

# Cultural Performance of Oral Tradition *Nandong* Simeulue as Human Resource for Ecotourism: A Linguistic Anthropology Study

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Abstract: *Nandong* simeulue is an oral tradition of Simeuluese contain advices, stories and satires. As performances separately are able to perform the characteristic of the community who belong to, cultural performance of *nandong* is also able to perform the characteristic of Simeuluese in their daily life. Besides, the performance of *nandong* is also able to explore as one of attraction for ecotourism. The performance not only entertain the visitors but also as lesson media for Simeuluese. This study concerned to describe and evaluate the cultural performance of oral tradition *nandong* in Simeuluese toward ecotourism. The data were audio-video recording of *nandong*, and texts of *nandong* in written form. Recording data were collected by using handycam Panasonic FULL-HD, meanwhile texts were given by informans who collected them. The meaning of *nandong* is advices and the function is the “alarm” for Simeuluese related to their way in running their life and for their safety. The value contain of respect and appreciate, sportivity, responsibility and survive. The way they deliver the message through pantoons and poetry which is sung is a local wisdom that can be explored in ecotourism.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The uniqueness of an area could be based on their creativity in delivering a message as fascinating linguistic phenomenon. The way their perform dance, a ritual, a folksong must be has strong relationship with the creativity and absolutely accepted in their community. *Nandong* is an oral tradition consist of pantoons and poetry about advices, stories, and satires. It is belong to Simeuluese who live in Simeulue island, Indonesia. There are three local languages in Simeulue islands namely Devayan, Sigulai and Leukon and a lingua franca namely Aneuk jame. Historically, *nandong* derived from Minangnese who nomad to Simeulue island and eventually it belong to Simeuluese. *Nandong* also develop in Devayan and Sigulai language but they are exist in poetry form only. The development of *nandong* such tells about the acceptances from Minangnese as nomads in Simeuluese. This study is focused on oral tradition *nandong* of Simeuluese. As Sibarani (2018: 48) stated that the study of oral traditions focuses on the integrity of the form, content, and

heritage of traditions in the living performance with full of creativity and improvisation (Sibarani, 2018: 48).

The cultural performance of *nandong* especially in formal occasions, performs their way to communicate. The word of *nandong* refer to advices to guide the community to behave and also be a solution when they face a problem. The popular one is *nandong smong* which inform the instruction to keep them safe from tsunami disaster. The lyrics in *nandong smong* instruct the Simeuluese to run away from the ocean to the highest place was an evidence that listening the advice is very important to do. Unfortunately, this oral tradition is rarely to perform nowadays even though it is potential to attract tourists to tell about the beauty of Simeulue as Singer in Bauman (1997) stated that in his study in India about to understand the complexity of Indian, he concerned to Indian’s cultural form such as drama, concert, ritual, ceremony, or festivals. The way they perform their cultures separately are able to show that their culture is anchored in their performances hence it can be learned not only by tourists but also themselves. Singer named as

“cultural performance” means refer to a context that highly perform a set of characters of a community.

Ecotourism convey tourism activities in nature. Tourists come to a place with particular reasons such as surfing, refresh their mind and body, away from crowded, and including enjoying local activities. Simeulue is an island under Aceh Province in Indonesia has many beautiful beaches because this island surrounding by Hindian ocean. The information about situation and the existence of flora and fauna can be found from their local tradition. Because oral tradition consist of expressions especially words related to their surroundings. And it can be found in *nandong*.

## 2 METHOD

Simeulue island is an island located at southwest of Aceh province and surrounding by Hindia ocean. To analyze cultural performance of *nandong*, qualitative research is applied and ethnography method was used. The data were audio-video recording of *nandong* performance and text of *nandong*.

They were collected through in-depth interview and participant observation. Video-audio recording were documented by using Panasonic FULL-HD. The data were analyzed through linguistic anthropology approach to describe performance of *nandong*, the indexicality and also participation in order to explore it as attraction in ecotourism.

## 3 DISCUSSION

Ecotourism is a form of travel into the natural areas aimed in conserving the environmental resources and preserve biodiversity and improve the local communities live hood. This is defined by The International Ecotourism Society (IES) in 1990. Ecotourism is a form of tourist that is responsible in preserving the nature areas, to create economic benefits and maintain the cultural integrity of local communities which is also a form of special tourism interest (Fandeli. 2003). Based on these definition, ecotourism has potential stage to maintain and/or revitalize oral tradition and also benefit for the local communities economically. Therefore, the first stage is to analyze the oral tradition to find out the meaning and value and then to include it in tourism as one way to maintain and preserve it.

*Nandong* is performed by performer(s) through specific pitch and way. It must be sung by a

man/men who able to produce high pitch and have ability in perform as the previous performer. The genre of *nandong* are pantoon and poetry. Pantoon consist of four lines where two first lines are *sampiran* (consist of metaphor), and two last are contain literal meaning. In poetry form, all of lines are contain lliteral meaning entirely. In a formal situation, *nandong* is accompanied by instrument namely *kedang* (drum) and/or violin, but in non-formal performer(s) only emphasize to the voice of performer(s). There were 13 *nandong* classified with its theme. They are *nandong* dendang, *nandong* batunangan, *nandong* samba, *nandong* samba in Sigulai language, *nandong* untung, *nandong* janji, *nandong* jawab, *nandong* carai, *nandong* kasih, *nandong* burung, *nandong* buang, *nandong* baree kunyik and *nandong* smong. For example *nandong* samba tells about how to respect and gratitude, *nandong* untung tells about human’s fate, and *nandong* batunangan tells about engagement.

One of the unique of *nandong* is, it is sung by using high pitch. historically, it has relationship with the distance. Formerly, *nandong* was sung by men when they were on the clove tree, or on their robin (canoe) while fishing, or in their break time in rice field or even at night to the dawn. The high pitch is caused by the distance between clove farming, the distance between rice field to the other rice field, the distance between their houses and to defeat wave sound in the sea. Orality is relative to individual mannerisms, reactions, attitudes, ways of being, walking, talking, thinking, eating, sleeping, dressing or living. It also relates to working or doing nothing, fishing, cultivating, preparing food or sharpening tools. It is expressed when dying of hunger, sickness, or melancholy as well as through living in hope and faith just as much as living in boredom and ignorance. Orality also encompasses gestures and actions punctuated by *pehe*, that are rhythmic poems and droned chants about the tender intimacies of life, the emotions of the soul and spirit, or of a heart in pain, in joy or in mourning. Orality gives us words from time immemorial as well as contemporary times (Devantin, 2009: 9-10). Their ability to sing like counter tenor become their skill and unique to deliver their message.

To describe their cultural performance in *nandong* means to introduce who they are and what they do with their nature, so it can be adding value to attract the visitors to come to this island besides its beautiful beaches. Through their human resource, there are a lot of things to do related to develop ecotourism. Such cultural values become local

wisdom that can be utilized as a source of character building (Sibarani, 2018: 5).

Folk discourses are cultural expressions as the collective memory of the local community such as proverbs, parables, traditional verses, traditional puzzles, fairy tales, legends, myths, and other verbally cultural expressions. As the part of oral traditions, folk discourses are transferred orally from one generation to other generations (Sibarani, 2018:48). Cultural performances belong to the native. Therefore, the meaning of multi expression in *nandong* performance only known exist in theirs. The messages to keep environment, to inform about how what they have in this island and how they use it wisely. For example the lyrics of *nandong* about ocean resources below:

- (1) *Tanggung mananggung di tapian*  
(catches at the seashore)

*Kanailah udang tali-tali* (got tali-tali shrimp)

*Sabuik manyabuik paruntungan*  
(question and answer each other about fate)

*Disangko patang pagi lai* (thought it is noon, but it still morning)

- (2) *Kanailah udang tali-tali* (it has got tali-tali shrimp)

*Kironya udang tabingkaru* (but in fact, it is tebingkaru shrimp/lobster)

*Sabuik manyabuik paruntungan*  
(question and answer each other about fate)

*Tabik taurai ai mato* (tears are drop)

From the first stanza especially at the first and second line, performer inform about one of their way to catch fish or shrimp. The activity of fishing can be taught to the tourists as one of local activities which friendly for the environment. The way to catch not only pleasure but also teach the value of patience. Local wisdom can be understood as ideas and local knowledge which are full of wisdoms, values, and virtues owned by members of the community. Local wisdom is gained from cultural traditions or oral traditions because it is the content of the oral traditions or cultural traditions inherited for the next generation and used to organize social life in all areas of their lives. Local wisdom is a local cultural value that can be used to set the order of a society in a wise or prudent ways (Sibarani, 2018: 4).

The second stanza informs about Simeulue natural resources which rich of its seafood. The two first lines are *sampiran* (phrases/clauses/sentences which is used before the last two lines). *Sampiran* was not only to parallelize pantoon, so it sound

aesthetic, but also related to their cognitive about describing the same phenomenon from what they've seen in nature to the problem their facing or only inform the situation. *Nandong*, also used to inform about their natural resources convey flora, fauna, and procedural about how to socialize including save their life from huge disaster like tsunami. One of *nandong* theme is *smong* means tsunami. In this text, simeulue were given a procedural way about how to face tsunami which is begun with huge linon (earthquake).

All of their performance relate to their language use. It means, all of the action to produce the performance is a mode of communication. Seyfeddinipur and Gullberg (2014) stated that language used is fundamentally multimodal. Multimodal involved body movement, facial expression, face and gaze, and also gesture. All of them have meanings. They are occur together with the text or without text. The performance while perform *nandong* consist of meanings that express their idea, thought and feeling toward their oral tradition, such as they position when do *nandong* such as sit with cross leg, put their palm into they ear, and produce high pitch. Putting their palm (fore finger) into their ear has purpose to produce louder voice. Produce high pitch complete the vocal in order to deliver the message well and sit with cross leg show a polite position. They cultural performance shows their characteristic; obedience, polite, low profile, and also brave.

To find out the meaning of *nandong* cultural performance can be found from their performance too. Each action to produce language must be rely on their culture. Language one of cultural action as Duranti (1997: 2) explained that language as cultural resources and speaking is cultural practices. The concept of performance in this study refers to every action of speaking. The actions include show, appearance, and speech obviously occur in their daily conversation. Beginning with folklore studies, and develop to performance studies, and now is linguistic anthropology studies. The experts such as Bauman and Honko emphasize performance as crucial element to study of human behaviour. Bauman (1990: 60) stated that studies of performance can make a unique contribution in language studies. As many authors have stressed, performances are not simply artful uses of language that stand apart both from day-to-day life and from larger questions of meaning, as a Kantian aesthetics would suggest. Performance rather provides a frame that invites critical reflection on communicative processes. A given performance is tied to a number

of speech events that precede and succeed it (past performances, readings of texts, negotiations, rehearsals, gossip, reports, critiques, challenges, subsequent performances, and the like).

Then, Honko (2000: vii) explained that Oral performance cannot be captured in letters and words. Too many essential features are simply left aside in the written codification of a speech event which normally employs a wide array of paralinguistic means of expression from gesture to music. The other definition came from Hymes in Duranti (1997: 15) defined performance is something creative, realized and achieved.

The using of language related to their environment inform about their natural resources, how to treat them and advices about their social life also part of their local wisdom. Sibarani (2018: 42 ) states that local wisdom is indigenous knowledge of local genius of a society derived from to make peace and improve the community welfare. Local wisdom can be local knowledge, local skills, local intelligence, local resources, local social process, local norms and local customs. Substantially, local wisdom is values and cultural norms to organize the social life. The values and norms that are believed to be true become the reference for the daily behaviour of the local people.

Aesthetically, *nandong* has poetic function that accepted by Simeulunese. Every time *nandong* is sung, it such as an alarm for them about how they have to behave to both nature and society. Lyrics in *nandong* intend to warn Simeulunese through their poetic poetry. This way able to touch they heart and build their responsibility keep them dong what the ancestor told. The parallelism help them easier to remember and keep the lyrics and theme in their memory. Müller-Zetelmann in Lethbridge and Mildorf (2003: 143-144) stated that poetic texts have a tendency to:

- relative brevity (with some notable exceptions)
- dense expression
- express subjectivity more than other texts
- display a musical or songlike quality
- be structurally and phonologically over structured
- be syntactically and morphologically over structured
- deviate from everyday language
- aesthetic self-referential (which means that they draw attention to themselves as art form both through the form in which they are written and through explicit references to the writing of poetry)

Parallelism not only occur in phonology level, but also in grammatical level especially for pantoon in Aneuk Jame language. The *sampiran* at the first line is similar as the first content in a stanza, and *sampiran* at the second line is same as content at the second content. *Nandong* in Devayan language showed parallelism in phonological level only and *nandong* in Sigulai language only focus to the message without paying attention to parallelism. In generally, *nandong* consist of advice hence it can be said that *nandong* is advice, listen to the word of *nandong* will indicate to advice.

The unity of beauty words, high pitch and the way to deliver *nandong* is a creativeness of Simeulunese which reflected in their daily life. Some of gesture or body movement show strong relationship with Islamic. It can be noted from the way they perform to produce louder voice, and sit position. It is similar like a person who do *adzan* (the action to inform pray time) and recite holy Qur'an. Expression of imperative sentence which is wrapped by persuasive or procedural sentences tend to inform good values and norms that accepted in their community. To revitalize and to explore *nandong* as one of their heritage, there are several things to do relate to its existence such as activate *nandong* studio hence performer(s) able to focus to do *nandong*.

Developing ecotourism will be able to increase Simeulunese income. From *nandong*, it can create a lot of handmade based on simeulue natural resource to be souvenirs. Besides, performance of *nandong* also able to attract visitors' attention in art. The souvenir can be key chain, clothes, bag and etc. Meanwhile *nandong* performance can perform at the beach, at the stage, and so forth. The performance of *nandong* not only to advise simeulunese, but also the visitors. The local wisdom of mutual cooperation is actually a cultural heritage of Indonesia. It is found in various regions and ethnics in Indonesia with various terms, concepts, and implementation. Even though it has various terms and implementation, all kinds of mutual cooperation is concerned with the effort to combine the potential, energy, resources, and funding to complete a job in the form of mutual help, mutual support, and mutual work (Sibarani, 2018: 41).

Relating to ecotourism, the existence of *nandong* is still needed because the value and belief are lied and reflected in the expression as local community's cognitive through language. Cultural performance of them refer to their characteristic which accepted and applied in their life. Furthermore Drumm (2002) states that in any



ecotourism activities should have a minimum impacts on natural resources that serve as tourist attractions. It should involve any stakeholders (individuals, communities, eco - tourists, tour operators and relevant government and non government) in the planning stages, development, implementation and supervision. While ecotourism's intentions are certainly laudable, the challenge to ecotourism is to deliver on its definitional promise: 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people' (TIES, 2006). Blamey, 1997; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1987; Honey, 1999 in Butar-butur and Soemarno (2013) explain that most scholars take this challenge to have three parts: ecotourism must simultaneously (a) minimise environmental impact and thus have a small ecological 'footprint', (b) contribute to conservation either through direct efforts (e.g. on-site reforestation, habitat restoration, etc.) or through financial benefits, and (c) promote local livelihoods through political empowerment and a combination of culturally appropriate social and economic benefits to local people.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

*Nandong* is performed both lingual and non-lingual expression in a context. From the expression, the cultural performance is appear as resemble that describe Simeulunese character. The character can be seen from their performance that rely on meanings and values of indigenous knowledge. From *nandong*, it also can be seen that there are a lot of ideas, equipment, and material related to their welfare. The material used such as *kedang*, violin, cap, symbol, color are able to represented as accessories or key chain for example. When people made, create, see, sell, and buy the product, they will indicate *nandong* because the iconic and symbolic of its cultural performance.

The cultural performance of *nandong* is one of a good access to develop Simeulunese welfare that rely on human resource toward ecotourism. It is concluded that performing oral tradition for ecotourism is able to maintain the existence of oral tradition itself and in the meantime, the benefit also can be reached to increase the human resource and also their economy. Individual, government, and stakeholder should be involved in order to have sustainability.

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