

The Awareness and Interest of Child Fans of K-Pop to Traditional Children Songs: A Study in Indonesia

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This study determines to describe the awareness and interest of K-pop fan kids to ‘tembang dolanan’ (playful songs) in Indonesia. Qualitative analysis with phenomenology design utilised in this study. The methods for collecting data were interviews, observations and documentations. Four teachers and 14 students of SD Negeri 1 Tawangmangu, Karanganyar, Indonesia, are the informants. This study used sources and techniques triangulation for data validation and interactive model for data analysis. The result showed that the informants were aware of ‘tembang dolanan’ as children songs which have the ‘playful’ factor. The informants did not perceive them as poem or poetry which have vocabulary fineness, due to children’s limitation in understanding Javanese language structure. K-pop fan informants indeed have interest and attraction towards ‘tembang dolanan’. However, minimum exposure of ‘tembang dolanan’ caused the informants to be more interested in K-pop songs.

Key words: *Primary-school kids, k-pop, Tembang dolanan.*

Introduction

Nowadays, foreign cultures are developing rapidly in Indonesia. One of the cultures that have been spreading for the past few years in Indonesia is Korean culture, commonly known as Korean Wave. According to Lee (2011), Korean wave was triggered by the expansion of Asian entertainment shows, including Korean drama. It’s broadcast on television and internet opened a wide gate for other Korean cultures such as food, dance, and music often called *Korean Pop* (K-pop). The presence of easily-accessed-for-all internet alongside social media helps Korean Wave and *K-pop* reach their fans (Sihombing, 2018). These result in growing fanaticism within social communities.

Fanaticism is a significant phenomenon of the infiltration of foreign cultures into local community. This takes place as the current culture may heavily affect one's comprehension such as loyalty, devotion, etc. (Seregina, Koivisto, dan Mattila, 2011). Fanaticism of K-pop music does not occur only in adults, but also on adolescents and even minors; they consume K-pop music regardless of music that suits their age. K-pop music, through the artists and the musicians, give influences through their hairstyles, wardrobes, costumes and song lyrics. However, K-pop music may carry influences that are unsuitable for child's development - cognitive, affective and psychomotor - and may affect the child's emotion and paradigm on communicating and socialising. Unfortunately, adults among the children's surroundings pay less attention to the song lyrics heard by them (Rasooli & Abedini, 2017).

In fact, primary school children are at the age where they learn as much about life as a means for their future. Childhood is also a phase where children explore and ask questions. This period is often called the 'copying' period. Children imitate adults' speech and behaviour (Mashar, 2011). This condition allows children to mimic everything that exists and happens in their surroundings, including K-pop music. Exploring and imitating their surroundings are interesting ways for children's to learning. They tend to copy what they see, touch or hear. Their learning process is affected by their surroundings: family, school and social community. Hence, children are likely to imitate what they see and hear in K-pop videos.

As a matter of fact, there are many songs that can be enjoyed by children, such as national songs, children songs, and *tembang dolanan* (traditional children music). However, media and children's environment play K-pop music more often compared to children's music. In Indonesia, particularly Central Java Province, there is children's music called *tembang dolanan*. *Tembang dolanan* and is one kind of spoken Javanese literature, referring to it's oral spread in the social community back then. According to Nurgiyantoro (2010), *tembang dolanan* is classified as *geguritan* (poetry). The fineness of language and word structure is a characteristic of *geguritan*. Besides, *tembang dolanan* has cultural, normative, courteous, and religious values. Some examples of *tembang dolanan* are *Lir-ilir*, *Padhang Bulan*, *Jaranan*, *Sluku-sluku Batok*. Yet, these songs are rarely played for children. One distinction of *tembang dolanan* is it's fine rhythmic words. Every line has moral messages and plenty of symbolic meaning. Those meanings have wisdom that can be taught to children by their parents at home, teachers at school and the community. Unfortunately, many adults are not aware of it.

Music is a proper medium for learning. Roffiq, Qiram, and Rubiono (2017) argue that music affects students learning atmosphere inside the classroom. It is undeniable that learning by playing and singing is fancied by children. Children get more interested when they are moving, running and joking around with their peers. This condition may develop their creativity and skill, and please children in participating learning by playing activities. Children favour learning by playing using *tembang dolanan* as a learning medium that

matches their development stage. Lately, children get further away from local wisdom as a consequence of globalisation. This happens as well to *tembang dolanan*, a Javanese local wisdom. Hence, it is important to conduct a profound study on children's awareness and interest on *tembang dolanan* as Javanese local wisdom in Indonesia, specifically on those who are fans of international culture.

According to Winarti, et, al (2015), *tembang dolanan* is a form of communication medium which is able to effectively deliver decent messages to children. In addition, Americo (2014) concluded that learning through value-contained literature *tembang dolanan*, may teach children to develop positive characters. Thus, children should listen to *tembang dolanan* instead of K-pop music. However, it is the other way around in reality. It is expected that children not only sing, but also understand *tembang dolanan* so that they receive it's moral values and messages. *Tembang dolanan* may be used as wisdom for children so that they are prepared to be a decent human being and become Indonesian comprehensively. These children also take an indirect role in preserving spoken Javanese literatures that are endangered, hence it will remain among the waves of cultures and music, particularly K-pop.

Some studies on traditional and modern music are already conducted. The first result obtained by Wai-Chung (2014) reveal that secondary school students in Beijing listen more to pop music from outside of China and they do not enjoy traditional Chinese music completely. As a response, Chinese government appeal to music teachers to teach traditional music. The second study from Sang-Hyeop et al (2017), focused on the perception of Malaysian university students on the Korean Wave. It concluded that Malaysian teenagers have a positive perception on the Korean wave, since Malaysian media often portray Malaysian content on daily basis. The third analysis is Finchum-Sung (2009) which found that the *Korean Wave* phenomenon triggered the interest of all Asia in Korean culture. It was based on the interest in the persona of K-pop artisst, actors and actresses and Korean dramas whose plots are exceptional. K-pop is also appealing since it offers unique music, hence traditional music is left behind and replaced by K-pop. The study from Ayderova (2017) explained that Malaysian folk songs are suitable for children. When taught to children, folk songs that are part of local wisdom may become a medium to learn about their identity and the broad knowledge of the songs. Based on the relevant studies, it can be concluded that modern songs are more popular among students compared to traditional songs. If this keeps happening, local wisdom such as *tembang dolanan* will become extinct. Therefore, it is important to conduct a profound study on children's awareness and interest in *tembang dolanan*, as Javanese local wisdom in Indonesia, specifically in those who are fans of international culture including K-pop.

The relevant studies discussed the bigger popularity of modern music compared to traditional music among school children, yet those studies did not focus on the awareness and interest in



tembang dolanan of primary school students. The author conducted a study of awareness and interest in K-pop fan children on their understanding of *tembang dolanan* among higher grade students in Indonesia. The objective of this study is to describe the awareness and interest K-pop fan children on their understanding of *tembang dolanan*.

Method

Design

The method is qualitative analysis with phenomenology design. According to Sanjaya (2013), qualitative study is a method whose goal is to deliver a comprehensive and profound description of various phenomena and social realities that occurred in the studied community, by depicting models of characters, phenomenon, natures and features.

Place and Time

This study took place where there are many students who are fans of Korean music and able to dance and sing, imitating their K-pop idols' video music. At the same time, *tembang dolanan* is taught in their school. Sometimes before they start studying, the students sing national songs or *tembang dolanan* altogether. Hence, the author chose SD Negeri 1 Tawangmangu. The study was conducted for 5 months, starting from March 2019 until July 2019.

Table 1: Informants Description

No	Initial	Sex	Age	Grade	Status
1	LB	Female	11	5	Student
2	SD	Female	11	5	Student
3	CG	Female	12	6	Student
4	JE	Female	12	6	Student
5	JW	Female	13	6	Student
6	AI	Female	12	5	Student
7	CT	Female	10	4	Student
8	FO	Female	10	4	Student
9	RF	Female	11	5	Student
10	AA	Female	11	5	Student
11	AN	Female	9	4	Student
12	SF	Female	10	4	Student
13	UD	Female	12	5	Student
14	AF	Female	10	4	Student
15	CY	Female	32		Teacher
16	SL	Female	45		Teacher
17	AN	Male	25		Teacher
18	DR	Male	44		Teacher
19	CY	Female	29		Teacher

Note: Male students are excluded because they do not meet the criteria.

Data and Source

This study used quantitative data which are informants' awareness of *tembang dolanan*. The sources are primary and secondary. The primary data are the observations and interviews of the both student and teacher informants. The secondary data are documentation of K-pop themed attributes of the students. The criteria for student informants are that they are healthy, are higher grade students, are fans of K-pop, own K-pop merchandise, and are aware of K-pop. The criteria for teacher informants are that they are healthy, they teach in class on a regular basis, and have taught in a higher grade for a minimum of 1 year.

Data Collection

The data was collected via observations, interviews, and documentations. Observations and interviews were conducted to gather informants' awareness profiles and interests in *tembang dolanan*. Meanwhile, K-pop themed school attributes were documented. The author visited the site to pre-observe as the first step of the study. After that, observations on students'

attributes were done when the study was conducted. Semi-structure interviews with the students' and teachers' informants were employed. The indicator of questions are as follows: K-pop merchandises and attributes; k-pop consumption intensity; appearance; behaviours; K-pop awareness; *tembang dolanan* awareness; interest in *tembang dolanan*; and *tembang dolanan* consumption intensity.

Data Validation

Merged triangulations were employed for data validation. Triangulation is a validation technique for data from various sources from various ways and time. This study used source and technique triangulations. Source triangulation is information obtained from students and teachers. On the other hand, technique triangulation is information obtained from observations and interviews.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the interactive model from Miles and Huberman (1992). The steps for analysing data were data collection, data reduction, data serving, and data conclusion.

Results

The followings describe the awareness and interest of K-pop fan school children on the understanding of *tembang dolanan*.

The Awareness of Tembang Dolanan

Based on the interviews with the informants, it can be concluded that according to students' perceptions, *tembang dolanan* are *tembang* or children's songs that use Javanese language for its lyrics. These songs are usually used in traditional games, for instance *Cublak-cublak Suweng*. The students also stated that *tembang dolanan* contain wisdom and life lessons for children, as mentioned in *Lumbung Desa* and *Padang Bulan*. The students mentioned *Gundul-gundul Pacul*, *Gambang Suling*, and *Jaranan* as examples of *tembang dolanan*. One student also mentioned *Gundul-gundul Pacul* and *Cublak-cublak Suweng* as his/her favorite. The composers of the song were unknown to the students. It is in line with the statement of the following informants.

Informant CG.

“I know *tembang dolanan*. *Tembang dolanan* is old Javanese songs for kids, just like *Gundul-gundul Pacul*. The examples are *Gundul-gundul Pacul*, *Gambang Suling*. My favorite song is *Gundul-gundul Pacul*.” (interview S/CG/18-5-2019)

Informant SD

“I know. *Tembang dolanan* is Javanese songs for kids, just like *Cublak-cublak Suweng*. The examples are *Cublak-cublak Suweng*, *Jaranan*, *Gambang Suling*, *Gundul-gundul Pacul*. My favorite one is *Cublak-cublak Suweng*.” (interview S/SD/18-5-2019)

Informant RF

“*Tembang dolanan* is about wisdoms for kids. There are also ones for playing and singing. The example for wisdom is *Padang Bulan*. It is for *oyo turu sore-sore* (not to sleep in the afternoon). The one for playing is *Jaranan*,” (interview S/RF/18-5-2019)

The Interest in Tembang Dolanan

It is inferred from the interview that the students have interest in *tembang dolanan*. According to a student, *tembang dolanan* is fun to be sung with his/her friends with or without a game. Songs like *Cublak-cublak Suweng* and *Gundul-gundul Pacul* suit the student rhythmically and lyrically. Before Javanese language lessons, the students sang and studied *tembang dolanan* with enthusiasm. The students, whether they were K-pop fans or not, participated in the movement competitions and *tembang dolanan*, that is based on the statements of the following informants:

Informant CG.

“Yes I like *tembang dolanan* because of its funny and meaningful for us. I like *Gundul-gundul Pacul*.” (interview S/CG/18-5-2019)

Informant SF

“I like it, especially *Cublak-cublak Suweng*. It’s because we can use it as a game with friends. It’s also enjoyable to hear.” (interview S/SF/18-5-2019)

Informant DA

“The students are very enthusiastic to sing *tembang dolanan*, they usually stand and clap their hands while singing the songs with excitement. Even more when they are playing the game, the classroom atmosphere always get exciting. One time, every student stood one by one in front of the class to sing, and almost everyone sang it well. I think the enthusiasm here is well due to singing *tembang dolanan* before the Javanese language class started. The enthusiasms

of grade IV, V, VI are equally good, I guess. Class VA in particular, the male students there are many and all active.” (interview GK/DA/16-5-2019)

Infomant DN

“There is annual competition held by the Education Ministry. They are movement and *tembang dolanan* competition. The students are enthusiastic in preparing the competitions. Many students want to participate. Too bad, the school did not get any podiums this year.” (interview KS/DN/16-5-2019)

The Interest in *Tembang Dolanan*

Based on the interviews with the informants, it can be concluded that students who are K-pop fans enjoy *tembang dolanan* when they are in Javanese language class at school. The teachers scheduled the class to sing *tembang dolanan* before the Javanese language class started. Besides, the teachers also taught a traditional game *Cublak-cublak suweng*. The K-pop fan students rarely listen to *tembang dolanan* at home. This was caused by the adults in their home environment who listened to other songs; therefore, the students listened to K-pop more often. It is in line with the statements of the following informants:

Informant LN

“I sing it in every Javanese language class since we are asked to sing it together. At that time we were asked to play *cublak-cublak suweng* in front of the class. I listen and sing K-pop songs more often because I hear it many times at home” (interview S/LN/18-5-2019)

Infomant FO

“Every Javanese language class. Ms. Fiyan teaches us to sing *tembang dolanan*. There was a time I play *cublak-cublak suweng* at home with friends. I mostly listen to K-pop instead of *tembang dolanan*.” (interview S/FO/18-5-2019)

Infomant DA

“The students get lessons about *tembang dolanan* in Javanese language class, and I happen to be the one who teach it. Before the class start, I ask the student to sing *tembang dolanan* along with hand claps and movements. The program runs well since many students are enthusiastic to join. Besides singing, I usually teach them traditional games.” (interview GK/DA/16-5-2019)

The summary of the study can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the Findings

INDICATOR	FINDINGS
Awareness of <i>tembang dolanan</i>	The informants are aware of <i>tembang dolanan</i> as songs for children which are sung in the Javanese language. These songs are usually sung in traditional games.
Interest in <i>tembang dolanan</i>	The informants have an interest in <i>tembang dolanan</i> . According to the students, <i>tembang dolanan</i> are fun to sing with friends while playing games or without any games.
Intensity of singing <i>tembang dolanan</i>	The informants sing <i>tembang dolanan</i> at Javanese language class at school. They rarely enjoy <i>tembang dolanan</i> at home.

Discussions

The Awareness of Tembang Dolanan

Based on the findings, student informants are aware of *tembang dolanan* as children's songs which have lyrics in the Javanese language. These songs are usually used in traditional games, for example *cublak-cublak suweng*. The students also stated that *tembang dolanan* has wisdom and life lessons for children. These songs are *Lumbung Desa* and *Padang Bulan*. They also mentioned *Gundul-gundul Pacul*, *Gambang Suling*, and *Jaranan* as examples of *tembang dolanan*. The most favourite songs are *Gundul-gundul Pacul* and *Cublak-cublak Suweng*. However, the students did not know the composer of those songs.

According to Purwadi and Wayanti (2015) *tembang dolanan* is a Javanese traditional song which contains elements about learning and playing. The learning element of *tembang dolanan* is from the chosen words which have a noble meaning. The playing element takes form as fine words that are easy to remember and hear. Those *tembang* (songs) have good morals for children. They can be a medium for learning by playing. On the other hand, Nugiantoro (2010) explained that *tembang dolanan* are included in *geguritan* (poetry). The fineness of language is attained by processing language into structure parallelism and repetition of sounds or words. The repetitions of sounds of particular words can form poetry aspects and rhythm, which make poems fine and melodious.

The difference between the findings and descriptions in Purwadi and Waryanti (2015) is that the children did not perceive *tembang dolanan* to have a leaning element and fine word structures. In line with Nurgiantoro (2010), children have limitation in languages. Children have not yet reached and understood complex words and sentences. It can be inferred that K-pop fan children perceive *tembang dolanan* as children's songs which contain a playing element. Children did not perceive it as poems or poetry due to their period of reception.

Students' Interest

The findings indicate that informants had an interest in *tembang dolanan*. According to the students, *tembang dolanan* were fun to sing together with or without games. *Tembang dolanan* such as *cublak-cublak suweng* and *gundul-gundul pacul* are suitable for children rhythmically and lyrically. Before Javanese language class started, the student sang *tembang dolanan* excitedly. They were also enthusiastic when they were joining lessons about *tembang dolanan*. The competitions of movement and *tembang dolanan* were always participated by the students, including those who were fans of K-pop.

The findings are in line with Pratama (2013); the students have a positive perception of traditional songs from the Jogjakarta and Central Java region. The majority of students are categorised 'good' and 'very good'. Local music can be utilised as learning materials. These long discussions come to a conclusion that the informants had an interest in, and attraction to *tembang dolanan*. Meanwhile, the positive perception to *tembang dolanan* is indicated to be influenced by experiences. It strengthens the findings of Adelaar (2010) and Hidayat, Fauziati, Nugroho & Mokhtar (2019). Informants generally had fun and happy experiences related to *tembang dolanan* which made them have positive perception and interest with *tembang dolanan*.

Intensity of Tembang Dolanan Usage

The findings indicate that the informants only used *tembang dolanan* during Javanese language class at school. Teachers made a *tembang dolanan* singing program before Javanese language class started. Teachers also taught a traditional game *Cublak-cublak Suweng*. The K-pop fan students rarely listen to *tembang dolanan* at home. This was caused by the adults in their home environment who listened to other songs; therefore the students listened to K-pop more often.

The study of Simbar (2016) concluded that the negative impact emerged when young generations consume Korean pop culture, which gives them less appreciation of local art, including *tembang dolanan* itself. Further, there is dependency of K-pop fans to own K-pop themed merchandises. When overconsuming K-pop, time is wasted. Students should use their time to do productive activities, such as studying. Looking at the findings and previous literature, the conclusions are that K-pop fan students only sing *tembang dolanan* at school. This is due to the adults in their environment who also listened to K-pop and did not introduce *tembang dolanan*. The majority of younger generations choose arts that are able to entertain them using sophisticated technology. Local arts are left aside since they are considered old school. Fuadhiyah (2011) mentioned the factors affecting less interest in local arts and culture (*tembang dolanan*), are the unattractive packaging and socialisation process



that are done by the adults including teachers, so that students are more interested in K-pop and listen to it more often.

It can be concluded that students who are K-pop fans, enjoy *tembang dolanan* when they are in Javanese language class at school. The K-pop fan students rarely listen to *tembang dolanan* at home. This is due to the adults in their home environment who listened to K-pop and the *tembang dolanan* socialisation process is less attractive, hence the children listen to K-pop more often.

Conclusion

Based on the discussions, the conclusion is that informants are aware of *tembang dolanan* as children's songs which contain the element of playing. Informants do not perceive them as poems or poetry which have fineness of words and phrases due to the informants' limitation in understanding word structure of the Javanese language. K-pop fan informants indeed have an interest in and attraction towards *tembang dolanan*. However, minimum consumption of *tembang dolanan* makes the informants more attracted to K-pop.

The author suggests that parents be attentive to their children and limit their consumption of K-pop. Parents should also teach children to *nembang* (sing) in order to preserve *tembang dolanan* as local wisdom from Central Java. Teachers can use *tembang dolanan* as a tool for character education and students should not idolise the K-pop artist excessively.



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