

AN ANALYSIS OF ORAL TRADITION AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

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Abstract : This study aims to investigate the role of oral tradition as a significant source in reconstructing history. The research method used is a literature study, with reference to several previous studies that mainly focused on collecting data from libraries and previous research. The results of this study are intended to provide an overview and description of the facts, nature, and relationships between phenomena that occur. The use of oral tradition as a historical source provides a valuable alternative, although there are indeed weaknesses and limitations in its verification capacity. Oral tradition is not only limited to the oral dimension, but also includes forms and patterns of oral communication. It became an integral part of the culture and had links to local history. One strategy to utilize oral tradition as a source of local history is to record it through interview techniques and document it in the form of sound or written recordings. Such interview notes and voice recordings can be integrated as part of a document that can be analyzed with the support of other reference materials. The importance of oral tradition in local history is not only limited to cultural value, but also can create economic value for the community in this era.

Keywords : *Oral tradition, History learning, Language Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Tradition acts as a rich inheritance of culture that reflects diversity in society. In this regard, oral tradition becomes a key element, as stated by Finnegan Anthropologists (in La Sudu, 2012). Folklore and oral historians often refer to oral traditions, which have varied meanings, often interpreted as cultural expressions or ways of running something governed by inherited practices, ideas, or values.

The ability of oral tradition to store the characteristics of a culture makes it an inseparable function. The oral tradition, which has existed since ancient times, involves not only the oral dimension but also includes the forms and patterns of oral communication. According to Sibarani (2012), oral tradition can develop into community knowledge and be passed down through various versions from one generation to the next.

Even though we are in the modern era, oral tradition remains relevant and closely related to the life and culture of society. Although cultural and moral messages are transmitted through oral traditions for generations, we see a threat to the continuity of these traditions due to a lack of interest from the current generation. Factors such as the decline of local culture, technological advancements, and the influence of foreign cultures also play a role in this.

Since oral tradition is an inseparable part of local culture, its role is very significant in Indonesian society. Oral tradition is one of the elements forming uniqueness and diversity in the identity of Indonesian society. The results of the study, as reported by Irwanto in 2012, show that oral tradition not only involves fairy tales, mythologies, and legends, but also conveys information regarding life views, identities, expressions, and religious systems and community beliefs.

As a dynamic element, oral tradition has the potential to contribute to art and culture. The uniqueness of oral tradition arises from its nature that is open to development, it can even be a tourist attraction with aesthetic value. Oral tradition is also able to support local history along with local historical relics that require community attention. Thus, oral tradition can benefit society through its contribution to local historical growth.

Overall, the existence of local historical oral traditions in the modern era has a positive impact when well developed. Its diverse functions are the focus of this study, expected to provide a descriptive picture of the facts, nature, and relationships between observed phenomena, as well as stimulate further understanding of the value and role of oral tradition in today's society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts the literature study method as the main approach. Syaodih (2009) states that library research methods refer to a series of studies that focus on how to collect data from libraries or research that investigates its purpose through various library data. Wiratna Sujarweni (2014) explained that literature studies are used to develop concepts or theories that are the basis of research. The literature collection in this study focused on investigating oral tradition to understand its scope. This research has the hallmark of literary research, involving: 1) direct linkage to text or figures without involvement in the real world or witnesses to events; 2) use existing data directly related to existing sources; 3) utilize secondary data; and 4) data is not limited by space and time.

Before reviewing library materials, researchers selectively select relevant sources of information, such as textbooks, scientific journals, theses containing research results, and other appropriate sources. The next step involves analyzing

the sources needed to interpret the data that has been collected.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Most Indonesians pass down their customs for generations, including verbal and nonverbal traditions. This tradition is mostly oral, as a collection of customs that become an integral part of the culture of the community and are passed down through the tradition of word of mouth. In historical research, historical sources play an important role as reliable references, especially in the study of local history. Kuntowijoyo (2013) stated that the heuristic stage is crucial in the historical research process, where the search and acquisition of sources is a significant first step through literature research, field observation, interviews, and other methods.

Historical writing and research rely heavily on heuristics as a method for searching and obtaining historical sources. Heuristics are considered the first step that determines credibility in historical writing, especially given the difficulties researchers often face in finding the required resources. Historical sources, as a rule, are divided into two main types: primary sources, that is, information gathered directly from contemporary events, and secondary sources, obtained from third parties such as essays or books written by historians.

Oral tradition becomes an important choice when looking for primary sources, especially on historical events where the main witness has died. Oral tradition, which involves witnessing events passed down from one generation to the next, has a vital role in reconstructing history. However, keep in mind that oral tradition has its limitations and drawbacks, including its ability to reinterpret the source and the degree of subjectivity of the data.

In recreation of local history, oral traditions are often thought of as stories or legends containing myths. However,

awareness of ecological preservation and tourist destinations towards the environment lends legitimacy to oral traditions. Local oral traditions can be processed and have economic value, in line with the times and human needs for tourism. In this case, various recreational oral traditions can be categorized according to the development of the times and the needs of society.

Performances

In the realm of performing arts, we find a variety of oral traditions that are not only a source of inspiration but also involve themselves as an essential backdrop for various performing arts. The existence of this tradition creates a special dimension that gives it a distinctive and profound touch, permeating into the essence of each performance.

This oral tradition, inextricably intertwined with the world of performing arts, not only creates unique visual and auditive experiences but is also deeply rooted in rich cultural values. Each performance sets the stage for an oral heritage passed down from generation to generation, contributing to the richness of our cultural heritage.

Taking inspiration from oral tradition, performing arts become more than just visual presentations. Every movement, melody, and expression of the artist contains traces of oral narratives that take the audience on a journey across time and culture. This tradition creates a bridge between past and present, giving each artwork a vibrant historical dimension.

The importance of oral tradition in performing arts is not only about preserving heritage, but also about enriching the meaning of each work. Engagement with oral tradition provides emotional depth and a deep understanding of the culture surrounding the performance. As spectators, we don't just watch the show; We feel the existence of cultural heritage that lives in every nuance of the performance.

By embracing oral tradition, performing artists not only create visual entertainment, but also become pioneers in maintaining the sustainability and authenticity of cultural heritage. The application of these traditional elements in performing arts becomes a form of respect for the cultural roots that make up our identity.

In this sense, every art performance becomes a celebration not only of the artist's creativity but also of the oral legacy passed on from time to time. The diversity of oral traditions gives invaluable color to the world of performance, creating an immersive and moving experience for the audience.

Literary Works

Pramudya Ananta Toer's literary work "Mangir" is not only a novel, but also a source of inspiration that moves many individuals to elevate it into the realm of performing arts, especially in the form of drama. At this level, the role of oral tradition plays an important role in bringing rich and deep interpretations of the literary work, bringing the creation of performing arts to an alluring new dimension.

By adapting "Mangir" into a dramatic form, the oral tradition made an invaluable contribution to the process of interpretation. This tradition becomes a bridge between the literary text and the audience, bringing a distinctive oral feel and bringing to life the essence of the story. The involvement of oral tradition not only involves narrative aspects, but also presents cultural nuances and values contained in the story.

In the interpretation of performing arts, the drama resulting from "Mangir" is not simply a mechanical reproduction of the text of the novel. In contrast, oral tradition brings nuances of creativity, providing flexibility to explore deeper emotional and cultural dimensions. The staging of drama becomes more than just a visualization of

words, but an evocative and pervasive experience.

Oral tradition also provides space for improvisation and adjustment, allowing artists to bring their unique innovations and interpretations to the story of "Mangir". In this case, drama becomes a lively medium, speaking to the audience through dynamic and evocative spoken language. Oral tradition is not only a supporting element, but also a major pillar that shapes the character and atmosphere of the performance.

Thus, the adoption of "Mangir" into the world of drama not only creates an entertaining art show, but also celebrates literary and cultural heritage. Oral tradition is not only a guardian of the authenticity of the story, but rather a driver of creativity and interpretation that transcends the boundaries of the written text. In the end, the play "Mangir" is a testament to how oral tradition can give new nuances and richness to the performing arts, opening the door to a deeper understanding of literary works.

Dance

Ramayana Ballet is a unique performance art offering, combining the beauty of dance and dramatism without dialogue. Tracing its roots from the epic Ramayana, the show combines various elements of art to create an immersive and enthralling experience for its audience.

Basically, Ramayana Ballet is not just showing beautiful dance moves. More than that, the show presents a dramatic narrative without the need for words, but rather through careful gestures, facial expressions, and stage arrangements. Thus, each dance movement becomes an integral part of the story, taking the audience on an immersive visual and emotional journey.

The Ramayana story that is the foundation of the Ramayana Ballet provides a strong narrative foundation. However, the uniqueness of this performance lies in its ability to convey stories without words, relying on the

sophistication of dance moves and dramatic expressions of the dancers. Each dance move becomes a kind of lively scene that builds tension, conflict, and resolution in the epic story.

The elements of art combined in the Ramayana Ballet create an atmosphere that is more than just a performance. Music, lighting, and every other visual aspect blend harmoniously to create an evocative and immersive atmosphere. At the same time, the beauty of dance movement provides an alluring aesthetic dimension, making this performance more than just a presentation of stories.

Ramayana Ballet is also a vehicle to understand and appreciate Ramayana's cultural heritage in a creative and contemporary way. This performance is not just a traditional presentation, but an adaptation of art that brings classical values into a context that is relevant to today's audience.

In this way, the Ramayana Ballet is an example of performing arts that successfully combines dance and drama, creating an unforgettable experience for the audience. The success of this performance lies in its ability to communicate the story without using words, utilizing the expressive power of dance as an effective means of delivery. This is what makes the Ramayana Ballet a valuable part of Indonesia's artistic and cultural heritage.

Myth as a promotional vehicle

Oral traditions, especially in the form of myths, are an effective marketing instrument in encouraging tourist arrivals. For example, at Prambanan Temple, Yogyakarta, there is a widespread myth which states that "bringing a girlfriend will definitely break you up." Even though at first glance it may sound logically implausible, this myth has succeeded in creating attraction and curiosity for visitors, especially regarding tourism.

The myth of "bringing a girlfriend will definitely break you up" at Prambanan Temple

provides a unique dimension to the visiting experience. Regardless of the accuracy or truth of the myth, its existence has become an attraction in itself. Visitors who come may feel challenged or want to test the truth of the myth, creating an atmosphere of excitement and curiosity that colors their visit.

The use of myths as a marketing strategy in tourism destinations shows that oral traditions are not only part of cultural heritage, but can also be adapted into creative modern attractions. In this case, myths are not only stories passed down from generation to generation, but also become a tool for creating interesting narratives that support the tourism industry.

The success of myth as a marketing tool at Prambanan Temple highlights the importance of creativity in packaging local cultural heritage. Even though it may seem logically implausible, this myth is part of the destination's appeal, creating a different and interesting impression for tourists. This also reflects that the tourism experience is not only about the tourist attraction itself, but also about the stories, myths and oral traditions that surround it.

Thus, oral traditions, especially in the form of myths, are not only inheritors of cultural values, but also become creative resources in building the image and attractiveness of tourism destinations. In developing the tourism industry, it is important to understand the potential of oral traditions as an integral part of tourism marketing and experiences.

Historical Tourism

Historical heritage sites spread across various regions carry interesting stories that can be told through oral traditions. The important role of the tourism industry then emerged as a vital alternative for improving the economy, turning historical sites into attractive and attractive tourist destinations. The findings from Adi and Saputro's 2017 study confirmed that potential tourist attractions rooted in

cultural history can be valuable assets that contribute to regional economic development and increased regional income. Thus, historical and cultural tourism is not only an element marking the richness of heritage, but also a real opportunity to provide significant benefits to areas that have this potential heritage.

The importance of understanding the economic value of historic sites opens the door to sustainable regional economic development strategies. By utilizing historical and cultural heritage, regions can create tourism programs that not only attract the attention of visitors, but also have a positive impact on the local economy. Economic sustainability can be achieved through various initiatives, such as developing tourism facilities, promoting local culture, and creating jobs in the tourism sector.

Historical and cultural tourism also has the potential to strengthen local identity and promote cultural diversity. Through stories passed down through oral tradition, visitors can experience the rich heritage of each region. Therefore, the development and management of tourism destinations must be carried out carefully, considering not only economic aspects but also the cultural and social values that are upheld by the local community.

Apart from that, involving local communities in the management and development of historical and cultural tourism can be a strategic step. Community empowerment in local heritage management can create a harmonious relationship between tourism development and environmental and social sustainability. Therefore, the success of developing historical and cultural tourism is not only measured by the level of visits, but also by the positive impact produced at the local level.

In this case, it is important for local governments and related stakeholders to work together in identifying, involving and promoting historical and cultural tourism

potential. With a holistic approach involving various aspects, the development of the tourism sector can become a driving force for sustainable economic growth, while maintaining and respecting the cultural diversity inherent in each destination.

Oral History Research: Source Criticism

Success in historical research which relies on communication between interviewers and informants largely utilizes oral data. The key importance in exploring someone's memory or collective memory lies in the involvement and interaction between both parties during the interview process. To achieve this, interviewers must pay attention to important aspects, including the technique of avoiding open-ended questions, avoiding "yes" or "no" responses, and presenting questions in a concise and focused manner. In the initial stages of the interview, it is recommended to ask non-controversial questions, and if there are variations in the narrative version, the interviewer can use expressions such as "I heard" or "I read" to emphasize understanding.

Finding primary sources, especially in the form of personal memories or memories, plays a central role in oral history research. Information obtained from living historical actors is often a highly sought after source, although a number of problems, such as objectivity and subjectivity, can arise if the identity of the perpetrator or witness has been revealed. Criticism of sources reflects that objectivity may be technically difficult to achieve, but subjectivity is considered a natural and understandable aspect.

Subjectivity can arise from a variety of factors, such as differing perceptions, personal biases, group prejudices, contradictory interpretations, and differences in philosophy. The perpetrator's mental condition, such as dementia or pretense, can also affect the

accuracy of the information conveyed. To overcome subjectivity, critical questions are needed that can test and evaluate witnesses or sources, such as considering whether they are able to provide accurate and honest information. If there is any doubt about the veracity of the information provided, consider not involving them further in the interview process.

Overall, historical research demands a careful and critical approach to subjectivity, as well as a deep understanding of the accuracy of information obtained from oral sources. By paying attention to these aspects, research can gain deeper and more credible insight into the history told through the memories and stories of historical actors.

Oral Tradition and Its Problems as a Historical Source

Oral culture or oral tradition is cultural heritage that has not been compiled in written form. Its function involves keeping records and transmitting knowledge and history from one generation to the next. Kuntowijoyo's view, which refers to Vansina, describes oral tradition as testimony passed down orally through various generations.

In the discipline of Anthropology, oral traditions are an object of study that involves personal memories, general knowledge of history, and oral literature. Oral literature and general historical knowledge become research sources after testing or criticizing sources. Oral tradition is not just the narrator's own testimony, but rather a record of what has been passed down orally from one generation to the next.

Information that comes from other people and is passed down from generation to generation is identified as oral tradition. This tradition contains knowledge that is preserved in human memory, forming a historical record of the past with cultural values, including stories, religion and morality.

Despite creating challenges to verify the accuracy of oral reports due to the lack of written manuscripts, literary works have the capacity to systematically cover the social and cultural history of a society. Folklore, as an element of oral literature, becomes a real symbol of oral social and cultural experience. Literature is not only created for artistic purposes, but also includes religious and ritualistic dimensions.

It is important to realize that history cannot be equated with fairy tales or myths. Myths, in contrast to historical stories, tell the past through events that are unrelated to time and do not make sense to humans today. Myths, such as the legends about king Iskandar Zulkarnaen in West Sumatra and Dewata Cengkar in Sulawesi, do not have a definite date. In history, every event has a clear date, while myths tend to be abstract. Songs, mantras, poetry, proverbs, and oral traditions can be part of myth, but oral traditions have the potential to become history when supported by other historical sources.

CONCLUSION

Oral traditions have a central role in the cultural diversity of the archipelago and demand respect and preservation by the community as their owners. In a traditional society that is so involved in Indonesian national life, oral tradition becomes a significant element. This is not only related to the distribution of moral messages, beliefs and norms that are firmly held by society to maintain order in the social system. Oral traditions are also a forum for educational values that are passed down from one generation to the next.

Although advances in computer technology have improved the documentation of human activities in contemporary historical studies, not all aspects of life can be recorded accurately. Some elements cannot be fully documented, so research that relies on personal data or recollection remains of

significant value. Therefore, oral data is recognized as a very complex historical source.

The narrator's own personal memories or testimony are reliable sources of oral data. However, it is important to treat oral data from oral traditions with caution when used to understand the past. Not all oral traditions are fictional, and the question of whether the data are based on past events or simply reflect factual social reality remains an open issue that needs to be explored carefully.

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