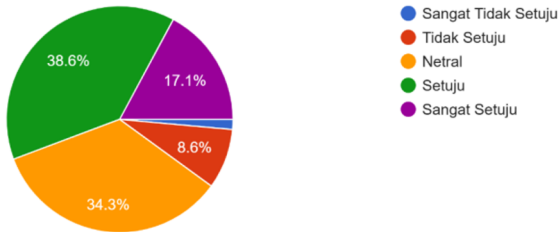


Fig. 8. Using Korean slang to be seen as well-informed in the Korean language

The first chart (*see Fig. 7*) provides direct evidence of the Social Identity function of slang. A substantial majority of students confirmed that using slang fosters group cohesion. Specifically, 52.1% reported Agree, and an additional 9.9% reported Strongly Agree, resulting in a combined agreement rate of 62.0%. This result confirms the hypothesis that Korean slang functions as a potent linguistic marker of in-group membership. By adopting and utilizing this specialized, informal vocabulary, students reinforce their shared identity and create a sense of solidarity with their peers who also consume Korean culture and study the language. While a substantial 33.8% remained Neutral, indicating that connection may not be the primary motive for everyone, the high rate of agreement clearly demonstrates the slang's efficacy in social bonding among this specific community of Indonesian learners.

Meanwhile, the second chart data (*see Fig.8*) confirm the role of social comparison and the desire for prestige in motivating slang adoption. Over half the respondents expressed a desire for linguistic recognition, with 38.6% selecting Agree and 17.1% selecting Strongly Agree, yielding a total agreement rate of 55.7%. Because formal language instruction rarely teaches contemporary slang, the ability to use it signals a learner who goes beyond the classroom—one who is culturally fluent and "mutakhir" (up-to-date). Therefore, adopting slang serves as a strategic tool for positive distinctiveness, elevating the speaker's status within both the Indonesian peer group and in the eyes of native Korean speakers. While a significant portion remained Neutral at 34.3%, the clear majority expressing a desire for mastery and modernity confirms that self-presentation and status are key psychological drivers behind the adoption of Korean slang.

Slang as Personal Expression and K-Pop as Social Identity

Adopsi saya terhadap bahasa gaul Korea dipengaruhi oleh keinginan saya untuk berbaaur dengan penggemar budaya pop Korea.

71 responses

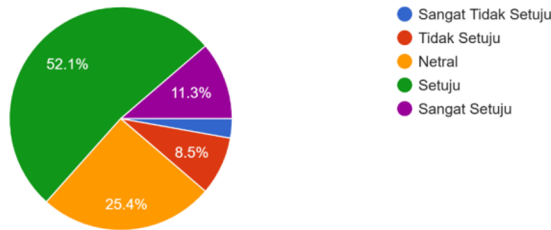


Fig. 9. Korean slang adoption to mingle with Korean pop culture fans

Saya merasa bahwa menggunakan bahasa gaul Korea membantu saya mengekspresikan kepribadian saya dengan lebih penuh saat berbicara bahasa Korea.

71 responses

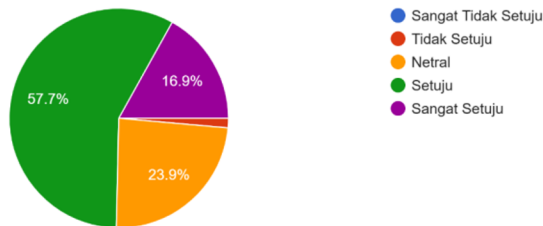


Fig. 10. Using Korean slang for self-expression

The first chart (see Fig.9) suggests that students view slang as a tool for deeper self-expression, a key function of language adoption. A large majority of respondents reported agreement, with 57.7% selecting Agree and 16.9% selecting Strongly Agree, resulting in a combined agreement rate of 74.6%. This high rate indicates that formal, academic Korean is perceived as linguistically restrictive, while the informal lexicon allows students to inject nuance, humour, and emotional depth—qualities essential for conveying one's true personality. The ability to use culturally relevant slang empowers learners, making their language output feel more authentic and reflective of their individual identity, thereby enhancing the overall communicative experience.

The second chart (see Fig.10) provides the most direct confirmation of the study's central theme. The majority of students acknowledge that their adoption of slang is explicitly tied to their desire for Social Identity affiliation with the K-pop fan community. A total of 63.4% of respondents agreed with the statement (52.1% Agree and 11.3% Strongly Agree). This finding is crucial, as it validates the theoretical framework of the journal: the language learning choices of Indonesian students are heavily influenced by their desire to integrate into a specific cultural in-group defined by K-pop consumption. Slang, in this context, acts as a social gatekeeper, allowing students to successfully "mingle" and signal shared cultural capital. Although 25.4% remained Neutral, indicating other factors (like pure linguistic interest) are also at play, the commanding majority confirms that the social goal of belonging significantly drives the linguistic behaviour.

Slang and Overall Cultural Integration

Saya merasa ada tekanan dari teman sebaya (sesama pembelajar bahasa Korea asal Indonesia) untuk menggunakan bahasa gaul Korea.

71 responses

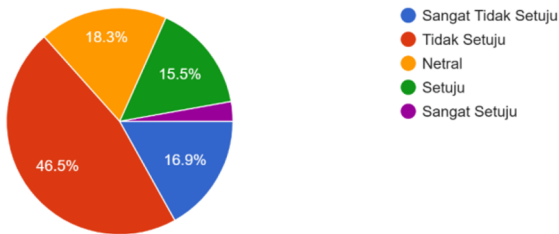


Fig. 11. The pressure to use Korean slang

Saya menganggap penutur asli Korea yang menggunakan bahasa gaul lebih otentik atau mudah diajak berinteraksi.

71 responses

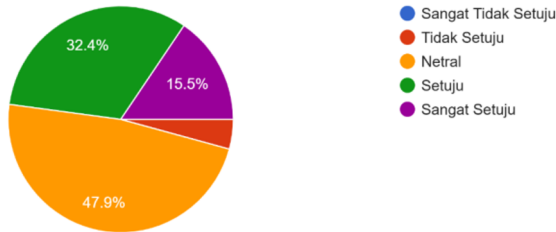


Fig. 12. Korean native speakers who use slang are more sociable

Saya yakin bahwa menggunakan bahasa gaul Korea akan meningkatkan integrasi saya secara keseluruhan ke dalam budaya Korea (misalnya, jika ...au berinteraksi dengan lebih banyak orang Korea).

71 responses

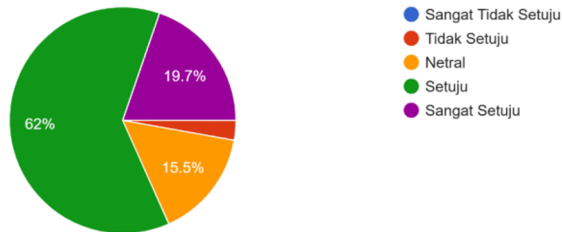


Fig. 13. Using Korean slang to integrate fully into Korean culture

As stated in the first chart, "I feel there is peer pressure from friends (fellow Indonesian Korean language learners) to use Korean slang." The data show that explicit peer pressure is not a key driver of slang adoption, which contrasts with the very favorable findings on connection and confidence (see Fig. 11). The statement was disapproved of by a combined majority of 63.4% of respondents (46.5% disagreed and 16.9% strongly disagreed). Few people (15.5% Agree and 3.0% Strongly Agree) said they felt under pressure. This is an important finding because, although slang indicates in-group membership (as demonstrated by previous evidence), it seems to be voluntary and driven by a desire to fit in rather than being extrinsically compelled by pressure or expulsion from

the peer group. Therefore, using slang is not an activity driven by social pressure, but rather a normative behavior resulting from a common desire.

There are conflicting findings about how native speakers are perceived, providing a complex picture (see Fig 12). By contrast, a sizable percentage of respondents agreed with the statement (32.4% Agree and 15.5% Strongly Agree, for a total of 47.9%), while an equal percentage chose Neutral (47.9%). According to this finding, over half of the students believe that native speakers' use of slang is genuine and approachable. In contrast, the other half are either unsure or have a neutral opinion. The students' varied exposure to Korean media may be reflected in this divided viewpoint; they may be able to identify that certain situations (such as news or formal settings) do not employ slang, which prevents them from categorically referring to all slang users as "more authentic." Slang, on the other hand, is a potent social equalizer that makes native speakers seem less remote and more relevant to Indonesian learners, according to nearly 50% of those who agree.

According to the last graphic (see Fig. 13), slang is often seen as a crucial tool for fostering profound cultural cohesion. The statement was overwhelmingly accepted by respondents, with 62% choosing Agree and 19.7% choosing Strongly Agree, for a remarkable aggregate agreement percentage of 81.7%. This result indicates the students' belief that slang is an important component of cultural capital. They view its use as a strategic linguistic technique to transcend the role of a mere foreign language learner and achieve true acceptance and connection within the Korean cultural sphere, rather than merely as a casual activity. This assurance of integration highlights how highly the informal lexicon is valued.

5 Conclusion

Based on the compiled data, various categories of slang can be observed, spanning different thematic discussions. These include slang used in chatting/writing, exclamations of expression, and compound words that encompass a range of meanings. This slang is frequently encountered in scenes within dramas, films, variety shows, and other media. An individual who understands and can practically use these slang terms may subsequently be regarded as an insider or a quasi-local. The findings of this study confirm that the adoption of Korean slang terms by Indonesian university students is a sophisticated linguistic behavior intrinsically linked to the dynamics of Social Identity Theory. The use of specific terms, such as those related to address (e.g., *oppa*, *eonni*) and exclamation (e.g., *daebak*), fosters in-group cohesion by creating a shared linguistic repertoire and a sense of exclusive knowledge among members of the "K-pop fan" or "Korean language learner" communities. This shared practice establishes a firm boundary, distinguishing those with cultural access from those without.

Crucially, this linguistic mechanism serves to construct a Positive Social Identity. By affiliating with a cultural group recognized for its high global status—namely, the Korean Wave or Hallyu—students effectively elevate their own social standing and self-esteem. Furthermore, the strategic use of this slang promotes Social Comparison, allowing pupils to distinguish between their in-group and perceived out-groups (those who do not understand or use the vocabulary). In essence, this language activity serves

as an effective tool for both identity creation and expression, revealing how an individual's own self-concept is inextricably linked to and actively negotiated through participation in specific social groupings.

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