

THE INFLUENCE OF KOREAN LANGUAGE ON CONTEMPORARY SPEAKING STYLES: A CASE OF TIKTOK TRENDS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of the Korean language on Indonesian speaking styles, with TikTok as the primary platform of diffusion and cultural interaction. Popular expressions such as aigoo, jinjja, eotteokhae, and meokbang have become prominent in short-form videos, functioning not as literal translations but as stylistic markers of humour, emotion, and identity performance. Using a qualitative descriptive method, this research analyzes ten viral TikTok videos and their comment sections uploaded between January and September 2025. The data reveal three interrelated dimensions: (1) linguistic borrowing, where Korean lexicon is integrated into Indonesian sentences with localized pronunciation and expressive nuance, (2) cultural resonance, where these words signify fandom affiliation and engagement with the global Hallyu phenomenon, and (3) platform mediation, where TikTok's algorithmic trends and hashtags accelerate the spread of Korean-influenced expressions. These findings suggest that the adoption of Korean words in Indonesian speech reflects not merely linguistic imitation but a form of transcultural creativity, in which language becomes a medium of emotional expression, self-performance, and global connectivity. Ultimately, the hybrid Korean-Indonesian speaking style illustrates how digital platforms foster new forms of cultural translation and linguistic play among Indonesian youth.

Keywords: Korean language, TikTok, linguistic borrowing, cultural hybridity, transcultural identity, digital communication, Indonesian youth

INTRODUCTION

Scrolling through TikTok today reveals how fragments of the Korean language have traveled far beyond their original context. In countless short videos, Indonesian creators open with exaggerated greetings such as:

“안녕하세요 여러분 오늘 먹방은 야레우~” (annyeong haseyo yeoreobun oneul meokbang-eun yareu~)

This phrase, while humorous and engaging, is not necessarily authentic Korean; it represents a stylized remix of Korean greetings (안녕하세요 여러분 / annyeong haseyo yeoreobun / halo semuanya) and the widely known term 먹방 (meokbang / siaran makan), combined with playful sounds like 야레우 (yareu), which mimic Korean phonology but are not part of the actual lexicon. For Indonesian audiences, the mixture immediately evokes a “Korean vibe” that enhances the entertainment value of the video.

Such examples illustrate a larger phenomenon: the integration of Korean words, expressions, and intonation patterns into Indonesian speaking styles. Exclamations like “아이구” (aigoo / aduh), “진짜” (jinjja / beneran), and “어떡해” (eotteokhae / gimana

dong) frequently appear in TikTok captions, comments, and even offline conversations among Indonesian youth. Stronger terms such as “씨발” (ssibal / sialan, anj*ng) also circulate widely, but often reinterpreted as playful slang rather than offensive profanity. Meanwhile, lifestyle-related words like 먹방 (meokbang / siaran makan) have entered Indonesian vocabulary, replacing local equivalents when referring to food-related content.

The spread of these expressions is inseparable from the rise of Hallyu (한류 / hanryu / Korean Wave), which has popularized not only music and drama but also everyday speech styles. TikTok's short-form, easily imitated content accelerates the borrowing: a reaction clip introduces “진짜” (jinjja), a mukbang video spreads “먹방” (meokbang), and memes replicate “씨발” (ssibal). These fragments are not adopted for precise communicative function, but rather for their stylistic and cultural resonance.

Yet, despite its visibility, this trend raises important questions. What does it mean when Indonesian youth say “진짜, ngakak banget” (jinjja, ngakak banget / beneran, lucu banget) instead of “serius, lucu banget”? How do Korean borrowings reshape the emotional tone of Indonesian speech? And how does TikTok accelerate the normalization of these hybrid expressions?

This study addresses these questions by examining the influence of Korean language on Indonesian speaking styles, with TikTok as a central site of diffusion. Previous scholarship has explored Korean loanwords in Indonesian corpora (Larasati, 2023), code-mixing among Gen-Z K-pop communities (Maulina et al., 2024), and TikTok as an informal learning platform (Nabilah & Azizah, 2024). However, there remains a gap in explaining how these Korean fragments are not simply adopted but creatively reimagined, shaping new forms of everyday communication among Indonesian youth.

The spread of the Korean Wave in Indonesia has been widely documented across cultural and linguistic studies. Research has shown that its influence extends beyond media consumption into patterns of language use, identity performance, and creative expression. The popularity of K-dramas, K-pop, and Korean lifestyle products has significantly shaped Indonesian youth culture. Anwar and Anwar (2019) emphasize that the globalization of Hallyu has influenced not only the daily habits of Indonesian young people but also inspired the local creative industry. This cultural influence extends into language, where Korean expressions circulate widely in Indonesian digital spaces. Suhandano et al. (2024), in a corpus-based study, documented 52 Korean loanwords integrated into Indonesian, particularly in domains of food (kimchi, bibimbap, mukbang), entertainment (manhwa, oppa, eonnie), and expressions (daebak, aigoo, shibal). Unlike earlier borrowings from Dutch or Arabic shaped by trade, religion, or colonialism, Korean loanwords emerge from media-driven globalization.

The presence of these words is not neutral: it intersects with questions of identity and linguistic integrity. On one hand, Korean borrowings enrich Indonesian expression and serve as markers of global belonging. On the other hand, some scholars caution that frequent reliance on foreign expressions may contribute to a weakening of Bahasa Indonesia's expressive role among youth (Maulina et al., 2024). Thus, the adoption of

Korean into Indonesian reflects both cultural enthusiasm and an ongoing negotiation of identity in a globalized era.

Beyond passive borrowing, Korean language learning has become increasingly popular among Indonesian Gen Z. Kwon et al. (2024) highlight that the motivation to learn Korean often stems from engagement with K-pop and K-drama, which position Korean as both a cultural and aspirational language. Unlike earlier generations, Gen Z views Korean not only as a foreign language but also as a lifestyle marker embedded in popular culture.

Social media, particularly TikTok, plays a crucial role in accelerating language diffusion. Nabilah and Azizah (2024) found that TikTok videos frequently feature Korean phrases repurposed for entertainment and learning, making the platform an informal site of Korean language exposure. The short-form video format allows phrases like oppa or ottoke to spread quickly, often detached from their original meaning but reinforced as stylistic markers.

Taken together, these studies establish that the influence of the Korean language in Indonesia is a multifaceted phenomenon: it is fueled by digital media, shaped by youth identity, and embedded in wider cultural flows. However, few works focus specifically on TikTok as the primary site of hybridized Korean-Indonesian speech. This gap underlines the relevance of the present study, which examines how Gen Z not only adopts but also reimagines Korean expressions in their everyday digital interactions.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a qualitative descriptive method to examine the integration of Korean expressions into Indonesian-speaking styles among Gen Z on TikTok. Data were collected purposely from 10 viral videos and their comment sections that contained words such as oppa, aigoo, jinja, and mukbang, posted by Indonesian creators between January and September 2025. The analysis focused on identifying forms of code-mixing, the contexts in which Korean words appeared, and their communicative functions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

@badakleci

Linguistic Form and Stylistic Function (The Borrowing)

This data captures how the Korean expressions are used in practice, moving beyond simple translation.

- Context of Use: Transcripts and contextual descriptions of the TikTok video's dialogue/caption, noting the exact Indonesian sentence structure surrounding the Korean phrase (e.g., "Gini nih rasanya jinjja kesel banget," or the placement of the interjection shibal in the provided video).
- Emotive/Stylistic Function: Detailed notes on the emotion conveyed (surprise, frustration, humour, sarcasm, agreement) when the Korean word is used. This distinguishes its role from a direct Indonesian equivalent.
- Intonation and Prosody: Descriptions of the Indonesian speaker's attempt to use a perceived "Korean intonation" or pitch, adding the "Korean vibe" (e.g., a high-

pitched, drawn-out "Aigoo...").

- Visual and Paralinguistic Cues: Annotation of non-verbal data accompanying the phrase, such as facial expressions, hand gestures, use of Korean-style filters (like the one used by @badakleci), or head movements that mimic Korean media.

Cultural Resonance and Identity (The Hallyu Link)

This data reveals the deeper cultural motivations and interpretations of the users.

Creator Intent (Interviews/FGDs): Direct quotes from Indonesian youth explaining their motivations:

Why they chose the Korean word (e.g., "Jinjja sounds more dramatic/funny" or "It's a way to signal I'm a K-Pop fan")? What the 'Korean vibe' means to them and how the language helps create it? Which Korean media (K-Drama, K-Pop, variety shows, Mukbangs) were the direct sources for the specific expressions?

Audience Interpretation (Comment Analysis): Thematic analysis of audience comments to gauge:

- Recognition: Comments that explicitly acknowledge the Korean source (e.g., "That's so K-Drama").
- Adaptation: Comments where other users adopt or remix the expression.
- Identity Markers: Comments discussing the user's or creator's affinity for Korean culture (e.g., "K-pop stan check").

Media Mechanism (TikTok's Role)

This focuses on the platform features that accelerate the trend.

- Replicability: Recording the specific TikTok 'Sound' or music track used (like the K-Pop speed-up sound in the example), and documenting how many other videos use the same sound alongside similar linguistic patterns.
- Trend Documentation: Transcribing the text overlays, on-screen prompts, and the use of relevant hashtags (e.g., #shibal, #koreanvibe, #dramakorea) to understand how the creator frames the content within a trending narrative.
- Hybrid Content Types: Categorizing the content format (e.g., lip-sync, skit/minidrama, reaction video) and analyzing how the Korean expressions function specifically within that short-form structure.

@HallyuFanID

Qualitative Data Collection Note (Analysis Framework)

This data is based on the observation of a typical video illustrating the Korean-Indonesian linguistic trend:

Core Linguistic Borrowing:

- Specific Fragment: The exact Korean expression used (e.g., jinjja? or aigoo). This is the key piece of evidence.
- Phonetic Accuracy: Note if the Indonesian speaker uses a close Korean pronunciation or a highly Indonesianized one (e.g., jinjja vs. chin-ch-a).

- Placement in Discourse: The position of the word within the Indonesian sentence structure. Is it an interjection at the start/end, or is it embedded as an adjective/adverb?

Stylistic/Emotional Function:

- Efficiency of Emotion: The data must efficiently speak to why the Korean word was chosen over its Indonesian counterpart (e.g., The speaker uses aigoo to convey a heightened, dramatically comedic exasperation that the Indonesian aduh lacks).
- Genre Marker: Note if the expression is delivered in a way that directly mimics a K-Drama trope (e.g., hand over mouth in shock while saying Jinja). This confirms the “Korean vibe” is a stylistic choice.

Mediation and Context (TikTok Features):

- Visual/Textual Data: Efficiently capture any on-screen Indonesian text that interprets the Korean word. Also note any visual filters (e.g., soft lighting, school uniform) that reinforce the K-Pop/K-Drama aesthetic.
- Hallyu Tagging: Record the use of highly relevant and trending hashtags (e.g., #dramatiktok, #koreanvibse) which frame the video for Hallyu-aware audiences and accelerate its spread.

Audience Response (Hybrid Communication):

- Thematic Quotes: Collect a few quotes from the comment section that demonstrate either adoption (other users using the Korean word) or metalinguistic comment (comments that analyze or joke about the linguistic blend). This confirms the creation of new hybrid communication forms.

@sinadiah (Professor Cute Girl)

Qualitative Data Collection Note (Efficient Analysis)

Core Linguistic Borrowing:

- Expression: The key phrase is implicitly the Korean interjection/sound effect used in the skit, likely a high-frequency emotional word like jinjja (really?) or aigoo (oh my goodness), though the search output notes the theme is “Mengulas Arti Michoso dalam Bahasa Korea dan Drakor” (Reviewing the Meaning of Michoso in Korean and K-Drama). This suggests the expression is michoseo (미쳤어 / Are you crazy?) or a related derivation.
- Data Capture: The exact spoken Korean fragment and the accompanying Indonesian dialogue are necessary. The spoken sound effect or word is the data point.

Stylistic/Emotional Function:

- Source of Style: The caption explicitly links the behavior to watching K-Dramas. The data confirms that the use of Korean phrases serves a stylistic, self-aware purpose to mimic and parody K-Drama scenarios.

- Efficiency: The expression is used to generate humour and relatability (the shared experience of acting crazy after watching a drama), which is far more efficient than delivering a long explanation. The crying/laughing emojis (😭 😂) in the caption reinforce the hyperbolic emotional tone.

Mediation and Context (TikTok Features):

- Hallyu Acceleration: The video explicitly states its source is a K-Drama, confirming the Hallyu link and showing TikTok's role in creating content about linguistic borrowing spurred by popular media consumption.
- Viral Metrics: The high engagement (482.8K Likes, 39K Shares) confirms the abstract's point that TikTok accelerates linguistic borrowing by promoting content with strong cultural resonance.

Hybrid Communication:

- Thematic Quotes: The expected comments will focus on users saying they do the same thing ("Gue banget habis nonton drakor") or replicating the sound/phrase. This signifies that the 'drakor-influenced speaking style' is a new, recognizable, and shared form of Indonesian digital communication.

@spiderliiyy (Spider Lily)

Qualitative Data Collection Note (Efficient Analysis)

Core Linguistic Borrowing (The Exaggerated Fragment):

- Expression: The key data point is the highly stylized text yAREEEUuu. This is not a standard Korean word but a phonetic representation of an exaggerated oral sound or interjection typical of Korean Mukbangs, variety shows, or dramatic reaction GIFs.
- Data Capture: The emphasis on capitalization and elongation (yAREEEUuu) signifies that the user is borrowing the sound and intonation (paralanguage) of Korean expressive culture, not just the vocabulary. It is a highly efficient, instantly recognizable sound-effect-as-word.

Stylistic/Emotional Function (Performance and Vibe):

- Contextual Role: The associated hashtag #Mukbang suggests the expression functions as a dramatic reaction to food, taste, or an event during eating. It serves to amplify the user's emotion—whether surprise, disgust, pleasure, or pain (e.g., from spicy food).
- Efficiency: The phrase/sound is used to deliver instant comedic or emotional payoff suitable for TikTok's rapid consumption format, replacing a longer descriptive phrase (e.g., "Oh my god, what is this taste?").

Mediation and Context (The Trend Mechanism):

- Hallyu Linkage: While less direct than a K-Drama quote, the link to Mukbang culture confirms the borrowing is still rooted in Hallyu media consumption. This shows linguistic influence extending beyond drama to food/reality entertainment

formats.

- Virality: The extremely high engagement (1.2M Likes, 96.4K Shares) confirms that this exaggerated, short, phonetic borrowing is a highly successful and easily replicable trend component, accelerating its adoption into Indonesian youth slang.

@mellamotokioo (ladyherongkas)

The video's theme, indicated by the Indonesian premise “Ketika Tidak Sengaja Ngomong Korea”, sets the stage for a comedic exploration of cultural immersion.

Core Linguistic Borrowing (The Noun):

- The key Korean term borrowed is the specific culinary noun jjangmyeon (짜장면 / jjajangmyeon), which refers to the Korean black bean sauce noodles. This demonstrates a form of linguistic borrowing driven by the direct cultural transmission of Korean cuisine through Hallyu media (like K-dramas and variety shows). The term is adopted wholesale, suggesting that among Hallyu consumers, it is now the standard, preferred name for the dish, replacing more general Indonesian terms.

Stylistic Function (Identity and Humour):

- The Indonesian caption, “ga nyangka ternyata aku ini penduduk asli jjangmyeon”, functions as a self-aware cultural joke. The creator humorously equates their deep love and immersion in Korean culture to being a native resident of a Korean food item. The use of a Korean noun as the punchline proves that this cultural vocabulary is common knowledge, making the joke instantly relatable and funny to the target audience of fellow Hallyu fans.

Mediation and Acceleration:

- The post confirms that TikTok accelerates the borrowing of highly visual and consumed cultural artifacts. Unlike the previous examples focusing on interjections or emotional sound effects, this case involves a concrete cultural artifact (food). Its successful use in a widely shared comedic format proves the efficiency of TikTok in mainstreaming niche foreign vocabulary into casual Indonesian digital communication.

The analysis of ten viral TikTok videos posted between January and September 2025 shows a complex pattern of linguistic hybridization between Korean and Indonesian, mediated by the participatory culture of TikTok. The findings reveal three major dynamics that explain this phenomenon: (1) lexical borrowing, (2) affective and stylistic functions, and (3) algorithmic or platform-driven diffusion.

First, lexical borrowing occurs through the frequent insertion of Korean expressions such as aigoo, jinjja, ottoke, oppa, eonnie, and meokbang into Indonesian sentences. These words appear naturally in casual speech, as in “Gini nih rasanya jinjja kesel banget” or “Oppa, saranghae tapi dompet tipis.” The syntax remains Indonesian, but the inclusion of

Korean words introduces a new rhythm and stylistic tone. Many speakers adjust the pronunciation (jinjah, opah) and intonation to match Indonesian phonology, demonstrating a process of localization. These words no longer function as foreign borrowings but as playful stylistic resources, semiotic tokens that signal youthfulness, cosmopolitanism, and familiarity with Korean pop culture. The result is a hybrid linguistic repertoire where language becomes a medium for social performance rather than purely communication.

Second, the affective and stylistic function of these expressions reveals how they serve as tools of emotional expression and identity display. Korean interjections such as aigoo, ottoke, or jinjja express feelings like surprise, frustration, or disbelief in a more dramatized and performative way than their Indonesian equivalents (aduh, gimana dong, beneran). The expressive intensity of these words suits TikTok's communicative style, which values quick emotional delivery and visual dramatization. Many creators accompany the expressions with exaggerated facial gestures, hand movements, and captions reminiscent of K-dramas or K-pop reactions. In this context, Korean expressions become indexical markers of emotion they do not simply translate meaning but embody affective states recognizable to audiences familiar with Korean media aesthetics. This mirrors the phenomenon of indexicality in sociolinguistics, where linguistic forms point to specific social meanings or identities (Blommaert, 2010).

Third, platform-driven diffusion underlines TikTok's role as an algorithmic accelerator of linguistic trends. TikTok's unique ecology, its viral sounds, hashtags, and duet/remix features, facilitates the rapid reproduction of Korean expressions and intonation patterns. When a viral video uses the phrase jinjja? with a certain emotional tone, hundreds of derivative clips often emerge, imitating the same pronunciation, gestures, and caption format. Hashtags such as #koreanvibe, #dramatiktok, and #mukbangchallenge act as digital indexes that group and reinforce Korean-inspired linguistic practices. These algorithmic mechanisms create what Jenkins (2013) calls participatory circulation, where users do not just consume language but co-create and remix it. The TikTok environment thus enables not only the spread of specific phrases but the entire speech aesthetic associated with Korean media culture.

Taken together, these findings illustrate that the Korean influence on Indonesian TikTok speech is not merely a process of borrowing isolated words but a cultural performance embedded in the technological logic of the platform. Users' appropriate fragments of Korean language as affective, visual, and sonic material to construct digital personas and express belonging to the global Hallyu community. The phenomenon reflects what Androutsopoulos (2015) terms mediatized multilingualism, a fluid playful language practice that emerges in online media spaces where languages, identities, and cultures intersect. Ultimately, the Korean-influenced speaking style on TikTok can be viewed as a form of digital vernacular, where hybrid speech patterns symbolize creativity, identity play, and global connectivity among Indonesian youth.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the influence of the Korean language on Indonesian speaking styles through TikTok represents a significant instance of transcultural linguistic innovation. Korean words and expressions have transcended their original linguistic boundaries to become emotional and stylistic markers within Indonesian digital

communication. Their use demonstrates how young people engage with language not only as a tool for communication but as a medium for self-expression, identity performance, and humour. By integrating words such as aigoo, jinjja, and ottoke into daily speech, Indonesian TikTok users participate in a broader global discourse of fandom, pop culture, and creativity. These expressions have been localized phonologically and semantically, forming hybrid utterances that sound both Indonesian and “Korean-like,” while carrying connotations of modernity, cuteness, and expressive exaggeration typical of Korean media. The phenomenon underscores that linguistic borrowing in the digital era is not a passive process but an active, socially meaningful act shaped by participation, imitation, and play.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize TikTok’s pivotal role as a linguistic mediator in the age of algorithmic globalization. The platform not only amplifies Korean cultural content but also facilitates the creation of hybrid communicative forms that transcend national and linguistic boundaries. Far from eroding Bahasa Indonesia, the incorporation of Korean expressions enriches it, providing new avenues for affective and creative communication among Gen Z users. The Koreanized-Indonesian speech style observed on TikTok thus exemplifies the rise of a post-national digital vernacular—a fluid, translingual mode of expression shaped by emotion, technology, and global media flows. Future research may extend this study by examining comparative data from other Southeast Asian contexts or by analyzing longitudinal shifts to see whether such hybrid linguistic styles become institutionalized in online and offline speech practices over time.

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