



CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF YESUNG SUPER JUNIOR'S LANGUAGE USE TO BUILD DIGITAL CONNECTION WITH INDONESIAN FANS

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ABSTRACT

Globalization of the Korean entertainment industry (K-pop) has intensified glocalization practices where the artists use local languages of certain culture or country as their communication styles. This aim research is to examine how Yesung, Super Junior member, uses Indonesian language in tweets of his Twitter/X platform as a strategy to build connection with Indonesian fans. Employing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, this research will analyse language choices, discursive styles, and affective symbols in Yesung's tweets containing hashtag #Indonesia with Indonesian language. The data will be collected through documentation of 19 tweets within 2016-2024, and will be analysed on three levels: textual, discursive practices, and social practice. This study shows that Yesung's use of Indonesian in his tweets is a conscious glocalization strategy to build emotional closeness and digital identity with local fans. His approach reflects how global celebrities navigate and adapt to cultural boundaries, contributing to discussions on glocalization, cultural hybridity, and identity construction in digital spaces.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; Yesung Super Junior; Language use; Digital communication; Fan engagement

INTRODUCTION

Communication is no longer limited to face-to-face interactions, but can also be conducted digitally. An example of this is the use of social media. Social media brings the world closer together by facilitating cross-cultural communication. In fact, social media can serve as a platform to overcome language barriers and spread intercultural ideas (Fazil et al., 2024; Jin, 2017; Lifintsev & Wellbrock, 2019; Puri, 2022; Sun, 2025). With the spread of intercultural ideas, it is no surprise that the term *glocalization*, a concept that merges the global and the local (Puri, 2022), has appeared to illustrate how globalization has become integrated with local cultures. The intersection between the global and local worlds has ultimately created diverse and complex forms of communication (Al Zidjaly, 2019).

Beyond communication, social media provides a space where individuals can express themselves freely (Gündüz, 2017). Each social media user has the freedom to share their ideas or emotions. This freedom of expression ultimately shapes their digital identity (Darvin, 2016; Deh & Glođović, 2018). Digital identity can also be formed in online learning, as internet users are able to express themselves through code-switching (Biró, 2020; Bozkurt & Tu, 2016). This identity formation can be seen in how account owners use language and how they construct a persona on social media through their

linguistic choices. This is evident in a study on university students in the Philippines, which found that their language use on social media often includes accurate abbreviations, expressive emoticon spellings, letter homophones, acronyms, misspelled words, shortened terms, numbers used to represent words, and the combination of two different languages in their writing (Esteron, 2021). These patterns reflect the current reality of how young people use social media today. There is also the formation of dual identities among Muslim social media users, who adapt between their religious values and social norms (Yanuar, 2025). Moreover, language shifts on social media can reshape digital identity, for example, the rapid increase in the use of English by Ukrainian citizens during the Ukraine-Russia war as a way to attract international attention (Racek et al., 2024). Based on this, digital identity is not something that can or should be avoided in social media. Every posts can shape our identity. We need to understand it and engage with it consciously (Majeed Mohamed Fareed Majeed et al., 2020).

Social media has become a key tool for public figures in constructing their digital identities. Well-known individuals like Bill Gates, a businessman, have crafted his image as impactful developers of artificial intelligence through careful and strategic language choices (Abdulhameed & Al-Sieedy, 2024). Former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, has also shaped her digital identity through authentic, consistent, and impactful communication, with a focus on values such as education, social justice, and empowerment (Ghaltakhchyan, 2025). In the Indonesian context, figures such as Prabowo Subianto, Ridwan Kamil, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) each employ different approaches to message delivery and self-presentation (Azmi et al., 2018). There is also a public speaker, Rijal Djamal, who shapes his identity by presenting himself as a caring leader with a humanistic and communicative personality, while building a consistent and well-intentioned public image (Dika et al., 2023). They shape such an identity intentionally and are aware of the impact of their choices in order to influence their followers. Consistency, authenticity, and audience engagement are key factors in building their online presence (Vasconcelos & Rua, 2021). Furthermore, President Donald Trump shaped his digital identity by openly expressing discriminatory views toward China and Muslims, which influenced public sentiment (Khaled Jamel et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2021).

K-Pop, or Korean Pop, is one of the most popular examples of glocalization worldwide. This phenomenon has had a significant impact on its audience, particularly among young Indonesian teenagers who are now easily exposed to Korean culture through digital technology (Alhamid, 2022). Indonesians try to stay updated with Korean culture, one way of which is by learning the Korean language (Youngsun et al., 2024). Their exposure to Korean culture empowers them to take part in the spread of that culture and, in some cases, even engage in political activism (Andini & Akhni, 2021). While Korean culture has gained popularity in Indonesia, it has also brought about increased consumerism and even fanatical devotion among some followers (Fibrianto et al., 2020; Gusti et al., 2022).

As digital technology evolves, Korean culture continues to spread rapidly. The way fans engage with their idols has shaped fandom identity, and companies like Hybe have taken advantage of this by building platforms that bring idols and fans closer together (Freitas, 2022; Li, 2023). As previously mentioned, not only in Indonesia but also in many other countries, the spread of Korean culture has led fandoms to become politically engaged, for instance, by participating in movements such as Black Lives Matter or advocating for feminism, which remains a sensitive issue in Korea itself (Lee

& Kao, 2021; Lee, 2019). Within literary practices, fanfiction has become a way for fans to imagine their idols according to their own expectations, often by creating fictional gay or queer male characters that challenge dominant gender norms (Andrade et al., 2024). Despite their strong sense of community, K-Pop fandoms are not excluded from engaging in hate speech toward idols or other fandoms, which may escalate into fanwars (Naibaho et al., 2024; Salsabila, 2024).

Based on this, the discourse surrounding K-Pop has been widely studied, particularly regarding its impact on fan and fandom dynamics. However, there has been little research focusing on the artists themselves, specifically, how K-Pop idols construct their identities to connect with fans on social media. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the language use of a Korean artist, Yesung of Super Junior.

Super Junior is a South Korean boy group that debuted in 2005. One of its members, Yesung, is notably active in engaging with fans on social media, particularly on Twitter, now known as X. Although he is a native Korean speaker, he embraces glocalization by using multiple languages, including Indonesian. Yesung's use of the Indonesian language is particularly interesting to explore through critical discourse analysis, as it reveals how his language choices contribute to building a digital connection with his Indonesian fans.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the use of Indonesian language in the tweets of Yesung, a member of Super Junior, particularly those related to Indonesia. The analysis follows Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework (Fairclough, 2013), which examines language as a form of social practice through three dimensions: textual, discursive, and social. The data consist of 19 tweets posted by Yesung on Twitter/X between 2016 and 2024, all written in Indonesian and containing the hashtag #Indonesia. At the textual level, the tweets are analyzed for hashtag, Indonesian language type, emojis, and multimedia elements such as images and videos. The discursive practices focus on how these tweets are produced, distributed, interpreted, and engaged with by Indonesian fans. Lastly, the social practices explore how these tweets reflect processes of glocalization and establish digital intimacy between the artist and his Indonesian fans.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, there are the results.



Image 1. Twitter account of Yesung Super Junior



Image 2: Yesung's tweet containing hashtag #Indonesia

Textual Analysis

A total of 19 tweets using the hashtag #Indonesia in Indonesian posted by Yesung almost always included more than one hashtag. Yesung's use of hashtags represents forms of trendgaging, bonding, and organizing, in line with ten (10) motivations for using hashtags on social media: trendgaging, bonding, organizing, amusing, reaching, designing, conforming, inspiring, summarizing, and endorsing (Rauschnabel et al., 2019). Yesung used the hashtag #Indonesia as an organizing strategy, categorizing his tweets based on the places he visited, including Indonesia, so he used the hashtag #Indonesia to organize his posts as a way to remember them. In addition, he also used the hashtag #Jakarta alongside #Indonesia, showing that the specific post referred to Jakarta. Yesung also frequently used the hashtag #AsianGames2018 as a form of trendgaging, since the 2018 Asian Games were trending at the time. Twitter users were actively engaging with the hashtag, and naturally, Yesung did not want to miss out on the trend. Lastly, Yesung demonstrated the motivation of bonding in his posts by adding the hashtag #ELF, abbreviation of *Everlasting Friends* for his Indonesian fans, as a way to connect more closely with them.

Yesung's use of the Indonesian language was not always consistent. In some tweets, he used formal Indonesian, such as "*Saya berharap dapat bertemu Anda lagi*" ("I hope to meet you again"). This is considered formal language because of the use of the pronouns *saya* and *Anda*, which are typically found in formal contexts. He also used informal Indonesian, such as *makasih* (a casual form of "thank you"), which is more commonly used in spoken language and friendly settings. Yesung also posted the sentence "*aku kangen kamu*" ("I miss you"), which reflects a sense of closeness or familiarity.

As someone who is not a native Indonesian speaker, Yesung's inconsistent use of the language could be due to the fact that he is still learning Indonesian or was taught by a native speaker. It is also possible that he used a translation application. His language use reflected the presence of translation ideology. Before tweeting in Indonesian, Yesung typically began with Korean, his mother tongue, and then translated it into Indonesian. However, elements of the Korean language remained visible in his Indonesian usage, as seen in his mix of formal Indonesian and localized, informal expressions commonly used in everyday spoken language by native speakers. Furthermore, the reasons behind Yesung's choice of this strategy can be further analyzed.

In addition to using hashtags and both formal and informal Indonesian, Yesung also used emojis to support his posts. He used the lips emoji '💋' several times in different tweets to express affection toward his fans. This emoji appeared in tweets such as

“*Semoga harimu indah.* 🍷 #indonesia #Jakarta @Sjofficial,” which can be interpreted as a goodbye kiss. “*Semoga harimu indah*” translates to “Have a good day.” He also included this emoji in tweets expressing gratitude to his fans, such as “*Makasih 🍷 #asiangames2018 #indonesia #jakarta*” and “*Terima kasih. Aku cinta kamu 🍷 @Sjofficial - #PresidentJokoWidodo #SUPERJUNIOR #AsianGames2018 #indonesia.*” This suggests that his gratitude was shown through a symbolic kiss.

Another frequently used emoji by Yesung is the fire emoji ‘🔥’. This emoji appears in the tweet “*rehearsal 🔥 Sampai jumpa besok !! #asiangames2018 #indonesia #jakarta*” to show his excitement about the rehearsal. In another tweet, “*#Supershow let’s go to #Indonesia !! 🔥 #jakarta gogogo !!*”, Yesung again expressed his enthusiasm about going to Indonesia. There is also the tweet “*before going to the stage 🔥 #asiangames2018 #indonesia #akucintakamu*”, which reflects his excitement before going on stage. Meanwhile, other emojis such as 🤔, 🦋, ❤️, and others used in his tweets also carry their own meanings, depending on the context, and reflect the overall content of the tweets.

Yesung also consistently included photos and videos in each of his tweets. The photos he attached were mostly of himself. Some were related to the verbal text in the tweet, while others were not. The images and videos that were connected to the verbal text included, for example, two photos of identification cards for the closing ceremony of the 2018 Asian Games, supported by his use of the hashtag #AsianGames2018. He also shared photos of rehearsals and the performance stage for the Asian Games, in line with the hashtags he used. In addition, Yesung posted a video taken before going on stage with his fellow Super Junior members. He even shared a photo with former President Joko Widodo and his wife, using hashtags like #PresidentJokowi, #AsianGames2018, and #SUPERJUNIOR to indicate that he had met the Indonesian leader during the event. Yesung also posted photos of places in Jakarta, such as Kota Tua, suggesting they were worth visiting, in accordance with his verbal message: ‘*Meski panas, kalian harus merasakan negara ini (Even though it’s hot, you have to experience this country)*’.

Meanwhile, the visual texts that are not directly related to the verbal texts are mostly portraits of himself. These portraits appear in tweets where he greeted and expressed longing for his fans, known as ELF or *Everlasting Friends*. For instance, in the tweet “*Kami keluar dari bandara. Maaf membuatmu menunggu.*” (“We just left the airport. Sorry for making you wait.”), Yesung does not actually show himself leaving the airport, but instead shares a professionally taken portrait from a photoshoot. Another example is the tweet “*Aku tidak bisa tidur*” (“I can’t sleep”), which is accompanied by a photo of him dressed as if he is about to go on stage, not an image that literally depicts someone who can’t sleep. The photo showing him getting ready to perform, can be interpreted as a sign that he is excited and eagerly anticipating his stage appearance, which could be the reason he can’t sleep.

Discourse Practice

Tweets containing the hashtag #Indonesia that include the Indonesian language didn’t happen by chance. Yesung used them as a way to show that he was about to go to, was in, or had just returned from Indonesia. Since creating his Twitter account in 2010, he began posting with the hashtag #Indonesia in 2016. In the beginning, he used Korean in his #Indonesia tweets. Over time, he started using Indonesian to get closer to his fans in Indonesia. Alongside the hashtag, he added #rindu, an Indonesian word, making it the

first local word paired with the #Indonesia hashtag. He posted that tweet as a throwback to 2015.

After that, Yesung reappeared with the hashtag in 2018. From his post, it was clear that he was excitedly anticipating his visit to Indonesia as a guest star for the closing ceremony of the 2018 Asian Games. The 2018 Asian Games was a continental sporting event involving countries across Asia. Nations recognized as part of Asia came together to compete in various sports. In 2018, Indonesia served as the host country for the quadrennial event.

As a guest star at the sporting event, Yesung posted many tweets in August and September 2018. His tweets, which included the hashtags #Indonesia and #Asiangames2018, expressed messages that he would soon be heading to Indonesia, that he had arrived late in Indonesia, and that he showed off his ID card as a guest star for the Asian Games 2018 closing ceremony. Yesung also expressed his nervousness by asking fans whether they were able to sleep well. Although he didn't directly say that he couldn't sleep, the way he asked his fans suggested that he himself was too anxious to sleep ahead of his performance at the prestigious event.

Soon after Yesung showed signs of nervousness just a few hours before the closing ceremony began. He stated that he couldn't sleep, after previously sharing an update the day before that he had finished rehearsals. His nervousness was rewarded with a satisfying performance by him and Super Junior that delighted the audience. After the event, Yesung continued to use the hashtag #AsianGames2018 to show that he was still caught up in the euphoria of the sports celebration. This was evident when he tweeted, "*aku akan merindukanmu*" ("I will miss you"). This could mean that he would miss his Indonesian fans or the moment he was on the Asian Games 2018 stage. In fact, Yesung kept updating about the 2018 Asian Games a few days later by uploading a photo of Super Junior with Joko Widodo and his wife, who at the time was serving his first term as president of Indonesia. He proudly and gratefully shared the special treatment they received—something that was unusual for Super Junior: being given the opportunity to meet the head of state of Indonesia at that time. As a result, he wrote in his tweet: "*Terima kasih. Aku cinta kamu* 🍷 @Sjofficial - #PresidentJokoWidodo #SUPERJUNIOR #AsianGames2018 #Indonesia." Even now, the meeting with Joko Widodo remains a memorable moment for them.

Yesung also used the hashtag #Indonesia in connection with Super Show 7, Super Junior's 2019 concert, where he greeted Indonesian fans, saying it had been a long time since their last visit to Indonesia. He used the same hashtag again for the K.R.Y. concert — a vocal subunit of Super Junior consisting of Kyuhyun, Ryeowook, and Yesung — in May 2023. That year, one of his tweets showed him on an outing to Kota Tua. Using the Indonesian language, he expressed his admiration for Indonesia, especially for the city of Jakarta. Later, in November 2023, Yesung also used the #Indonesia hashtag during his visit as a soloist. In two of his tweets, he expressed gratitude for the success of his concert and appreciation for the continuous support of his fans.

As previously mentioned, Yesung used the hashtag #Indonesia to organize his moments so that fans could easily find his experiences related to a specific country. The distribution of his tweets shows that Yesung deliberately used the hashtag to connect more closely with his fans. Indonesian fans could also easily access his posts through these hashtags. It can be said that Yesung's distribution of texts through social media was not only about sharing information, but also about building a sense of closeness with his fans through the use of hashtags and the Indonesian language.



In addition, Yesung's tweets contain intertextuality. The choice of words he uses when addressing fans is not unfamiliar within the context of fan-idol relationships. Phrases like '*aku cinta kamu*' (I love you), '*aku rindu kamu*' (I miss you), '*sampai jumpa lagi*' (see you again), and others are commonly used by artists especially K-Pop idols to build emotional closeness with their fans. Yesung is no exception. Drawing from similar expressions in Korean, he made an effort to adapt and translate them into Indonesian in order to connect more deeply with his Indonesian fans.

Yesung's tweets also reflect interdiscursivity the blending of two different discourses within a single text. Out of 19 tweets, he frequently included the hashtag #AsianGames2018. This indicates that Yesung's tweets combined the discourse of a sporting event with a diplomatic agenda, such as his tweet about meeting President Joko Widodo in the context of the 2018 Asian Games. In this way, Yesung's role is not only as an artist but also as a cultural bridge between Korea and Indonesia.

Social Practice

Yesung's tweets using the main hashtag #Indonesia were produced during significant moments that involved direct interaction with Indonesian fans. This situation shows that tweets are not merely a form of personal expression, but also part of a communication strategy in response to specific events that hold emotional meaning for fans. He aimed to create an emotional closeness directly through digital means. This highlights that the tweets are a response to the evolving dynamics of the artist-fan relationship, which today is built not only through physical presence at concerts but also through real-time digital engagement. Thus, Yesung's tweets in this context also reflect a shift in how artists build connections by touching on emotional aspects through digital communication that is relevant to ongoing events.

In addition, Yesung's tweets are also closely tied to the way the entertainment industry operates. Yesung is an artist under SM Entertainment, a major entertainment agency in South Korea. As part of the global entertainment industry, he adheres to certain norms, such as the use of fan service in various local languages to expand market reach. The use of Indonesian language and hashtags related to Indonesia reflects an institutional strategy to maintain the loyalty of the Indonesian fanbase. In this context, social media also functions as an institutional platform that shapes how artists interact and produce content consistently following industry demands.

Yesung's tweets also reflect a strong connection to the phenomenon of glocalization and the spread of K-Pop ideology as a global popular culture. By using the Indonesian language and directly addressing Indonesian fans, Yesung contributes to a cultural hegemony in which Korean culture becomes a central force widely consumed by other countries, including Indonesia. However, on the other hand, the adaptation to Indonesian language and local values indicates a shift in cultural influence. Indonesian fans also play a role in shaping how global culture is communicated. In this way, Yesung's tweets become part of a social practice that illustrates the dynamic relationship between global and local cultures, as well as between artists and fans, within a social sphere shaped by interconnected economic, cultural, and political forces.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Yesung's use of the Indonesian language in his tweets is not a casual or spontaneous act, but rather a Strategic language use embedded within the practice of glocalization. Rather than simply greeting fans, Yesung consciously selects

emotionally charged expressions, local language, and affective symbols such as emojis and hashtags. Through this approach, Yesung not only builds a personal connection with Indonesian fans but also constructs a digital identity that feels intimate and authentic. This digital identity enhances emotional engagement and fosters a sense of belonging among fans toward the artist.

Yesung's digital discourse illustrates how global celebrities can surpass linguistic and cultural boundaries through localized communication strategies, allowing them to sustain fan loyalty and cultivate emotional intimacy in the fast-paced landscape of social media. This practice highlights the evolving role of social media, not merely as a one way communication tool, but as an interactive space that enables real-time, cross-cultural social relations.

Consequently, Yesung's digital strategy contributes to broader discussions on glocalization, where global culture (in this case, K-Pop) is not only spread dominantly, but also adapted to local contexts. This reflects a complex form of cultural hybridity, where identity is no longer fixed, but constantly negotiated through digital interaction. The study emphasizes the importance of analyzing identity construction within digital spaces as part of the broader social dynamics shaped by global economic, cultural, and political forces.

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