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## **ETHNOLINGUISTICS OF MADURESE LANGUAGE PRESERVATION THROUGH ORAL LITERATURE IN LOK-OLOK ART**

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### **Abstract**

In facing the challenges of globalisation and modernisation, the preservation of local language and culture, especially the Madurese language, is becoming increasingly important. This research focuses on the oral literature tradition of Lok-Olok as an effort to maintain and preserve the Madurese language. Lok-Olok is a poem or verse spoken in the Karapan Sapi performance. The art of Lok-Olok not only reflects the beauty of language, but also conveys the cultural values and identity of Madurese society. This research uses a qualitative approach with ethnomethodology method to understand the role and meaning of Lok-Olok in the context of language preservation. Through interviews with tokang lok-olok and observation, this research explores how oral literature becomes a reinforcement and preservation of the Madurese language. The results show that the involvement of the younger generation in Lok-Olok is very important to foster a love for Madurese language and culture. By understanding and preserving Lok-Olok, it is hoped that the Madurese language can survive and remain relevant in the modern era. This research provides insight into the importance of preserving oral literature as part of efforts to maintain the sustainability of the Madurese language.

*Keywords: Ethnolinguistics, Madurese Language Preservation, Lok-Olok, Oral Literature*

### **Introduction**

The era of globalization marked by the rapid development of technology and communication has made the preservation of local languages and cultures an increasingly urgent challenge (Zarinah, 2024). Language is an integral part of a society's cultural identity and serves as a means of expressing values, traditions, and knowledge passed down from generation to generation (Adinda, Zira DKK, 2024). However, in many

parts of the world including Indonesia, regional languages are threatened with extinction due to the dominance of national and international languages. Therefore, it is important to find effective ways to maintain the sustainability of local languages in a broader context.

The Indonesian region has cultural and linguistic diversity which is a wealth that must be preserved (Luthfia, Dewi 2021). Indonesia has more than 700 regional languages with tremendous cultural potential (Mulya, Oktavia, 2024). However, it also faces serious threats from modernisation and globalisation. The use of Indonesian as the language of instruction in various aspects of life including education and media has caused some regional languages such as Madurese to lose their existence. This situation needs to be addressed by the preservation of oral literature as a form of cultural expression that is increasingly relevant. Oral literature serves as a means to educate the younger generation about cultural values and Madurese identity.

One of the significant forms of oral literature in Madura is Lok-Olok (Hefni, 2014). Lok-Olok is a poem or verse that is often performed in traditional events, especially in Karapan Sapi performances. Lok-Olok not only reflects the beauty of the Madurese language but also serves as a medium to convey the values, norms, and cultural identity inherent in Madurese society. In this context, Lok-Olok has a very important role in maintaining the existence of the Madurese language. Through the verses spoken in the art of Lok-Olok, the younger generation in the Madura region is invited to recognise and understand the roots of Madurese culture so that they can preserve the Madurese language which is rich in meaning and symbolism.

The participation of the younger generation in Lok-Olok art is crucial to ensure the continuity of the tradition. The younger generation is required to actively participate in maintaining Madurese culture and language by developing a sense of love for Madurese language and cultural identity (Widodo, Suwandi DKK, 2017). Such involvement is expected to foster awareness of the importance of preserving the Madurese language as part of an invaluable cultural heritage. Through the preservation of oral literature, it is hoped that the Madurese language can continue to live and adapt to changing times so

that it remains relevant and dynamic in the lives of Madurese people. The formulation of the problem in this paper is how the art of Lok-Olok can contribute to the preservation of the Madurese language. In addition, this paper aims to explore the meaning and function of Lok-Olok as a means of preserving Madurese language and culture.

### **Method**

This research adopts a qualitative approach with an ethnological research type. The aim is to deeply understand the Lok-Olok tradition, especially in the context of the Karapan Sapi event. Through this approach, the research will analyse the verbal expressions and gestures used by tokang Lok-Olok and the social context behind them. The subjects in this study are tokang Lok-Olok, who are Madurese community leaders with significant experience in Madurese traditions. The selection of subjects was done purposively, aiming to gain deeper insights related to their role in the preservation of the Madurese language and the cultural values contained in this tradition. The data collection techniques used include observation, documentation, and interviews. Data analysis will be conducted using an interactive analysis model, where the analysis process takes place simultaneously with data collection. The stages followed include data collection, data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion drawing or verification. This approach aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of the meaning and function of the Lok-Olok tradition in the context of Madurese culture and its contribution to the preservation of language and local identity.

### **Findings**

#### **A. The Essence of Lok-Olok Art as Madurese Oral Literature**

Lok-Olok art is a very important form of oral tradition in Madurese society (Hefni, 2014). This performance not only functions as entertainment, but also holds rich cultural

and linguistic values. Lok-Olok, which literally means poetry addressed to the cow, is a poetic expression spoken by tokang Lok-Olok in the context of the Karapan Sapi performance (Irani, Adhani DKK, 2021). In every performance, tokang Lok-Olok expresses respect and affection for the cow in a very distinctive and affectionate way as a form of appreciation to the cow because the cow has been considered like a child (Hadi, 2018). The language used in Lok-Olok art uses Madurese through poetic and symbolic words. This is because Lok-Olok is a poem that wants to describe the characteristics of cows very beautifully (Masruchin, 2017). The phrases uttered contain deep meaning and reflect the social and cultural conditions of Madurese society (Pongsibanne, 2017). For example, in one of the phrases spoken in the performance, the tokang Lok-Olok will say the name of the cow with a distinctive rhythm and rhythm and add artistic value to the delivery. Here is one example of Lok-Olok art spoken by tokang Lok-Olok before starting Karapan Sapi.

*kacong buwâna atè* (Alas my child the baby)  
*tadâ" bhunga andi" ana"* (It's good to have a child)  
*kanṭa bâ"na* (like you)  
*èabas dâri adâ" gâgâ"* (Seen from the front, you are dashing)  
*èabas dâri èrèng mantèrèng* (Seen from the side, you are radiant)  
*akanṭa arjuna kembhâr* (Like Arjuna's twin)  
*Adu kacong, pola bâ"na* (Alas my son, perhaps you)  
*Atapa pèttobelâs taon è gunong Maraong* (Ascended Mount Raung for 17 years)  
*Salbhâk macan lopot.* (Escaped from the jaws of a tiger)

The art of Lok-Olok reflects the tokang Lok-Olok which shows the value of Madurese culture that highly values and nurtures cows like a child. In the Lok-Olok performance, there is a structure that characterises it. The performance begins with a greeting to the audience, where the tokang Lok-Olok greets and invites the audience to participate in the event. This creates a close relationship between the tokang Lok-Olok and the audience to build a strong interactive atmosphere. After the opening greeting, tokang Lok-Olok continues with the announcement of the cow's name. This

announcement is not just a name, but is complemented by poetic expressions that describe the nature and speciality of the cow with poetic words in the Madurese language.

The names of cows expressed in Lok-Olok art contain deep and symbolic meanings. For example, a tokang Lok-Olok may express, 'Kaulâ andi' bur-lèburan duwa' Nè'-kenè' cabbhi lètè' Moghâ dhaddhi sampornana,' which not only mentions the name of the cow, but also implies hopes and prayers for perfection. Through this expression, the tokang Lok-Olok invites the audience to understand the meaning behind the spoken words, strengthening the connection between art, language, and Madurese culture (Meliartawan, Sudarta, 2021). The art of Lok-Olok has a very important meaning in the preservation of the Madurese language. In the context of a society that is increasingly affected by the times and social changes, the preservation of local languages is an urgent matter. Lok-Olok art with its rich language serves as an effective medium to preserve and promote the use of Madurese through the role of literature in the form of poetry in Madurese. In every performance, the use of Madurese language that is poetic and rich in vocabulary becomes a vital means to introduce the younger generation to Madurese language and culture.

In addition, the art of Lok-Olok also creates strong social interaction among community members. It becomes a place for people to gather, share stories, and strengthen their sense of community (Sudarto, Nurholis DKK, 2024). Tokang Lok-Olok not only acts as a messenger, but also as a link that connects tradition and culture with the daily lives of the community. In this case, Lok-Olok becomes a medium that strengthens social networks, where the Madurese language functions as an effective communication bridge. The art of Lok-Olok is not just a form of entertainment or mere words but a vehicle to convey cultural values, maintain the identity of Madurese society, and preserve the Madurese language. In every performance, there is a moral message contained in the phrases delivered, reflecting local wisdom passed down from generation to generation. This shows that the art of Lok-Olok is a representation of the soul of Madurese society which is full of wisdom, rich language, and noble values.

## **B. Ethnolinguistics of Madurese Language Preservation through Oral Literature in Lok-Olok Art**

Ethnolinguistics is a discipline that studies the interaction between language and culture in the context of a particular society (Yusuf, 2022). Ethnolinguistics not only focuses attention on linguistic aspects, but also investigates how language functions as a representation of the values, norms, and traditions of the people who use the language. In terms, ethnolinguistics consists of two main components, namely 'ethno' which refers to ethnic groups and 'linguistics' which relates to language (Sumitri, 2016). Therefore, ethnolinguistic studies provide a deeper understanding of the function of language in social and cultural contexts. In the context of Madurese society, language not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a medium that contains rich cultural meanings. The preservation of Madurese language becomes very important to maintain the identity and cultural heritage of the community. One form of preservation carried out by the Madurese community is through the art of Lok-Olok which is an oral tradition involving poems delivered in the Karapan Sapi performance. In Lok-Olok art, Madurese language is not only preserved but also expressed in a creative and dynamic oral form.

From an ethnolinguistic perspective, the use of language in Lok-Olok art creates a space for people to interact and communicate in a cultural context. The language used in Lok-Olok art is rich in expressions, metaphors, and symbols that are unique to the Madurese community (Ambarwati, 2019). The process of delivering poetry does not only rely on words, but also involves non-verbal elements that enrich the meaning conveyed. This art exclusively features poems or verses delivered in Madurese to reflect the deep attachment between language and culture in the daily lives of Madurese people. In every performance of Lok-Olok, the Madurese language plays a central role. It is used as the main medium to convey messages and cultural values to the audience. In Lok-Olok art, the use of Madurese language is not limited to everyday language, but is packaged poetically with a choice of beautiful and meaningful words. The Madurese language used

in lok-olok art is not only a means of communication but also a symbol of the ethnic and cultural identity of the Madurese community.

From an ethnolinguistic point of view, Lok-Olok art can be seen as a form of language documentation and preservation. In a situation where regional languages are increasingly marginalised by globalisation and modernisation, arts such as Lok-Olok help to keep the Madurese language relevant and used in social life. This art is one way to keep the Madurese language from being forgotten by the younger generation, given that it is used in interesting and meaningful forms of expression in the context of cultural traditions that become an identity such as Karapan Sapi.

Lok-Olok itself is a poem or verse spoken by tokang Lok-Olok or the person assigned to deliver messages in the Karapan Sapi performance. In every Karapan Sapi performance, tokang Lok-Olok expresses verses filled with metaphors and cultural symbols. Tokang Lok-Olok in delivering a poem to introduce cattle during Karapan Sapi not only describes the physical characteristics of cattle, but also adds deeper symbolic meanings that reflect the close relationship between humans and animals in the agrarian life of Madurese society.

Lok-Olok is an important part of cultural communication because the language used contains many local cultural references that are not understood by outsiders. In this context, Lok-Olok art functions as a tool to transmit cultural values to the next generation. For example, in Lok-Olok poetry, cows are not only seen as farm animals but as symbols of strength, resilience and success for their owners. This is reflected in the use of distinctive and meaningful terms that are often used in Lok-Olok poems. Linguistically, Lok-Olok presents dialectal variations and a rich vocabulary in the Madurese language. The language used by tokang Lok-Olok is a high level language or a language full of rich metaphors and suppositions that are difficult to understand by ordinary speakers. This is where the artistic value of Lok-Olok lies as oral literature. Lok-Olok not only uses language as a means of ordinary communication but also as a tool to enrich and preserve the Madurese language.



One of the interesting aspects of the art of Lok-Olok is the way the language is conveyed. Lok-Olok does not only cover the language aspect, but also the intonation, rhythm, and gesture of the tokang Lok-Olok, all of which reinforce the message that the tokang Lok-Olok wants to convey. This shows that the art of Lok-Olok involves more than just verbal language, but also non-verbal elements that support the overall meaning and aesthetics of the performance. So the Lok-Olok performance is not only about listening but also about feeling and understanding the whole cultural message implied in it.

In the context of ethnolinguistics, the study of Lok-Olok art provides insight into how people use language as a means to express and preserve Madurese cultural identity. The Madurese language used in Lok-Olok art illustrates the characteristics of Madurese culture as well as a way for the community to affirm the existence and identity of Madurese culture in the midst of globalisation. The use of language in Lok-Olok art also reflects local wisdom that is manifested in the choice of words that are full of symbolism and meaning.

As part of the oral tradition, the art of Lok-Olok not only functions as entertainment, but also as a means to strengthen social relations in the community. Lok-Olok performances are usually attended by various groups, ranging from children to adults. In this context, the art of Lok-Olok plays an important role as a medium of intergenerational communication so that cultural values and language are transmitted from one generation to another. Younger generations who watch or listen to Lok-Olok will learn about Madurese history, traditions and cultural values through language that is rich in meaning.

### **C. Significance of Oral Literature in Madurese Cultural Identity**

Oral literature is an integral part of a community's culture that functions as a tool to convey values, norms, and identity (Hidayat, 2024). In Madura, oral literature has various forms, one of which is Lok-Olok (Badrih, 2018). The art of Lok-Olok is not only a means of entertainment, but also reflects the uniqueness of Madurese culture and identity. Through Lok-Olok, Madurese people are able to express collective experiences, maintain traditions, and celebrate Madurese identity and culture. The importance of oral



literature in the life of Madurese society cannot be underestimated. Lok-Olok as a form of oral literature has a central role in maintaining and preserving local culture. Lok-Olok is a form of poetry associated with the tradition of Karapan Sapi. In this performance, each poem contains a deep meaning, reflecting the outlook on life of the Madurese community using language rich in symbolism and meaning. Madurese people can express themselves and convey stories and pass on noble values from the art of Lok-Olok. The use of language in Lok-Olok reflects the richness of Madurese culture so that what is used is not just a symbol, but also contains deep meaning. This shows that oral literature does not only function as a communication tool, but also as a medium to convey local wisdom.

The involvement of the younger generation in the art of Lok-Olok is very important for the sustainability of Madurese traditions. The values contained in Lok-Olok can be passed on and maintained through the participation of the younger generation so that the Madurese language is not eroded by the slang language that is widely used by the younger generation. Oral literature involving traditional arts can foster a sense of love and pride in Madurese culture. Involvement in Lok-Olok also provides an opportunity for the younger generation to learn about the history and traditions of Madurese society. Thus, Lok-Olok is not only an art form, but also an effective educational tool to build awareness of Madurese culture to the younger generation so that it continues to be preserved.

From the point of view of cultural identity, Lok-Olok acts as a symbol of the Madurese community. This is because in every performance, people not only enjoy the art but also celebrate collective identity through Karapan Sapi. Involvement in Lok-Olok creates a sense of belonging and togetherness among community members. Each performance becomes a moment to strengthen social and cultural bonds so that the community can feel a shared identity as Madurese. In the context of growing globalisation, the preservation of oral literature such as Lok-Olok is an unavoidable challenge. The flow of modernisation is a threat to the existence of local traditions that can cause the loss of existing cultural values. However, the Madurese community shows resilience and

commitment in maintaining Madurese cultural heritage. Initiatives to support the sustainability of Lok-Olok in every Karapan Sapi performance at cultural festivals and art performances provide space for the younger generation to engage and learn about the richness of oral literature.

Lok-Olok art also has a role in strengthening the character of Madurese society. Through the values contained in each poem, people are taught about the importance of mutual respect, hard work, and maintaining good relations with the surrounding environment (Lubis, 2023). Lok-Olok is a means to form a strong moral identity so that Madurese people can strengthen the values to always maintain the ethics and norms that apply in society (Hasan, 2021). Thus, oral literature functions as a tool to build positive character in Madurese society. Lok-Olok is also a link between the ancestors and the younger generation in Madura. In Lok-Olok performances, the younger generation is introduced to poems using the Madurese language that explore the meaning contained in each poem. Interaction between generations can create a transfer of knowledge that is important in the preservation of Madurese traditions.

The importance of Lok-Olok in the social context is a priority because the performance that opens the Karapan Sapi performance becomes a place to strengthen social solidarity among members of the Madurese community. The art of Lok-Olok also serves as a tool to understand and explore local cultural values. In each poem, there is wisdom that can provide lessons for the Madurese community. The messages conveyed through Lok-Olok can be a reflection of how Madurese people interact with the environment and each other. By understanding and living the values contained in Lok-Olok, people can strengthen their Madurese cultural identity while enriching their knowledge on how to live harmoniously and sustainably with the surrounding environment.

The use of Madurese language in Lok-Olok shows the importance of language preservation as part of cultural identity. Language is one of the key elements in the formation of identity so that Lok-Olok becomes a means to preserve the Madurese

regional language. Oral literature plays an important role in shaping and preserving Madurese cultural identity. Through the art of Lok-Olok, people can express themselves and introduce the identity of Madurese society. The involvement of the younger generation in Lok-Olok is also a hope to maintain the sustainability of local traditions and culture amid the challenges of globalization.

### **Conclusion**

Oral literature such as Lok-Olok has a crucial role in preserving the Madurese language. Through each poem delivered, Lok-Olok not only maintains the use of Madurese language but also enriches the existing vocabulary and grammar. These works hold cultural values and local wisdom that are important for the younger generation to learn so that the Madurese language remains alive and relevant in the social and cultural context. In addition, Lok-Olok functions as a medium to disseminate the use of Madurese language in various circles of society. This is because in every performance, the language used in Lok-Olok shows the beauty and uniqueness of the Madurese language so that people feel encouraged to learn and use it in daily communication. This helps foster awareness of the importance of preserving the language as part of the Madurese cultural identity and makes it relevant in the midst of globalization challenges because of the literature of the Lok-Olok art.

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