

## **Local Wisdom in *Dideq* Oral Literature among the Selayar Community in South Sulawesi**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Local wisdom is understood as local policy (*local wisdom*), local knowledge (*local knowledge*), or local intelligence (*local genius*). It may be interpreted as the product of human intellect, deep feelings, character, behavioral patterns, and moral guidance aimed at achieving human dignity. Mastery of local wisdom elevates individuals toward noble character. The concept of local wisdom held by the Selayar community is partially implemented in *dideq* oral texts. These concepts need to be documented, revitalized, and disseminated so that they continue to live within the community to which they belong and become part of individual character formation not only for the Selayar people, but also for the wider community of South Sulawesi and Indonesian society in general. This study aims to reveal concepts of local wisdom, particularly the attitudes of *sipakatau*, *sipakaingaq*, and *sipakalabbiriq* found in *dideq* oral literature. The primary data were collected through field research using recording, interviews, transliteration, and translation techniques. Data analysis was conducted based on Roland Barthes' concepts of denotative and connotative meaning. The results of the study indicate that *sipakatau* and *sipakalabbiriq* are two inseparable values. Mutual respect and mutual appreciation coexist and strongly characterize the life of the Selayar community, as clearly reflected in *dideq* texts. Meanwhile, *sipakaingaq* represents an attitude of mutual reminder among community members, manifested in behavior, speech, and religious observance.

**Keywords:** Local Wisdom; *Sipakatau*, *Sipakalabbiriq*; *Sipakaingaq*; Oral Literature

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Selayar Islands constitute one of the 23 regencies and municipalities in South Sulawesi Province. This regency is distinctive due to its geographical condition, as it is separated by the sea, requiring sea transportation to access the region. Moreover, the Selayar Islands Regency consists of a cluster of islands, comprising several relatively large islands and numerous smaller ones. Selayar Island is the

largest, measuring approximately 100 kilometres in length and about 15 kilometres at its widest point. In addition, there are smaller islands such as Kalo Island, Tanah Jampea Island, Bonerate Island, and many other small islands.

Historically, the Selayar Islands served as a transit area connecting the western and eastern parts of Indonesia. Traders from western regions of Indonesia, including Sumatra and Java, who sought spices and other agricultural products in Maluku and Papua, had to pass through the sea routes around Selayar. Likewise, people from Maluku and Papua who marketed their regional products such as copra, spices, and marine products including sea cucumbers and shark fins also navigated through the waters surrounding Selayar.

These historical conditions have shaped the Selayar community into an open and receptive society toward outsiders. This openness is reflected in their willingness to provide information to newcomers entering the Selayar Islands, whether as migrants or researchers. In addition, the Selayar people are known for their ability to adapt quickly to new acquaintances. As a community, the Selayar people possess various concepts of local wisdom that have been passed down from generation to generation through oral traditions. These concepts of local wisdom are embedded in various cultural practices, such as *dideq*, *pakarena* dance, *anngarraq pandang*, *songka bala*, *addinging-dinging*, and others. The diversity of these cultural activities constitutes a rich source of local wisdom that can be explored, analyzed, documented, and revitalized, particularly those values that remain relevant to contemporary life.

One cultural practice expressed in the form of oral literature is *dideq*. Initially, *dideq* was an oral literary tradition found throughout the Selayar Islands. However, due to discontinuous transmission, performances or recitations of *dideq* have become increasingly rare, especially among younger generations. Currently, only one hamlet Tenro Hamlet in Buki District continues to preserve and regularly perform this oral tradition. Very few young people are willing to seriously learn this form of oral literature. One of the main factors contributing to this decline is technological advancement. In the past, *dideq* functioned as a medium for expressing feelings to fellow community members or even to the government; today, such functions have largely been replaced by more advanced tools such as mobile phones and other digital media.

In fact, the function of *dideq* extends beyond mere entertainment or a means of expressing ideas and emotions. Within the *dideq* texts are embedded social norms and even philosophical values of the Selayar people. Therefore, it is crucial to continuously preserve, document, and revitalize *dideq* as an effort to safeguard it as a cultural document. The loss of *dideq* oral literature would signify the loss of a cultural heritage document, not only for the Selayar community and South Sulawesi, but also for Indonesia as a whole. Etymologically, the term *dideq* derives from the word *sadindeq*, which means joy or a feeling of happiness. It is also customary among the Selayar people that when meeting an old friend after a long

time, expressions of joy are conveyed through the utterance *dende... dende...* as a sign of happiness. The term *dideq* originates from *dendeq*, an expression of joy, pleasure, delight, and happiness resulting from obtaining something (Rhofiqah, 2002:18). From *sadendeq* or *dendeq*, the term evolved into *dideq* when performed in song. In general, *dideq* represents an expression of happiness and joy.

In a broader sense, *dideq* refers to a form of antiphonal singing performed between groups of men and women. Over time, *dideq* has undergone various transformations. Initially, it functioned as a manifestation of prayers to the Creator. Later, it became associated with courtship among young people, often performed during the corn harvest season. In contemporary practice, *dideq* performers are no longer restricted by age, nor does it primarily function as a medium for matchmaking. Today, *dideq* performances may be held at any time and in any place as desired by the community.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Local Wisdom and Oral Literature

Local wisdom refers to a set of values, norms, knowledge systems, and behavioral principles that develop within a community through long historical experience and cultural interaction. It functions as moral guidance that shapes social behavior, identity, and collective consciousness. Sibarani (2012) explains that local wisdom emerges from oral traditions and cultural practices that transmit ethical values, social harmony, and communal responsibility across generations. In many Indonesian communities, oral literature plays a crucial role in preserving and transmitting local wisdom because it embeds moral messages within stories, songs, rituals, and symbolic expressions.

Danandjaja (1986) defines folklore as a collective cultural expression passed orally from generation to generation and shared by a community. Folklore does not merely function as entertainment but also contains educational, moral, and social functions. Similarly, Finnegan (1992) emphasizes that oral traditions serve as cultural memory that records social norms, belief systems, and identity construction. Through oral performance, communities maintain continuity between the past and present while adapting values to changing contexts.

In the South Sulawesi cultural context, oral traditions are closely linked to ethical values such as *siri'* (honor), respect, solidarity, and religious obedience (Hamid et al., 2005). Several scholars highlight that traditional oral forms, including songs, chants, and ritual poetry, function as moral instruction and social regulation (Endraswara, 2013; Ratna, 2003). Therefore, studying *dideq* as an oral literary form is essential for understanding how Selayar society internalizes and transmits values of mutual respect, mutual appreciation, and mutual reminder.

### **Semiotics as an Analytical Framework**

Semiotics provides a theoretical foundation for interpreting meaning in cultural texts. Barthes (2010) expands Saussure's semiology by introducing a two-level system of signification: denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the literal and direct meaning of a sign, while connotation represents the cultural, emotional, and ideological meanings attached to the sign. This dual structure allows researchers to uncover hidden cultural values embedded in language and symbols. Vera (2014) explains that connotative meanings emerge through social conventions, ideology, and cultural experience. Wibowo (2011) and Sobur (2012) further emphasize that connotation enables multiple interpretations because meaning is shaped by the reader's background knowledge and cultural framework. In literary and cultural studies, semiotics is widely used to interpret symbolic expressions, metaphors, and narrative structures that communicate social values.

Danesi (2010) highlights that signs operate not only as linguistic units but also as cultural codes that shape human perception and behavior. Christomy and Yuwono argue that cultural semiotics allows researchers to analyze how traditions function as systems of meaning within society. Hoed (2011) reinforces that texts should be understood as dynamic social products influenced by ideology, power relations, and historical context. Therefore, semiotic analysis becomes an effective tool for interpreting oral texts such as *dideq*, which rely heavily on metaphor, symbolism, and cultural codes.

### **Denotation, Connotation, and Meaning Construction**

Barthes' model of signification explains how meaning moves beyond surface-level interpretation. Denotative meaning reflects objective reality, while connotative meaning reflects cultural interpretation and emotional association (Barthes, 2010). According to Wibowo (2011), denotation provides clarity and stability of meaning, whereas connotation introduces flexibility and cultural depth. Sobur (2012) adds that connotative meanings are shaped by ideology, tradition, and social experience. Vera (2014) notes that the interaction between sign and reader produces layered meanings that cannot be separated from social context. This perspective supports the analysis of oral literature because oral texts often use figurative language to communicate moral values implicitly rather than explicitly. In *dideq* performances, linguistic expressions such as metaphors, polite forms, and symbolic imagery function as carriers of ethical teachings and social expectations.

### **Previous Studies on Folklore and Cultural Values**

Previous studies on folklore demonstrate that oral traditions function as cultural archives that preserve collective identity and ethical norms. Propp (1987) emphasizes that narrative structures in folklore reflect cultural logic and social organization. Dundes (1980) argues that folklore should be interpreted within its social context because meaning emerges from community practice rather than

isolated texts. In Indonesian contexts, Endraswara (2009) shows that folklore research contributes to understanding cultural continuity and moral education. Teeuw (1994) highlights the relationship between orality and literacy in shaping cultural transmission. Rhofiqah (2002) specifically studied moral aspects in *dideq* texts and confirmed that *dideq* contains ethical teachings related to social harmony and emotional expression. However, most previous studies have focused more on linguistic or descriptive analysis rather than systematic semiotic interpretation of local wisdom values.

This study therefore contributes by applying Barthes' semiotic framework to reveal deeper layers of meaning in *dideq* texts, especially concerning *sipakatau*, *sipakalabbiriq*, and *sipakaingaq* as core values of Selayar society.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. The focus of the study is *dideq* oral literature performed within the Selayar community. Primary data were obtained through field research that documented *dideq* performances and narratives. The research involved selected informants consisting of traditional leaders, religious figures, community leaders, and active *dideq* performers who possess knowledge and experience related to the tradition. These informants were chosen to ensure the richness and credibility of cultural data.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

Data collection was conducted using several techniques. First, recording was carried out to directly document *dideq* performances or recitations. The researcher used instruments such as a handycam, a digital camera, a tape recorder, and writing materials. Audio and visual recordings played a crucial role in capturing accurate oral texts. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected informants. The main instrument was an interview guideline that served as a reference during the interviews. Prior to the fieldwork, the researcher prepared an outline of key questions related to the research object to guide data exploration while allowing flexibility during interaction. Third, transliteration was applied to transform the recorded oral *dideq* texts into written form. Fourth, translation was conducted because *dideq* is performed in the Selayar language and therefore required translation into Indonesian to facilitate analysis and interpretation.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected *dideq* textual data were analyzed using a semiotic approach based on Roland Barthes' theoretical framework. Barthes refined Saussurean semiology by developing a system of signification at the connotative level (Vera, 2014). The core

of Barthes' semiotic analysis lies in the concepts of denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the relationship between the signifier (expression) and the signified (content) within a sign of external reality and represents the most literal and explicit meaning (Wibowo, 2011; Sobur, 2012). In Barthes' perspective, denotation constitutes the first order of signification, producing meanings that are direct, stable, and socially agreed upon (Vera, 2014). Connotation refers to the second order of signification, characterized by openness of meaning, implicitness, and interpretive flexibility (Wibowo, 2011; Sobur, 2012). Connotative meaning emerges from the interaction between signs and the reader's emotions, cultural values, and social experiences (Vera, 2014). The sign map proposed by Roland Barthes was used to guide the interpretation process in identifying layers of meaning embedded in *dideq* texts.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Attitudes of *Sipakatau* (Mutual Respect) and *Sipakalabbiriq* (Mutual Appreciation)

As previously discussed, *dideq* contains various forms of local wisdom. One prominent value embedded in *dideq* is the attitude of *sipakatau* (mutual respect). Closely related to this attitude is *sipakalabbiriq* (mutual appreciation). These two values usually appear simultaneously and are explicitly expressed in *dideq* texts. Etymologically, the term *sipakatau* is derived from two root words: *sipaka*, meaning "mutual" or "reciprocal," and *tau*, meaning "human." Broadly interpreted, *sipakatau* conveys the concept of mutual humanization or mutual respect, emphasizing the importance of positioning oneself and others appropriately as fellow human beings. Similarly, *sipakalabbiriq* is formed from *sipaka* ("mutual") and *labbiriq* ("noble"). Combined, *sipakalabbiriq* means mutual ennoblement or mutual appreciation. The application of these values is highly context-dependent and strongly influenced by cultural norms. The attitude of *sipakatau* as reflected in *dideq* texts can be observed in the following examples:

(1) Dideq

*Lakkelongkang tabeq mamu anda busung*

*Manna kamase lattajang tongkang tugguruk pangngamaseang*

"Please excuse us and allow us to sing, though we are poor, we still hope for attention."

(2) Dideq

*Tattolong-tolong tabeq mamu anda busung anggena*

*Latabalasak kelongba manna to kamase*

"Please excuse me, esteemed audience, allow me to respond to the song of the poor."

(3) Dideq

*Tabeq Karaeng Pattola tabeq opu tabeq daeng*

*Tapamopporang kale to kamasea*

"My apologies to the Crown Prince, Opu, and Daeng; forgive this poor person."

(4) Dideq

*Tabeq karaeng bajikmaki mari kelong*  
*Para tabe anda busung ridallekang labbiritta*

“Please forgive us; it is best that we stop singing so as not to bore those before the noble.”

(5) Dideq

*Tabeq mammo anda busung ri dallekang labbiritta*  
*Karaeng anak pattola to malompoa ri bonena ujung*

“Please forgive us if we bore you while in your noble presence, O Crown Prince, leader of Ujung Pandang.”

(6) Dideq

*Ngerang ampungak riolo minang ri kanuku bangkeng naik silambarak uruk*  
*Lakkelong anni ri dallekang labbiritta*

“First, I beg forgiveness from the soles of my feet to the tips of my hair, for I will sing before the noble.”

(7) Dideq

*Tabeq karaeng pattola tabeq opu tabeq daeng*  
*Tapamopporang kale to kamasea*

“Excuse me, Karaeng Pattola, Opu, and Daeng; forgive this humble person.”

The word *tabeq*, found in examples (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and (7), can be translated into Indonesian as *permisi* (“excuse me”). In Selayar society, both in everyday life and within *dideq* texts, uttering *tabeq* functions as a form of respect and appreciation toward other whether interlocutors or audiences present around the speaker.

The frequent use of *tabeq* at the beginning of almost every *dideq* performance represents the implementation of mutual respect and appreciation. It signifies that before expressing intentions or messages, Selayar people first offer an apology. The suffix *-ta* attached to *labbiri* serves as another marker of respect. The suffix *-ta* (“you,” polite form) functions as a clitic expressing politeness, in contrast to *-nu* (“you,” informal). Likewise, the prefix *ta-* attached to words such as *pamopporang* (“forgive”) and *tolong-tolong* (“sit”) also marks politeness and respect toward others.

Mutual respect and appreciation serve as the foundation for harmonious and balanced living. These concepts of harmony and balance directly influence the social order of Selayar society. Living peacefully within kinship-based social bonds is a life pattern inherited from ancestors and is considered an obligation to preserve. The values of respect and appreciation found in *dideq* are also expressed through self-humility. The use of the term *to kamase* (“poor person”) in examples (1), (2), (3), and (7) reflects a linguistic strategy of humility in Selayar culture. In reality, the speakers of *dideq* are not necessarily impoverished or socially marginalized. Another way Selayar people express respect in *dideq* is by explicitly acknowledging social stratification within their society. In addition to respect for fellow community

members, *dideq* also reflects attitudes of respect toward leaders. Even when referring to a leader's residence, special expressions are used, as illustrated below:

(8)

*Talaminanga manaik ri ballaq tinggi rindingna*  
*Pongoro mappasikapang*

"I have never entered the official's house; that is merely the slander of a madman."

The phrase *ballaq tinggi rindingna* ("a house with high walls") is used to refer to the residence of a government official. This analogy is based on historical facts, as royal residences known as *ballak lompoe* ("great house") traditionally had high walls, symbolizing authority, dignity, and exclusivity. Consequently, such residences were not easily accessible to the general public. The following example illustrates how Selayar people maintain respect for their leaders even when expressing social criticism:

(9)

*Manna bulang buru tonja bintoeng kaballe*  
*Matanna allo niak tonja taaggiling*

"Even if the moon and stars lie, the sun itself may shift."

The words *bulang* ("moon"), *bintoeng* ("star"), and *mata allo* ("sun") metaphorically refer to leaders or government authorities, symbolizing their elevated position and role as protectors of society. However, the inclusion of *kaballe* ("to lie") and *taggiling* ("to shift") conveys disappointment over the gap between expectations and reality. This disappointment is expressed through personification.

Disappointment arises when leaders fail to fulfill their protective and nurturing roles within society. Just as the moon, stars, and sun are expected to provide light, leaders are expected to guide and protect the community. When this expectation is unmet, disappointment emerges. In another text, Selayar people liken a leader or king to a high mountain difficult to reach without significant effort as illustrated below:

(10)

*Kanara tumalompoyi kujanjangi bulu tinggiya*  
*Namae kelong inni banngi sibannigini*

"A leader is like a high mountain; tonight, I come to sing all night long."

In relation to mutual respect and appreciation, Selayar society upholds the principle that respecting others is equivalent to respecting oneself. This philosophy aligns with the belief that "if one wishes to be respected, one must first respect others."

### ***Sipakaingaq* (Mutual Reminder)**

In addition to the attitudes of *sipakatau* and *sipakalabbiriq*, the value of *sipakaingaq* is also found in *dideq*. Based on its morphological structure, the term *sipakaingaq* is derived from the combination of two words: *sipaka* ("mutual")



and *ingaq* (“to remember”), thus meaning “mutual reminder.” In this context, mutual reminder refers to both behavior and speech. Reminding one another in speech and conduct reflects a strong sense of brotherhood within Selayar society. Community members do not wish for their relatives or peers to experience difficulties due to mistakes in speech or behavior. Therefore, *sipakaingaq* functions as an expression of social concern and collective responsibility. The following examples illustrate the value of *sipakaingaq* in Selayar society:

(11)

*Para katutui mamu ilalang empo barugayya*

*Laanda niak passisala pahangiya*

“Be cautious when you are in the *baruga*; avoid misunderstandings.”

(12)

*Barugayya iyaji taera-era ilalang empo*

*Nulaandaya massijanjang to maraeng*

“When you are in the *baruga*, do not regard others as strangers.”

In the past, the *baruga* functioned as a meeting hall and a deliberation space where collective decisions were made. Deliberations aimed at consensus often involved lengthy discussions, and differences of opinion were inevitable. Such differences were acceptable as long as they remained within ethical boundaries. One way to prevent unethical conflict was through mutual respect reinforced by mutual reminders. The two texts above emphasize the importance of guarding one’s speech to avoid misunderstandings. Speech inherently carries the potential for both benefit and harm; therefore, utterances that may cause harm should be avoided. Another way to prevent misunderstanding is by fostering a sense of kinship and familial bonds. Such instincts of brotherhood can extinguish the sparks of resentment before they develop into open conflict.

(13)

*Sipatutujaki naung ri lalang empo barugayya*

*Gele gampang kelong sipappak nataba panggorai*

“Take care of one another while sitting in the *baruga*; do not receive reprimand merely because of a verse of song.”

(14)

*Katutui bajik mamu gauk tassoddi-soddinna mula andaya panggorai*

*Katutui bajik mamu gauk tassoddi-soddinna gele natababa panggorai*

“Always guard your attitude and behavior so that you do not receive reprimand.”

Text (13) serves as a warning to maintain proper speech in order to avoid reprimand, while text (14) emphasizes the importance of controlling behavior. Both texts imply that at any time and in any place, individuals must remain mindful of their speech and actions. Receiving reprimand due to carelessness in speech or conduct is considered shameful and may invite ridicule from others. For this reason, Selayar people are highly attentive to their speech and behavior, particularly in public spaces, meetings, and important social events.

(15)

*Tutuki maklepa-lepa la biseang lengga-lengga*

*Kajennek kebok lamae pingbali-bali*

“Be careful when rowing a boat, for it may sway, as waves surround it.”

(16)

*Kala limbangki dolangan tutuki sibajik-bajik*

*Barangji sirra tannnga dolangang ngalle sahi rimaraeng*

“Be cautious on your journey, and do not change companions midway.”

Unlike the previous texts, the two verses above explicitly reflect the maritime ecology of Selayar society. As a community whose life is largely shaped by the sea, maritime imagery strongly influences *dideq* texts. These verses metaphorically depict life as a boat navigating a vast ocean. Just as the sea is never free from waves capable of overturning a vessel, human life is inevitably confronted with challenges in the form of problems, misfortunes, and disasters. Therefore, humans must remain vigilant at all times, much like a captain navigating the open sea. This message is clearly conveyed in text (15). Text (16) reflects mutual reminders related to loyalty. Selayar people strongly oppose betrayal. Loyalty in this context encompasses faithfulness to one's spouse, leaders or government, and fellow community members. Once again, the sea and the boat serve as symbolic representations in expressing this moral principle. The following texts demonstrate *sipakaingaq* in relation to religious values. Selayar society places great importance on religious observance, particularly the fulfillment of obligations and adherence to prohibitions prescribed in Islam.

(17)

*Parri-parriki sambayang ri genteng longguna lino*

*Kalompo duduk bambang apinna naraka*

“Perform prayers while still in this world, for the fire of hell is exceedingly hot.”

(18)

*Pakabjik laherennu nutangkasi aherakmu*

*Laanda taengko sassang lalang allo ri boko*

“Improve your worldly life and strive for the hereafter so that you will not regret it in the end.”

Performing the five daily prayers is an absolute obligation for all Muslims, and punctual observance is strongly encouraged. Failure to fulfill this obligation is believed to carry consequences in the form of divine punishment. To avoid such outcomes, Selayar people practice mutual reminders, including during *dideq* performances. The message conveyed in text (18) emphasizes the balance between worldly life and the hereafter, a principle consistent with Islamic teachings. While individuals are encouraged to manage and improve their worldly lives, they are simultaneously reminded to prepare for eternal life. Human beings are therefore urged to maintain equilibrium between material pursuits and spiritual responsibilities.

## CONCLUSION

*Dideq* performances and texts exist within Selayar society as cultural expressions that fulfill essential social functions. These functions extend beyond mere

entertainment to serve as a medium for conveying messages deeply imbued with local wisdom. The values of *sipakatau*, *sipakaingaq*, and *sipakalabbiriq* constitute some of the forms of local wisdom identified in *dideq* performances and texts. Undoubtedly, many other forms of local wisdom remain unexplored in this study. The integration of the three values *sipakatau*, *sipakalabbiriq*, and *sipakaingaq* as embodied by the Selayar community and articulated through *dideq* contributes to the preservation of a way of life characterized by strong kinship ties, religious commitment, and vigilance. These values function as cultural safeguards that shape social behavior and collective consciousness. Therefore, the preservation and transmission of these three values are essential in fostering a harmonious and peaceful society. A peaceful and orderly life not only represents the aspirations of the Selayar community but also aligns with broader national ideals for social harmony and cohesion in the context of nation-building.

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