
Decoding Social Standards for Children: A Case Study of Banjarese Songs

Ninuk Krismanti*, Agustina Lestary, Hj. Jumainah

STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study is set to explain social standards decoded through traditional songs for Banjarese children. This study is carried out under a descriptive qualitative design. The data are taken from 36 songs sung for different purposes, from lullabies to traditional games companions. Observation and interviews are the techniques employed to collect the data. The observation and the interview are conducted in regions representing two distinguished dialects of the Banjar language: Banjar Hulu and Banjar Kuala. Cultural Linguistics is an approach for data analysis. The lyrics of investigated songs are registered into five categories reflecting different standards expected by Banjarese society for children. The results of the study show the desired and undesired social values believed by Banjarese society. These values are introduced to children, not through the media of preaching, but common practice of Banjarese families, singing.

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1. Introduction

Culture and society are interwoven. Culture will not exist without society and, vice versa, culture itself is the soul of a society. Culture has been an integral part of a community since the very first day the community is established. Every tangible part of a society reflects the intangible system that governs the community. Culture is manifested through different integral aspects of people lives, one of which is art. Art is defined by Wiflihani (2012) as the expressions of deepest soul experiences by the means of certain media, including songs.

Folksongs are among Banjarese arts managed to survive though those who sing them are getting smaller in number. Folksongs, like many other forms of culture, are media to transfer wisdom from the older generation to the younger generation. Being part of everyday lifestyle, folksongs carry a certain message from the older member of society to the current one. Furthermore, Levchina (2015) stated that folk songs, which are parts of authentic songs, are a precious collection of cultural symbols, concepts, and myths. However, it is quite easy for some people to miss the deep meaning behind lyrics of the songs since the wordings used oftentimes sounds illogical, nonsense or funny.

Being a society of which the oral tradition is more than the written one, it is, then, quite difficult to find the record of some Banjarese culture. This condition is the result of the lack of documentation of some tradition of Banjarese people as well as the research related to Banjarese culture. Research on Banjarese songs is not significant in numbers. There are only a few researchers conducting studies on this field. Three of them are Adeliyani (2014), Adawiyah (2014), and Marfuah (2014).

Investigating the form, the meaning, and the function of lullabies, as part of folksongs, (Adeliyani, 2014) concluded that there are mainly two forms of Banjarese lullabies. They are bound and free form. Further, the result of the study also shows that the lyrics of Banjarese lullabies reflect the expected moral and prayer for Banjarese children. The study also shows the four functions of Banjarese lullabies; referential, expressive, directive, and aesthetic. To compare the work of Adeliyani

(2014) and this study, Adeliyani (2014) investigated Banjarese lullabies; meanwhile, this study is intended to analyse not only Banjarese lullabies but also traditional songs for games companion and giving advice. Furthermore, Adeliyani (2004) implemented hermeneutics approach to analysed the data, while Cultural Linguistics is the approach of this study.

Another investigation of Banjarese songs is conducted by Adawiyah (2014). She investigated the lyrics of Banjarese songs in three aspects of stylistics: word choices, sentence structures, and meanings. The biggest differences between the study conducted by Adawiyah (2014) and this study fall on types of investigated songs and the approaches of analysis. In her study, Adawiyah (2014) investigated modern songs with Banjarese lyrics written by a famous local musician, Anang Ardiansyah. On the contrary, this study investigates traditional songs for Banjarese children. Furthermore, Adawiyah (2014) analysed the data using stylistics approach, not Cultural Linguistics one.

The last study taken as the comparison is the study conducted by Marfuah (2014). Marfuah (2014) investigated traditional songs of Banjar Hulu to reveal their forms, functions, and meanings. In her study, Marfuah (2014) focused only on traditional songs of Banjar Hulu dialects. This what makes her study is different from this study where the songs are collected to present Banjar Hulu and Banjar Kuala. Furthermore, the approach of investigating the data is also different.

To conclude, most of the previous works on Banjarese traditional songs deal with the forms and messages behind the songs. The investigation on Banjarese songs is mostly done using a literature approach. About traditional children songs, most researchers investigated certain types of songs. For instance, they only investigated lullabies without paying attention to other children songs for different purposes.

Even though Banjarese songs have been subject to investigations of many studies, there is still room for further research. There are many kinds of children songs yet to be explored and there are surely many other approaches that could be applied in analysing the songs; one of which is the linguistic approach. Some previous studies focus only on the messages behind the songs while the belief system of the society underlying the songs is not discussed. These are why this study is needed.

With the research question of, “what are the social standards for children projected in the children songs in Banjarese?” this study is conducted to investigate and elaborate the belief system lies beneath the Banjarese folksongs which are sung for children or by children. This study will focus on the social standard set by society for their children. Cultural Linguistics theories will be used as the theoretical framework to analyse the Banjarese folksongs and its cultural representation.

2. Research Methods

This study is a descriptive qualitative study. The objective of this study is to describe the language phenomenon as it is, without any interference by the researchers. Mukhtar (2013) stated that a study is classified as a qualitative study if it is conducted to observe any phenomenon in its natural environment and to describe them as they are. The data are the Banjarese folksongs. The songs are specifically those sung by parents to children or by the children themselves as they are playing some games. 36 traditional songs are being investigated in this study.

The lyrics of the songs are mainly obtained through observations and interviews with the native speakers of Banjarese. There are two main dialects of Banjarese: Banjar Hulu and Banjar Kuala. The native speakers are carefully chosen to represent the users of these dialects. They came from Banjarmasin, Aluh-aluh, Anjir, Kandangan and Barabai. Interview was conducted to confirm researchers' findings. As the researchers themselves are Banjarese, the data are analysed by using the inferential technique in which the researchers' subjectivity as part of the society itself plays an important role.

Once the data were gathered, the researchers categorized the expected behaviour based on five categories related to physical, mental, interpersonal, spiritual, and other expectations. The classifications are based on the meaning interpreted from the words, phrases, or sentences used in the lyrics. Researchers' interpretation of the lines was first consulted to the native speaker of Banjarese. The belief system of the society is drawn through the analysis of the expected social standards identified.

The approach to analyze the data is Cultural Linguistic approach. “Cultural Linguistics

engages with features of human languages that encode or instantiate culturally constructed conceptualizations encompassing the whole range of human experience” (Sharifian, 2017). In other words, cultural conceptualization reflects various features of languages. Furthermore, Cultural Linguistics focuses on exploring the representation or the realization of the culture of society through the language use of the members of the society itself. Sharifian (2017) stated that it specifically focuses on the discussion of language, culture and its conceptualization.

Cultural Linguistics approach has been employed in many different studies to investigate various aspects of culture, from the intercultural communication (Xu, 2014), textbooks (Dinh, 2017 & Sharifian, 2017) to the language used in traditional ritual and ceremonies in a society (Raru, 2016; Tangkas, 2015). The studies emphasize the forms, the functions, as well as the meanings of words and sentences used during the ritual. Cultural Linguistics approach enables the researchers to interpret the social beliefs and the local wisdom of the community. Other studies employ Cultural Linguistics to investigate the folksongs. Purnomo & Subagyo, (2010) stated that folksongs reflect the customs and beliefs of the members in a certain culture. Kóczy (2018) investigated the Hungarian folksongs, focusing on three cultural conceptualizations: cultural schemas, cultural categorization, and cultural metaphors.

Moreover, Cultural Linguistics can be employed to investigate the language use of all forms. It cannot only be used to explore the cultural realization in traditional ritual, ceremonies, and other oral tradition, but it can also be used to unveil the social standards and communal rules laying beneath everyday language use. This approach is applied in many studies to explore the beliefs and values of a society through the lexicons or the sentence structures (Darheni, 2010; Musolff, 2016).

3. Results and Discussion

As part of a society, it is only natural that the members of the society are expected to obey the standard norms and rules set. As traditional as it may sound, many rules and norms in society are passed down from generation to another orally. They could be transferred through warnings and advice given by the elders to the younger generation, or they could as well be introduced through folklores, plays, and even songs. However, the standard set by the parents – as well as the society- for the children are often stated in a subtle way in which it comes not in form of firm warnings but in some expectations told repeatedly.

Songs have been an integral part of Banjarese people’s daily lives. People sing the songs to their children as lullabies, as well as the parents, play some games with their children. Though the lyrics might seem simple with some repetitive words or nonsense sentences but there are more than meet the eyes. Expectations are told to the children by parents with a hope that in the future their children would meet the standard set by the society where they growing up and living.

The documented lyrics of traditional songs were obtained through literature search both online and offline. The observations were conducted in four families to find authentic data. After analysing the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences used in the songs, the researchers categorized expectations into five categories: physical condition expectation, mental state expectation, interpersonal expectation, spiritual expectations and others. The explanation of each category and how it projects the belief system of the society will be explained as follow:

a. Physical Condition Expectation

Beauty is what inside, people said; still, appearance matters for Banjarese. The importance of physical traits for Banjarese is portrayed in parts of the investigated lyrics. Some words or phrases showing expectation on physical conditions of the children can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Lyrics reflecting physical condition expectation

| Lyrics | Translation |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Anakku nang bungas</i> | O, my handsome/good looking child |
| <i>yang bungas rupa</i> | The one with good look |
| <i>Disehatkan0</i> | Always be healthy |

dijauhkan segala penyakit
Mudahan panjang umurnya

Will not suffer any illness Long live

The words *bungas* is mentioned at least twice in the lyrics. The word itself can be translated as good looking. It can be used for either man or woman. It can be inferred that it is parents' wish for their children to grow up as a good-looking adult. Also, it can be inferred that society emphasizes personal appearance. It might be within the social belief that having good physical appearance will benefit the person him/herself.

Another physical trait expected from the children is being smart. It can be seen from the lyrics *anakku pintar* which can be translated as my smart child. Along with having a good look, society expects its members to be clever. Clever means being able to effectively function the brain. Clever means what people see outside portrays the insight. Being clever and behaving like one are highly deemed by Banjarese society. Children should not look *bebungulan* (look like a fool), the total opposite of clever. This again confirms that appearing as a smart kid is preferable.

In addition to having a good appearance and a good brain, the parents also wish that the children will grow up healthily. It can be seen from the lyrics of *disehatkan* which is roughly translated as (the children) always be healthy and *dijauhkan segala penyakit* which has a similar meaning as (the children) will not suffer any illness. This means that society expects a healthy generation so that they can fulfil their roles in the community well.

The lyrics of Banjarese songs for children also imply the parents wish for their children to live long. It can be seen from the sentence *mudahan panjang umurnya*. It is, for sure, only natural that parents would hope that their children to not only grow up healthily without suffering from any illness but also to live long. Live long means not only die at old age but also live happily as parents expect children not to bear any suffer physically and mentally until their last breath.

b. Mental state expectation

Along with their expectations on children's physical states, Banjarese parents also set their expectations on mental states of their children. The mental states here are associated with personality traits or inner beauty. The following table outlines parents expectations on mental states of their children.

| Lyrics | Translation |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Jauh culas</i> | Do not be dishonest |
| <i>Jauhkan dengki</i> | Do not be resentful |

Table 2. Lyrics reflecting mental state expectation

The lyrics above mentioned two personal traits: dishonest (*culas*) and resentful (*dengki*). However, as both words carry negative meaning, the phrases *keep away* or *do not be* always precede both words. This means that the society deems the traits cunning and resentful as a bad personality thus it is expected that the members do not possess any of these traits. It is the social belief that having these traits might lead one to do bad deeds.

Culas means someone will do anything to achieve his/her desire even by treating others unfairly. This is a toxic trait that is on the contrary with Islamic teaching *amanah* (trustworthy). No Banjarese parents expect their children to be successful in a dishonest way. *Culas* is a dangerous trait as it potentially causes big problems for children in the future. Therefore, of all bad traits, parents emphasize children not to be dishonest.

Along with *culas*, the parents also expect their children not to be *dengki* or resentful. *Dengki* is also a toxic trait portraying someone unhappy for others' happiness. This trait is very dangerous that in an extreme possibility it can lead someone to do unexpected things to hinder others from being more successful. Those who are resentful will never be happy as they always compare their happiness to others. Therefore, another trait parent emphasizes the children to avoid is being resentful.

c. Interpersonal expectation

Not only setting the standard for the members in terms of physical and mental state, but the society also set its standards on how their members should interact with one another. The expected norms to be carried within the community can be seen from the lyrics below.

| Lyrics | Translation |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Di dunia wajib bakti dengan orangtua</i> | Must obey the parents in this world |
| <i>Mambawa rahmat</i> | Bringing bless (to others) |
| <i>Membawa untung</i> | Bringing luck (to others) |
| <i>Membawa sugih</i> | Bring prosperity (to others) |

Table 3. Lyrics reflecting the interpersonal expectation

First and foremost, it is important for children to always obey their parents. They should listen to and follow the parents’ order. The members of the society should take the role of being filial children first before they take a bigger role in the community. The word *wajib bakti* (must obey) means that being a faithful kid to the parents is not something to bargain. Children are obliged to put their parents on the top of their priority. Every decision they make for their life shall not negatively affect their parents, be it mentally, materially, or physically.

Furthermore, based on the lyrics above, it can be seen that children are expected to be good not only to their parents but also people around them. The society needs the members to give back to the community they live in. One of the most expected ways of giving back is by being a blessing in the life of others. Being a bless (*membawa rahmat*) is defined as bringing joy, love, and comfort to all creatures. This means that someone who is a blessing for others is the one who treats all people equally, no matter what their backgrounds are. Being a blessing means pouring unconditional care not only to human beings but also to animals and plants.

Another expected standard deemed by Banjarese society is children have to bring luck (*mambawa untung*) to others. Bringing luck is defined as being beneficial to others. Children are expected to grow up as those who positively contribute to their surroundings. This means children’s lives are not their own. They have a social responsibility to benefit others. Society expects all of its members to create the opportunity to help other members. In other words, when growing up as successful people, later on, Banjarese children are hoped to open the doors for their friends and relatives.

Other than *membawa untung*, children are also expected to *mambawa sugih* (bring prosperity). Bring prosperity here shows another social responsibility of Banjarese society members. The word *mambawa* (bring) is Banjarese word that contains the understanding of carrying something to be given. Therefore, Banjarese children are expected to be prosperous when they grow up, and their prosperity shall be shared, especially to their parents.

Bless, luck and prosperity are highlighted in the Banjarese songs because they are regarded as standards of success for Banjarese. To go deeper, it can be seen that the Banjarese people do not only put emphasis on the material thing, which is prosperity, but also on the non-material things- bless and luck. Moreover, the Banjarese people set the standard of a good life which does not only focus on one’s family but also all other members of the society one lives in.

d. Spiritual Expectation

It is interesting to note that Banjarese people believe in the afterlife. Thus, they do not only emphasize the life they are currently living but also life after death. This can be seen from the lyrics of the songs as shown below:

| Lyrics | Translation |
|---|--|
| <i>Kelak ikam di akhirat mendapat naungan surga</i> | And in the afterlife, you will be sent to heaven |
| <i>Anak saleh</i> | Religious child |
| <i>Orang islam di dunia wajib sayang Allah dan</i> | Moslem must love Allah and His messenger |
| | Live with faith and die with faith |

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Rasul</i> | Oh child, live with faith and blessed by Allah |
| <i>Hidup baiman Mati baiman</i> | May you be a saint |
| <i>Kur sumangat hidup baiman disayang Allah</i> | |
| <i>Mudahan jadi wali</i> | |

Table 4. Lyrics reflecting the spiritual expectation

Islamic values are deeply rooted in Banjarese society. Therefore, there is no doubt that how Banjarese people live should be following the teachings of Islam. The presence of life after death is part of Islamic values believed by its followers. This becomes one signature belief of Banjarese society whose most of its members are Muslims. Therefore, as seen in the lyrics, Banjarese people have set certain standards on how the members should live their lives not only for the sake of their lives now but also their lives after.

As a society with strong religious values, the members are encouraged to be a devoted believer. As a devoted believer, one should hold on to their faith for the whole life. It is only by doing so, then, one will be sent to heaven in the afterlife. Heaven is always regarded as the ultimate reward for Banjarese. The only way to get the reward is by pleasing Allah. Therefore, everything that Banjarese children does is hoped to be on the track as guided by holy Qur'an and hadiths. If not, the children will face the threat of being sent to hell in the afterlife. No Banjarese parents wish their children to root in hell later. That is why parents keep on reminding their children to chase after heaven in their lives. The words 'heaven' and 'hell' do not only appear in Banjarese traditional songs for children but also other traditional oral works of literature of the society.

Other than heaven, the spirituality of Banjarese is also reflected in other phrases that appear in the investigated lyrics. One of them is *anak saleh* (religious child). Expecting the children to be religious ones augments the fact that Banjarese put spirituality as an important part of their cultures. *Anak saleh* includes the understanding of being faithful to Allah, being obedient to parents, and being good to others. *Anak saleh* is a complete wish for Banjarese parents as it resumes the wish of the parents to have pious children who have a balanced life spiritually and socially.

Another part of the lyrics portraying expectation of Banjarese society through parents wish in traditional songs is *Orang Islam di dunia wajib sayang Allah dan Rasul* translated as Moslem love Allah and His messenger. This means that Banjarese children have to be familiar with their Creator and His Messenger. Loving comes from knowing. Banjarese children are introduced to the concept of having only one God and the concept of making Muhammad PBUH the role model for their lives since a very young age. One way of introducing these concepts is through lullaby sung regularly by the parents.

Hidup baiman mati baiman and *Kur sumangat hidup baiman disayang Allah* appear in the lyrics of the investigated songs also reflect the spirituality of Banjarese. *Hidup baiman mati baiman* (live with faith and die with faith) portrays the desired goal of children's lives. Faith must always be part of the children. Therefore, faith is not only there within children during their lives, but they also have to be with it when they pass away someday. Furthermore, *kur sumangat hidup baiman disayang Allah* (Oh child, live with faith and blessed by Allah) also reflects the understanding for the children to live with faith. *Kur sumangat* is a Banjarese phrase uttered when cheering someone. In this case, parents cheer and support their children to live as a devoted creation so that the children will be loved and blessed by The Creator.

The last expectation set as part of spiritual standards by Banjarese society for children is a prayer for the children to be a saint. Being a saint, or *wali* in Banjarese is a prestige. *Wali* is a social title given to those who are regarded as having high spirituality and a deep understanding of Islam. *Wali* is believed to have a special connection to Allah and to possess certain magical abilities owned by no commoners. Therefore, the prayers of *wali* are believed to be powerful. The lyric of *mudahan jadi wali* (may you be a saint) portrays that parent's expectation toward children spirituality goes beyond simply being a devoted Muslim. If possible, the children are expected to be holier, more pious, than others.

e. Others

Other than the four types of expected standards explained previously, there are three other

expectations decoded in Banjarese songs for children. As the three do not belong to any of the four previous categories, they are listed in the category of “others”. The list of expected standards in this category is shown below.

| Lyrics | Translation |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Bauntung</i> | Lucky |
| <i>Disayang mama</i> | Loved by the mother |
| <i>Apik-apik di dunia</i> | Be careful in the world |

Table 5. Lyrics reflecting other expectations

Banjarese children are expected to be *bauntung* or lucky. *Bauntung* here means the children are hoped to be successful in life though they may not be the best in all aspects. *Bauntung* means children can always achieve the goal set though they may not be as good as others. *Bauntung* for Banjarese society is associated with wealth and power. It is closely related to material achievement. Therefore, *bauntung* rarely exists alone. In any oral literature, it usually appears along with two other words: *baiman* (faithful) and *batuah* (beneficial). The three words portray society expectation that all children of Banjarese will have a balanced life for their Creator (*baiman*), their good (*bauntung*), and other creatures (*batuah*).

Another expected standard is *disayang mama* (loved by the mother). Being loved by the mother has a deep meaning. Banjarese children have to be the ones who can make their mothers proud. This means they need to be good kids that do not disappoint their parents. Why ‘mother’ instead of ‘father’ or ‘parents’ appear in the lyrics? It is related to Islamic teaching that mother should be respected above anyone else. In other words, *disayang mama* portrays the understanding that whatever children do, be sure they do not cause any sadness or worrisome to the mother. Sadness or disappointment of a mother can cause bad luck to the children as it can trigger the wrath of The Almighty.

The last expected standard in this category is *apik-apik di dunia* translated as to be careful in this world. Society expects children to live carefully. To go deeper, *apik-apik* in Banjarese is associated with the notion of to keep what has been given well. Life is a precious gift from Allah. Therefore, appreciating it well is a must. Banjarese children are responsible to take good care of their life as proof of their appreciation to His trust to let them born. Also, *apik-apik di dunia* conveys the understanding that the world is a place full of danger. For that, children must always be cautious. Everything that the children do is going to be judged in the world after so that children have to grow up as someone knowing what is good and what is bad for them.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the classification and the analysis above, it can be seen that there are some standards set by society to have a good life. The first standard is about physical appearance. The members ought to have a good look and need to maintain their health. The second standard is the mental state of the members. Cunning and resentful are regarded as bad deeds. A good member of the society should not possess any of these bad traits. In other words, society expects the members to have a good heart so that they can live in harmony with others. The third standard is related to how the members interact one to another. To create a peaceful community, it is only natural that society set certain rules and standards regarding how their members live together. Banjarese people believe that every child should respect their parents. Parents’ opinions do matter. Good children are those who listen to their parents well and follow the parents’ order. Along with fulfilling their role as a filial child, the members of the society are also expected to contribute to the wellbeing of the community. However, it is important to note that Banjarese people do not define prosperity as material possession or wealth but also a blessed community in which the members do good deeds. The fourth standard is the spiritual part of the members’ lives. Being a religious society, Banjarese people believe in life beyond death. Thus, they are expected to do good deeds in their lives so that they will go to heaven in the afterlife. Other than the four, there are also some other expectations directed to the children who do not belong to any of the four categories.

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