

The Meaning of Sapi Sonok Culture for Madura Community

Rafi'i¹, Arief Subhan², Jamalullail³

¹Doctoral Program, Sahid University, Jakarta

²Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University

³ Sahid University, Jakarta

Jl. Jendral Sudirman No. 86, Jakarta 10220



Abstract – This study aims to show the cultural meaning of Sapi Sonok in Madura community. This study uses a qualitative interpretive approach by using the Ethnographic Speaking method by Dell Hymes. To collect the data, researchers used interview techniques and participant observation. The theory used is communication ethnography. The results of this study indicate that there are several cultural meanings related to Sapi Sonok in the Madura community. The communicative actions built in the community can initiate the minds of the Madurese people in Particular so that they can maintain this cultural art. They try to increase comprehension of this culture. Therefore, they can preserve and love their cows as one of the supports of a more established life.

Keywords – Culture, Sapi Sonok, Ethnography of Communication, Community.

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture is the result of human construction involving thoughts, feelings, and works. Culture represents values, beliefs, debates, and conflicts as well as traditions. Therefore culture will always be there to accompany the surrounding humans. Referring [1]: *Culture is a socially constructed phenomenon; culture is a human product and is shared by people belonging to various groups.* These facts will be easier to recognize if there is a tangible form as evidence of cultural activities found in ethnic groups, nations, communities, societies, and others. One of the attractive cultures is the Sapi Sonok found in the Madurese community.

The Madurese community is a society that has cultural characteristics that uphold brotherhood and love cows [2]. Sonok cattle contest is one of the cultural wealth of Madura [3]. Madurese people also have cultural arts. Sapi Sonok is a form of cultural activity that evolved and has become a tradition of Madura in some areas, and an alternative culture by using cows as media that is no less popular as well as being 'excellent cow' in the community besides Karapan Sapi. [4]. These cows as stated by Kutsiah (2015) are famous not only at the national level but also at the international level.

Kutsiah (2015) explained that the Sapi Sonok contest among the Madurese has existed since the 19th century with Kerapan Sapi. In Karapan Sapi, a pair of bulls competed for running speed, but in Sapi Sonok contest, the judges judged beauty and harmony in the way they walked from the start line to the finish line. (Kosim, 2007). Sapi Sonok and Karapan Sapi are cultural forms maintained as traditional arts and cultural symbols for the life of the Madurese community. BAPPEDA & LPPM [5]. It is not only a symbol, but according to Sairil Munir [6], it is also a unifying and solidarity medium for the world community.

According to Spradley [7], culture is a system of knowledge acquired by humans through the learning process, which is used as a tool to interpret the world and its surroundings and to develop behavioral strategies and ways to deal with the world. Prayogi [8]

Culture can be interpreted as the result of human creation, taste, and creation in the form of thoughts, ideas, norms, ideas, human activities to fulfill their needs. It contains rules and values. All of which become standard references for behavior in interacting through daily communication processes with their own boundaries.

Language itself contributed to support community to continue to become a creative community in preserving Sapi Sonok contest culture, and it is cultural arts to attract tourists come. Blumer [9] says in his theory of symbolic interactionism that language is the most significant part of the symbols used by people in interacting. Dell Hymes [10] that language will not be able to provide any meaning if it is not communicated. This is further strengthened by the statement Charon [11] from the presentation (Joyce Herself, 1965), calling it "*The key and basic symbolism of (human beings) is language. All the other symbols systems can be interpreted only by means of language*".

The interaction process begins with casual (non-formal) communication establishing Sapi Sonok lovers among farmers. Mr. H. Achmad Khairuddin, a pioneer in the movement of the community (Kutsiah, 2015) in the 19th century, and by chance, had power and had great influence in government ranks. As Klebun/Head of West Dempo Village, Pasean District, Pamekasan Regency, the area of origin of the Sapi Sonok according to Nurlaila S, et.al, [12]. It is certainly easy to invite people to join 'sape taccek' (Sapi Sonok) community. Sapi Sonok is a special cow and has become an icon of Madura, as reported Kompas.com [13]. Sapi Sonok has the meaning of prestige values that can elevate high social dignity and social status in society as well as become a symbol of wealth for them. Jauhari Efendy [14]. A symbol is a form that marks something other than the embodiment of the symbolic form itself. According to Prambudi [15], the Madurese as cultural beings always communicate through association or community that becomes the strength of Sapi Sonok during social interactions. One of them is through communication in symbolic forms. However, these communication symbols are contextual in a society and culture has a close relationship with human culture. Sobur [16].

Based on the background presented, the problem of this research is how is the ethnography of the Sapi Sonok community communication as a symbol of Madurese culture based on Dell Hymes theory? The aims of this study are: first, to get an idea of the ethnographic understanding of the Sapi Sonok community communication as a symbol of Madurese culture based on Dell Hymes' theory.

II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach and Dell Hymes' communication ethnographic method. The research approach uses qualitative. Creswell [17], which is an approach to building knowledge statements based on observations and the results of interactions with those in their immediate environment and trying to understand language and interpretations of the world around them. The use of the ethnographic method of communication is how researchers understand the perspective of indigenous people who are related to their daily lives in order to gain an understanding of their world. In this study, the focus is on the Ethnography of Speaking Hymes [18], namely the communicative act of the Sapi Sonok Community on human communication patterns in a speech language community. This is based on the opinion Hymes, [19] namely:

The starting point is the ethnographic analysis of the communication conduct of a community. Communication conduct is what people do when they communicate with each other. He set out to show that researchers could use his methods to study this communication (talk) systematically ... [The ethnography of communication ... is concerned with the questions of what a person knows about appropriate patterns of language use in his or her community and how he or she learns about it. Farah, I.; Jhonstone [20][21]. The Ethnography of Speaking deals with cultural and subculture patterns of speech variation in different social context. Ray [22].

The focus of ethnography is on what people do (behavior), what language is used when talking (language), what is the relationship between behavior and what people should do Spradley [23], Ethnography of communication can be interpreted as an assessment of the role of language in the communicative act of a society, how language is used in various cultures Kuswarno [24]. The focus of this research is to study objects in a natural context that seeks to interpret phenomena from the point of view of the meanings attached to humans such as the subject of Sapi Sonok. The Data collected through various empirical data; case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life journeys, interviews, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe meanings and daily problematical moments in people's lives, Denzin, & Lincoln [25].

The key informant based on Bungin [26] is the person who knows the most information about the object being studied or data collected by researchers directly from the first source. The key informant in this research is Saiful Haq (Acting and Secretary of the

Department of Tourism and Cultural Arts). Meanwhile, the informants are people who comprehend the history of the Sapi Sonok's journey, such as Sonny Budhiarto (Madura cultural practitioner), Rudi Hariyanto (Madura Community Trustees and the Livestock Service). Joko Pranoto (Chairman of the Paguyuban Kompas Pamekasan), Suhaimi (Chairman of the Pantura Association), Abdurrahman (Chairman of the Putri Kencana Sumenep Association), Suyitno (Vice Chairperson of the Sumenep Ampunten Association) and Rusmiah (Chairman of the Bangkalan Bire Temor Association).

III. RESULTS

Community groups and Sapi Sonok are two equally important things to know about the wider community and interesting to study. Sapi Sonok cannot stand alone and cannot provide more meaning without the role of community groups as actors in maintaining, caring for, and introducing and promoting the advantages of these cows, which are well known to foreign countries, Yuliansyah [27], and deserve to be the prima donna of Madurese community and should be treated as a Madurese cultural tourism treat. These activities are all summarized in their communicative actions.

Sapi Sonok, the prima donna cow, and as a symbol of Madurese culture built by indigenous people through the active role of the community can create varieties of positive contributions to the sustainability of their lives, such as increasing prestige, economy, solidarity, unification, and others. An active role in communicative acts built by the community through speeches that frame the custom of politeness can maintain the local culture.

To find out the whole activities of the community's communicative acts thoroughly, it can be seen from the analysis of Speaking, Dell Hymes as follows:

1. Setting and scene will describe situations such as location (place), time, season, and the physical aspects of the situation. The scene is an abstract from a psychological situation, a cultural definition of the situation, including a conversation as it takes place, which is termed (Hymes, 1974) as a speech situation. Conversations during the contest and outside the contest are different, including the delivery of the language. During the contest, as stated by Joko Pranoto, the Head of West Dempo Village, Pamekasan, the Chairman of the Kompas Association, and the Chief Executive of the Sonok Cow Contest 19/10/2020 stated that when the contest was held in 2020, people spoke more carefully to avoid using inappropriate words because there are many people watched the contest or else the inappropriate words would be thrown out”

Meanwhile, Sonny Budhiarto, a Madurese Cultural and a community leader, added 10/10/2020 that in communicating with each other during meetings such as holding events, it is also necessary to sort and choose words, to avoid offending someone else, because it is related to one's credibility in the perceptions of the community”.

During contests organized by local natives, they don't think about winning or losing. All the cows that appeared were already champions for the community, and they received the same prize in the form of a women's sarong as a keepsake. There is no difference in quality and price.

2. Participants

Participants can also be regarded as readers, listeners, viewers, government, and others, including the social categories associated with them, the term Hymes (speech community). In line with the statement, Creswell [28], knowledge will be obtained based on observations and the results of interactions with the surrounding environment like the community, family, or friends. The government contributed to providing support for the implementation or maintenance of Sapi Sonok. Sonny Budhiarto, 13/10/2020 that the presence of the participants came from “Regency, Provincial Governments, and the perpetrators of sonok cows, community leaders, spectators, the community; The center is in Waru Pamekasan District. It is from a whole Madura”.

Furthermore, Rudi Hariyanto, 5/10/2020, the builder of the Sapi Sonok Association of Madura, and the representative of the Livestock Service Office, Pamekasan, added that in Madura, hundreds of cow owners have already become members. Pamekasan can reach four hundred more. Sumenep is a hundred and fifty, and Sampang is still a little more or less around twenty-five”. So that during the last contest, despite the Pandemic, 168 participants and 336 superior and beautiful cows gathered in one community forum. It is the most extensive number in the history of the existence of Sapi Sonok cow contest until now.

3. Ends

Ends are goals regarding events in general in the form of individual participant interaction goals. The Sapi Sonok community was established because it has a specific purpose, for example, the value of pride for the owner of the Sonok Cow, Yuliansyah, (2016). Another goal is to establish a brotherhood because the brotherhood will lead to form high solidarity among members of the community. As stated by Sonny Budhiarto, 10/10/2020 that besides being able to improve welfare, the economy, investment, art, channeling hobbies, worship, mutual cooperation, togetherness, elevating someone's dignity in the community or social status. Therefore, for the Madurese community, owning Sapi Sonok belongs to the class of the rich”.

Sapi Sonok and culture are the unifiers of the Madurese community. Therefore, arranging activities involving other people as a means of kinship can be confirmed by at least a day before the implementation of the contest. Neighbors come to provide support and help to prepare for the needs of the event, including *selamatan* (act of thanksgivings). This habit is carried out by the community when they plan to hold a big celebration, such as the Sapi Sonok contest event, which usually invites community elders, relatives, neighbors, friends, and others for the smooth running of the event. It is different from Ray's statement, Ray, (2011) that related to the ethnography of speaking, cultural patterns and subcultures of speech variations in social contexts are different. Creswell (2015) emphasizes that ethnography focuses on developing a complex and complete description of the culture of the same cultural group. In fact, people who gathered in the Sapi Sonok community have come from one cultural family and one language, which is the Madurese community in a social context.

4. Act Sequence

Act Sequence is also called a communicative act sequence in Hymes's (1964) terms, speech acts including message content or surface-level denotative references; what was communicated. In line with Johnstone's opinion (Johnstone, 2010), communication ethnography is a question about what a person knows about the appropriate pattern of language use in his or her community and how he or she learns it. The conversation that occurs in the Sapi Sonok community is a reflection of speech activities that can be roled by anyone who is involved in the community, either directly or indirectly. An example of discussing the process of an ordinary cow until it becomes a soft cow, all people can have this beautiful cow, as stated by Rusmiyah, 16/10/2020, the Chairman of the Paguyuban, Sampang argues:

“Initially the Sapi Sonok was an ordinary cow which was then taken care of properly, with sufficient attention including food and nutritional consumption. With that attention, it turns out that over time the cow looks beautiful. Over time, the cow gave birth, and then the calf turned out to be better than the mother. So I took care of the child and use it as Sapi Sonok.”

Not only about the establishment of Sapi Sonok community, Abdurrahman, 21/10/2020 Chairman of the Commuity, Sumenep addeed,

“it also discusses the annual agenda and activities each month. To make the implementation more interesting and not boring. Sometimes discussing the development of future plans”

5. Key

Key refers to how speech acts are performed (Speech act) Hymes (1964), and this is the focus of the reference. Spirit can also be created by togetherness and communicative action among fellow members of the community. It is proven by the large number of invited participants, including when the speech takes place in the community, from various regions even though they are far away, it can be seen in the number of participants. Suyitno, Deputy Chairman of the Sumenep Society, revealed 24/10/2020 that

“During the establishment of the Sonok Cow, in the latest contest, there were more than 150 participants, aka 168 participants. This is a record breaker. This enthusiasm should be able to be transmitted from generation to generation, as has been done by the predecessors of the community, so that it can survive until now. The tough task for today's young generation is to maintain the culture to exist and thrive. Maintaining and improving something that already exists is a big task for the community. The task will be easy and light when carried together.”

Saiful Haq, 5/10/2020, as Secretary of the Pamekasan Regency Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Arts regarding the passion of involvement of various elements supported that statement and added “Sapi Sonok also involves various components in its implementation. Every time the event is held, it is always accompanied by, *saronen* (traditional music), *sinden* (traditional snger),

karawitan (sound art), saweran (act of giving money to a singer), spectators, sellers also come from outside the Pamekasan area, and other components that support it".

6. Instrumentalities

Instrumentalities is a form of message (message form) according to Hymes (1964). It includes vocal and non-vocal channels, as well as the nature of the code used in the implementation of an activity, such as the embedding of decorations on almost the entire body of a pair of female cows that are unique. This uniqueness is considered, Neuman [29] as a social reality and has an essential meaning. As It was presented by Joko Pranoto, 16/10/2020;

"Those horns are called slippers, they are made of *salakah* (copper/gold mixture) which is also expensive, then *kungseng pentol* but the binding material is made of leather like a belt which is also expensive."

The *gapura* (gate) is classified as a tool or symbol (sign) that conveys the recognition that it is where the cows stop to get an assessment from the implementing committee in the field. The artificial field is a non-vocal channel that can be used as an important attribute of the implementation of activities. The yard was held on the red carpet as a sign of respect for all social gathering groups including the selected cows. It is clear that cows have a high position in the art and culture of the Madurese community.

7. Norms of Interaction

Norms of interaction are norms of interaction, including general knowledge, culturally relevant assumptions, or common understandings, allowing certain inferences to be created, ignored, taken literally, and so on. In any condition, we still have to be careful in explaining the rules (norms). Hymes (1964) also states that speech procedures contain ideas, communication events in the speech community. For example, upholding brotherhood, providing material support for contributions, and others. This rule has become a mutual agreement in the community. In community culture, some rules are adhered to, enforced, and implemented for the common good. Communicating also needs ethics so that it avoids the chaos of words. Madurese culture also has rules in communication such as children to adults/parents and so on. Community communication can also be performed in polite language, even at various ages.

8. Genre

A *genre* is a type of event. Hymes (1964) describes speech events as 'situations associated with the context in which communication occurs between them. Beauty is a reflection and a symbol of the beauty of the Sapi Sonok. The owners of Sonok cows, when they are staged, are decorated in such a way that they remarkably amaze the spectators. Sapi Sonok itself is also an art that can be shown to the public, as stated by Suhaimi, Chair of the Pantura Association, 17/10/2020, Pamekasan stated,

"Sapi Sonok is a unity of arts because, at the Sapi Sonok event, there are many other elements of arts, for example, the art of music which is the hallmark of Sumenep, and the wood carvings on the hump including accessories, all of which are also attached to make the appearance of the idol cow impressive."

The opinion above is also confirmed by Saiful Haq, 10/05/2020, and Secretary of PTL. Pamekasan Arts and Tourism Office. Sapi Sonok not only contains art but also contains various values. He stated *"Sapi Sonok culture is not only merely art, but there are also spiritual values, values of cultural preservation itself, and economic values as well."*

In the poem, there are also words or communicative acts between the owner of the cow and the audience. The situation can be used as an object of poetry for *sinden* (traditional singer) in the sonok cow contest held by the association. The poem also led Sapi sonok to step gracefully to the rhythm of the *saronen* (traditional music). The cow owner danced 7 meters behind the cow. This event only applies when the show contest is held.

IV. CONCLUSION

The ethnography communication of Sapi Sonok, which is comprehended by the community group becomes a symbol of Madurese culture and becomes a unifying medium for the society that should continue to be supported from various sides. This support can also be carried out through communicative acts roled by the Sapi Sonok community group in particular and other communities in general by speaking the Madurese cultural regional language. The Sapi Sonok culture can provide a variety of meaningful contributions to the lives of the Madurese community, such as improving the economy, increasing dignity, encouraging friendship, establishing cooperation, directing hobbies, and others. This culture deserves huge attention, is maintained, improved,

and carried on by the youth as the holder of the baton in society. With the creation of the Sapi Sonok as a cultural property owned by Madura, this salt island (Madura) will be more easily known to all parts of the world and truly meaningful. It is also assuredly inseparable from the support of the communicative actions of the community groups and the surrounding community.

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