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Japanese Music Cover: A Study of Gramsci Hegemony in Indonesian Music Culture

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Abstract:

Music cover activities are very lasting in the world of digital platforms. Songs from various eras can be represented in a fresher form of presentation. One of them is the presentation in the form of a Japanese version. This study aims to (i) show the process of Japanese cultural hegemony in the tastes of Indonesian pop music lovers and (ii) analyze the potential dangers of Japanese cultural hegemony in pop song covers. This research is descriptive and qualitative with Gramsci's hegemonic theory approach. The research uses the literature study method with secondary research data in the form of online news, YouTube videos, scientific literature, etc. The results of the study found that (i) the hegemony process occurred because of the J-pop trend that touched many lines in the lives of Indonesian teenagers and (ii) hegemony had colonized intellectually and morally.

Keywords: J-pop, cover music, hegemony

1. Introduction

Today, social media platforms provide the widest possible time and place for everyone to create music. Songs that are currently popular will be easily found on YouTube, Spotify, Joox, and others with various cover models with different styles and presentation formats. The music that is presented again is known as cover music. By arranging music, musicians can bring back a song in a different form from the original music. The varied parts are in the form of musical presentation, genre or style, the use of many kinds of musical instruments, and even singing songs in different languages. Music covers are produced indiscriminately so that all kinds of songs can be replayed and uploaded on digital platforms.

Indonesian songs are no exception, where the songs made by Indonesian musicians are translated into other languages. The trend currently found is Indonesian songs which are re-sung into Japanese versions. This cover music is performed by the audience of the song, both local and foreign audiences, and even by the musicians themselves. The songs that are generally covered are Indonesian songs that are on the rise or occupy the top positions on the playlist. The reasons are various, such as wanting to recreate, go viral, exist and show off their abilities or even increase YouTube channel views. Gradually, singing songs that were originally in Indonesian into Japanese is not a new thing.

According to McIver (Soekanto, 2002: 304), culture is an expression of the soul, which is manifested in ways of living and thinking, social life, literary arts, religion, recreation, and entertainment, fulfilling the needs of human life. Finally, the term popular culture emerged. The popular culture here is an element of culture that comes from the people because it relates to everyday problems that everyone enjoys. According to Burton (Chaniago, 2011: 93), popular culture is dominated by producing and consuming material commodities rather than true art that arises from profit motives. It can also be said that popular culture is the result of the creation of an industrial society that is supported by advances in production technology and mass reproduction to make it more accessible to every line of society without the limitations of space and time.

Japan is a developed country that preserves traditional and contemporary culture, commonly called popular culture. Japanese popular culture includes anime, manga, J-fashion, Japanese popular music, dramas, games, and more. Japanese popular music, abbreviated as J-Pop, is all modern Japanese music genres famous worldwide and in demand from all walks of life.

One way to spread cultural hegemony is through the mass media, which indirectly instills ideologies into society. Mass media is an access for hegemonic groups (rulers/dominant class) to exercise their power. The mass media can influence the mindset, paradigm, and ideology of the community or other groups because the mass media are massive and have a significant influence. According to Gramsci, there are two forms of hegemonic leadership, namely intellectual

hegemony and moral hegemony. Intellectual hegemony focuses on knowledge leadership in influencing others, while moral hegemony focuses on leadership based on social relationships and emotional closeness in influencing others. This opinion is in line with Roger Simon's opinion, which states that hegemony does not arise with power but uses political and ideological leadership.

Contemporary Japanese music is closely linked to Western cultural influences. After World War II, the American military occupation of Japan began to introduce several new musical genres, including jazz, boogie-woogie, mambo, blues, and country. The existence of Japanese Pop was triggered by the desire of Japanese musicians to compete with western musicians. Therefore, the term J-Pop emerged as a genre of music that rivals popular Western music. Although in its development, song lyrics are sometimes written in English. Anyone can access Japanese songs easily through many digital platforms.

With the YouTube platform that allows someone to upload their music videos, the trend of changing song lyrics into other languages is increasingly happening. Thus, if an Indonesian pop song is popular, there will be two versions of the song, of which fans also await the Japanese version. The Japanese version was chosen because J-pop already surrounds young people in culture. So it will be more familiar to use it. Japanese musicians also capture the public's interest in Japanese people who sing Indonesian songs in Japanese. Gramsci's theory of hegemony will investigate the existence of this feeling of pleasure and enthusiasm. The final objective of this study is to explain the process of Japanese cultural hegemony in the Indonesian pop music market and to analyze the potential dangers of Japanese cultural hegemony.

2. Research Methods

This research is descriptive and qualitative with a hegemonic approach from Gramsci's perspective. The hegemonic perspective tries to see the process of ideological domination of the dominant group over the subordinate group through voluntary intellectual and moral leadership. The subjects of this research are Indo-Japanese cover music lovers. The research uses the literature study method, which is a series of activities related to collecting library data, reading, and recording and processing research materials. Sources of data have been obtained from secondary data in the sources of books, journals, and online sites on the internet.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Development of J-Pop in Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the countries that follow the development of Japanese pop culture. The globalization of Japanese pop culture can now be confirmed with an increase in Japanese-themed events such as manga festivals, cosplay, anime, culture, and J-pop concerts. J-pop itself entered Indonesia in the 1980s with the song Mayumi Itsuwa Kokoro no tomo. Then suddenly, all famous music lovers started speaking Japanese (Ryani, 2014). So far, many Indonesian bands and music groups in the Jpop genre are involved. Not only using Japanese in every song but also using Japanese fashion attributes and styles.

The emergence of Japanese music culture cannot be separated from the role of animated films from that country, or more familiarly called anime. Original soundtracks from old anime played on national television, such as Doraemon, Dragonball, Sailormoon, and others, are one of the influences of the entry of Japanese music into Indonesia. Since the emergence of J-pop in Indonesia, J-pop can immediately attract people's attention and become famous. The popularity of J-pop, anime and other popular Japanese cultures in Indonesia impacts the increasing number of people who want to learn Japanese. This is known through a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation which places Indonesia as number two with the most Japanese learners in the world (Widodo, 2010). 2018). J-pop not only has a good impact, but J-pop also has a bad impact on some Jpop fans in the eyes of the public. The impact that can be felt the most is the excessive fanaticism which is characterized by an attitude of loving J-pop too deeply in every aspect of his life.

3.2. J-Pop Hegemony in Indonesian Pop Music Covers

The style of J-pop and how J-pop is adopted into Indonesian pop songs are very popular. Nowadays, many people make cover versions of other people's songs, record them, and upload them to YouTube. The cover versions produced also vary, some are simple, and some are done professionally. The term cover song can be interpreted as songs of celebrities or famous singers that are reproduced without changing the original text and songs. The cover is the activity of entering or playing other people's songs/music previously recorded and performed by other singers or artists. Cover can also be interpreted as an appearance by someone other than the creator of the music/song (Dewi, 2017:513).

Popular Japanese music (J-pop) has not only entered Indonesia but has also spread throughout the world. The strategy of spreading J-pop globally cannot be separated from the role of other Japanese pop cultures in TV shows, movies, manga/comics, anime, games, music, and fashion (Venus and Lucky Helmi, 2007:73).

Of these entertainments, anime, manga, j-fashion, and Japanese pop music are the most popular in Indonesia. The dominance of Japanese products in the field of art proves that there is a higher Japanese power than the Indonesian people, which is carried out without the threat of violence, namely in the form of hegemony.

The process of hegemony in question occurs massively with the help of the mass media. The media is one way to spread Japanese ideology indirectly through the shows they display. With the media, Japan introduces and enlivens Japanese pop culture to cover music lovers. Gramsci (in Strinati, 1995:57) said that mass media and popular culture are concepts. Then, through the media spreads, an ideology packaged in Japanese popular culture creates a false awareness among its lovers. The Japanese media industry, such as Kadokawa Shoten, Libre Shupan, and Tokuma Shoten, are the

ruling groups that play a role in spreading Japanese popular culture in Indonesia. The spread of Japanese popular culture not only increases opportunities for cultural exchange and cultural interaction between Japan and Indonesia but also becomes a means of hegemony in terms of culture that can influence people's mindsets and lifestyles, especially in the younger generation. In this case, the hegemonic group is a community of Japanese popular culture lovers who unconsciously consume the results of Japanese popular culture in their daily lives.



Figure 1: Indonesian Pop Song Re-Sung in Japanese by the Original Musician

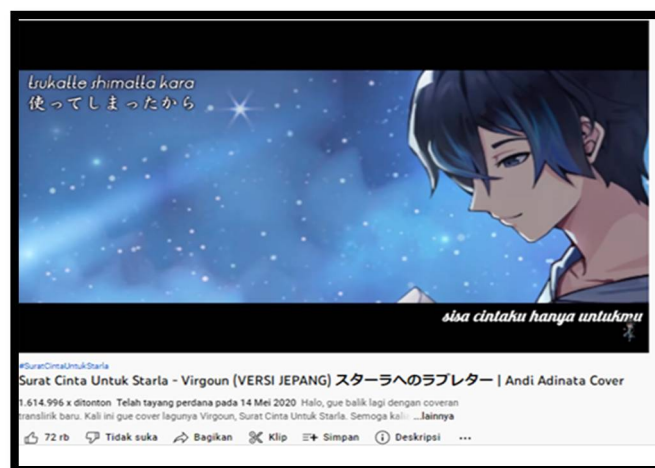


Figure 2: Indonesian Pop Song Made In Japanese with Anime Visualization

Gramsci (Amroshi, 2014: 3) states that a form of control over certain groups using intellectual and moral leadership is based on consensus. In other words, the hegemonic group agrees with the ideological values of the rulers. Intellectual hegemony focuses on knowledge leadership that influences others, and moral hegemony focuses on leadership based on emotional intimacy and social relationships that influence others. The longer a group consumes Japanese pop culture, the more ideology permeates and takes root among Japanese pop culture lovers. Without realizing it, the mindset and behavior of music cover lovers are changed by the influence of Japanese popular culture. This is one of the interests of hegemony because it indirectly affects the growth of interest in all things related to Japan. One of the dominant political parties is the Japanese media industry, which senses and uses Japanese pop culture fans. Gramsci explains this through the fact that hegemony also includes the role of capitalists in seizing state power and maintaining the power it has received.

With the existence of the mass media that has spread Japanese culture, it does not mean refusing to study or get to know the culture of other countries. This does not mean we reject the artists' creativity and work. However, this is fatal if we become passive connoisseurs without understanding the possibility of 'colonizing thoughts'. By preferring Japanese covers, we are perpetuating a paradigm that Indonesian songs will only sound cooler and more global if they are in Japanese. Every time there is a Japanese who covers an Indonesian song in Japanese and then after that, we praise him but do not appreciate the original song; it is certainly not a wise move. They unconsciously help the Japanese state to spread its culture orally and, of course, not paid for by the Japanese government. The Japanese media industry uses music cover fans as the main consumers of Japanese popular culture products. They are also agents of the spread of Japanese culture in addition to media, television, magazines, and the internet. With the increasing audience of Japanese cover music, Japan has become more flexible in spreading its culture through all media that can be accepted in various circles. This is what Gramsci means that hegemony does not only include the role of capitalists, both in seizing state power and maintaining the power obtained. With the consumption of music translated into Japanese without being equipped with nationalism awareness, slowly and unconsciously, our daily lives will slowly be filled with other countries' cultures.

4. Conclusion

Media is a place that can be accessed by hegemony who spread their ideology indirectly through broadcasting technology. The hegemony that appears on YouTube music covers is in the form of intellectual hegemony and moral hegemony. Knowing and using Japanese in everyday life is a form of Japanese intellectual hegemony enjoyed by music lovers. On the other hand, moral hegemony allows music lovers to internalize the lifestyle offered by musical performances or other Japanese pop culture, from hairstyles to dress styles to collecting Japanese-related items.

5. Recommendation

Based on the results of the discussion from the research, the important thing to do is not always be silent on what is displayed and offered by foreign cultures, but absorb and filter what we see, whether it is in accordance with values and norms or not. This is so as not to be bound by the false consciousness of capitalist parties who try to subject us to popular culture that is spread through the media.

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