

## Conference Paper

# The Preservation of Balinese Oral Literature in Globalization

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## Abstract

Oral literature is considered as a world cultural heritage (intangible cultural heritage). However, the present condition is that oral literature in Bali is marginalized by the development of tourism. The method is observation, socio-drama and recorded material. Oral literature tradition is expected to have additional value, especially electronic devices such as radio, television, Internet, social media and production house. The empowerment of the people who concern with oral literature can be done through educational institutions, from the basic to higher educational levels. The model offered here involves establishing 'sanggar sastra', or informal schools in which performing theatrical play and drama could be spread around the Indonesian archipelago.

**Keywords:** oral literature, socio-drama, storytelling

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## 1. Introduction

Oral literature is part of the socio-cultural life of Bali people. However, in line with technological developments and tourism in this territory, the life of oral literature is diminishing, especially in the teenage group. Balinese culture, which was originally agrarian, has moved toward the tourism industry, which is eroding the oral literary tradition. While parents are busy earning a living, the children seek out alternative entertainment in the electronic media, such as online games, videos, etc. This lifestyle is worrying for society and local Bali government because Balinese culture, especially oral literature, could be lost in the middle of hustle and bustle of the tourism lifestyle. Vansina argues that the expression of oral tradition refers to a process and to the outcome of the process [1]. The result is an oral message based on a previous oral message of at least one age.

The presence of oral literature in the life of Balinese people was felt during 1960 [2]. In 1978 Bali's Governor, IB Mantra organized the Balinese Art Party (BAP). The purpose

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of the BAP was to conserve and document Balinese culture, including oral literature. Although the BAP did not fully achieve their objective, many forms of art were documented and saved from extinction, including Balinese oral literature. The BAP held of storytelling competitions (*mesatua*) or teen and received positive responses. Similar competitions were often held in schools and campuses.

Achmadi has conducted research on literature relating to folklore in Raas Madura Island [3]. Karsa researched oral literature in storytelling tradition (*mesatua*) in Sekardadi Village, Sub-District Kintamani, District Bangli Province Bali [4]. Other researchers, such as Adriyeti Amir, have studied mapping in Minangkabau oral literature [5]. Throughout history, oral literature in Indonesia has been explored by foreign researchers, such as R.O Winstedt, Hooykaas, and Liauw Yoc Fang. In addition, some Indonesian researchers have also been interested in oral literature, for example, Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana, Zuber Usman, HB Jasin, etc. Dundes states that oral literature is part of the more inclusive term folklore [6]. Folklore includes both verbal and nonverbal forms.

Generally, oral literature researchers are more interested in discovering the form, function, and meaning of oral literature. It is a sad reality that the position of oral literature has become marginalized and has lost the competition with technology, especially in conveying tradition (storytelling). Today's era of globalization through television has accelerated the marginalization of this tradition. Folklores are now aired in every television station in the form of cartoon movies. However, the stories in these cartoon movies are imported from England, America, Japan, and Malaysia. They are rarely original Indonesian folklore; therefore, the children are separated further from their cultural environment. Sweeney states that in the era of communication, technology progressively developed the media's role in the shift of oral tradition [7]. Uni-directional communication that occurs between the storyteller and the listener does not incur direct contact.

Indonesian children enjoy watching Superman, Batman, Spiderman, Doraemon, Sailormoon, Sinchan, Mickey Mouse and Power Rangers. However, behind the show and unbeknown to the children, many of these animations contain elements of violence, rant, hoax, and cunning; these aspects are not things that children should be encouraged to watch. Therefore, it is time to re-establish oral literature and adapt it into cartoons and other media. This digitalization process will not fully replace the tradition of oral storytelling, but it needs a companion when the children watching the show both from parents, grandfather, grandmother nor teacher at the school.

Based on the background, a number of problems have formulated in this research. How much effort is put into the conservation of oral literature in Bali? How is a model of oral literature developed in the Globalization era?

## 2. Methods

According to Abrams, there are four approaches in understanding literature scientifically, specifically an objective approach (the work itself), a pragmatic approach (reader), an expressive approach (author), and a mimetic approach (reality) [8]. In understanding oral literature, a mimetic approach is required. This research is classified as qualitative; therefore, it is descriptive. Data were obtained from observation, literature review, and documents. Documents were in the form of oral literature VCD, the results of recorded IKIP Saaswatii's student when performing drama (theatre). The observation was gathered by watching theatre and observing the results recorded by audiovisual technique. Data analysis refers to Plomp, who sets out quality criteria for results, which must be valid (reflected in knowledge), practical, effective and have added value [9].

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Conservation of oral literature—socio drama model

In the Dictionary of World Literature, Joseph T. Shipley mention named of drama means every performance which uses mimic (any kind of mimetic performance). Aristotle, in Suaka, said that drama is a picture of a behavior or action/motion [9]. This differs from Sujiman, who describes the limitation of drama—literature has a purpose to illustrate life, its disputes, conflicts, and emotions, through action and dialogue which is habitually planned for showing on stage [10]. Littérateur, Sarumpaet believes that drama is a kind of literature in the form of dialogue, which is intended to be performed on the stage [11]. In particular, a serious play could have a happy ending or a sad ending to a serious problem or made a drama of grief.

People's empowerment to care about tradition can be implemented through educational institutions. Educating the youth can be entrenched with values of tradition which exists in their environment and offers an exciting prospect by giving the greatest possible opportunity to perform through socio-drama (theatre). The theater stages an

era of globalization and digitalization, not only for performance alone but for a performance recorded by video. Digitalization through VCD, DVD, or similar, will energize the students because they will feel like actors and actresses in a world of television series and movies. As a product of digitalization, I am sure the students will care for tradition, especially oral literature.

In playing this role, according to Subyantoro, an individual should position themselves in a role, and subsequently interact with others who are also playing a role [12]. Empathy, sympathy, anger, and love are displayed while playing a role on stage, and if done well it will depict a part of life. Furthermore, the core role of a play is the involvement of participants in observing the problem and the passion to solve and understand this problem.

Data was gathered through role-playing carried out by a group of student theatre Majors in Language Education and Indonesian Literature Faculty of Language Education and Art IKIP Saraswati Tabanan. These students were chosen as they were given lectures regarding the subjects of literature, fiction prose, drama, and theatre. They were given sufficient material concerning both theory and practice. In addition, Majors in Language Education and Indonesian Literature IKIP Saraswati Tabanan has theatre laboratory facilities. There were two groups of students, and each group consisted of 15 people. Previously they also asked to discuss Balinese oral literature in the form of folklore, legend, myth, and fable. The title of folklore and theme of the story were picked by the students. From ten titles of folklore, the selected title was the story of *Tuwung Kuning* and the story of *I Bawang Teken I Kesuna* (*Bawang Merah dan Bawang Putih*).

After that, through group discussion, they divided the roles. The exercise lasts 4 times, rehearsal 1 time and staging one time. The last staging was recorded directly through the camera in theatre laboratory room of IKIP Saraswati Tabanan. The result of this recording was documented through VCD, therefore it can be re-aired as evaluation material and self-reflection of the cast. Based on the interview result, the cast was very happy performing the story because they were like actors and actresses who were shooting a television series or movie. Through the shooting, they were more serious in attempting to portray the character that was delivered. Therefore, through the utilization of technology, we obtained maximum performance result compared with conventional ways. Cano mentions that culture has a very important position [13]. During the last number of years, we have witnessed the emergence of a strong interest in culture as a result of the combination of various phenomena such as globalization, regional integration processes, and culture that demands the right to express oneself.

### 3.2. Storytelling and story reading model

The storytelling model is a series of strategies which consist of story transfer from storyteller to the listener. Storytelling is a natural art. It is an activity which is delivered from the teller (teacher) to the student, father, and mother to their children, or grandfather and grandmother to their grandchild, storyteller to the listener. Storytelling also an activity which is aesthetic because it is related to beauty and leaning on the power of words. The power of these words is used to achieve the goal.

Lewis Carol views story as a 'love present', because telling a story is giving and sharing [11]. While telling a story, the storyteller shows a willingness to be open, even susceptible to being attacked and reproached, and wants to sharpen the deepest feeling and trustworthy values. The excitement of sharing stories is also beneficial for children's psychological development.

The story reading model is done by reading the story from a storybook with pictures. In the picture story, there is usually writing in the form of short sentences which briefly describe the picture. It is intended that reading the story will increase and develop children's interest. This model is very important as children's reading interest in Indonesia is ranked at the bottom of the South East Country. In picture books, there are often words in which the children have not understood, but the tone of the narrator's voice along with the pictures will help to explain the content of the story that is being read.

In connection with the story reading model, Flood and Lap mention some steps which must be acknowledged while narrating children's stories, as follows [12]:

1. Read the book to a child in a small group of no more than 5-7 children. If there are too many members in the group, some children may not be able to see the book.
2. Prepare before reading the story to children, such as having an opening question that relates to the theme of the book being read.
3. Display the book to the children while reading it. Therefore, the children can see the pictures and words on every page of the book.
4. Stop for a while to allow for questions to make sure that the children understand the story.

Based on the aforementioned description of storytelling and story reading, there are also principle differences between telling and reading. A good narrator or storyteller

will spread a strong new spirit and show vivid images in front of the listener, by giving a clear and interesting portrait [12]. This requires intonation, accompanied by gestures and the presence of emotional content. The storyteller can animate every character as demanded in the story. Otherwise, story reading is reading the storybook itself. Events in storytelling will pass quickly in the children’s mind. This can happen without any message being conveyed, except legible black letters which embody the author’s idea. However, not all storytelling is better than story reading. A bad example of storytelling can eliminate what should be important and beautiful in the story.

Giving attention to the aforementioned discussion, the step toward conservation and development of oral literature in Bali in the globalization era is outlined as follows (Figure 1):

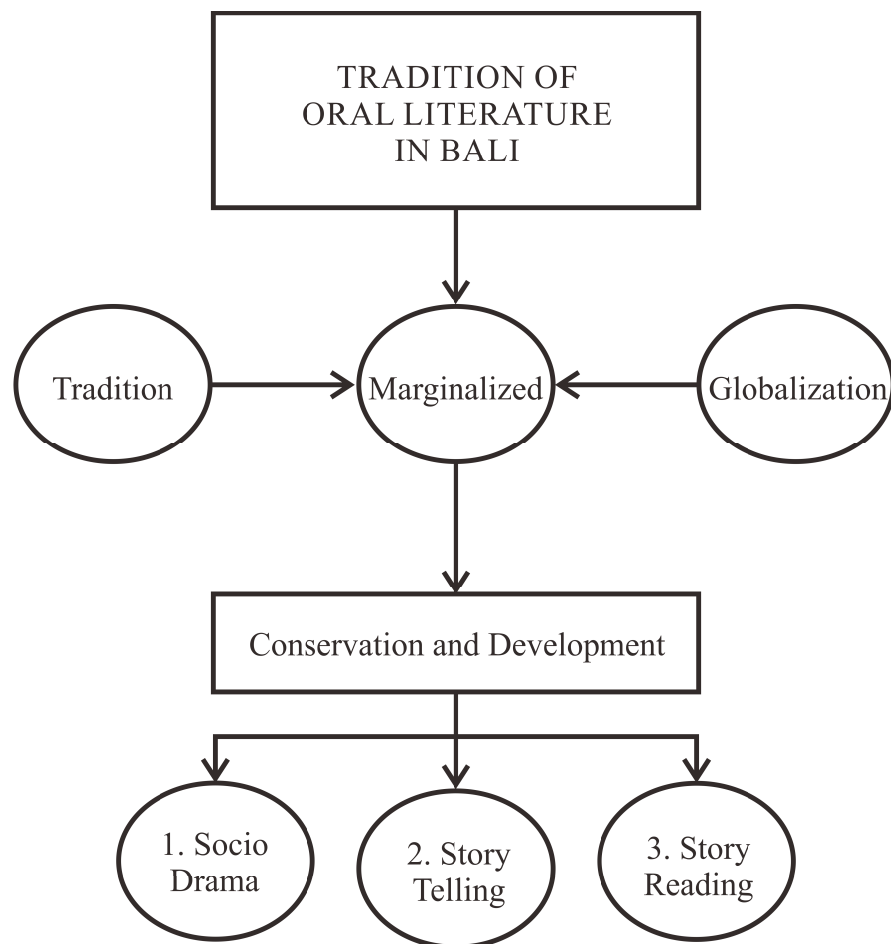


Figure 1: Flowchart of conservation and development of oral literature in Bali.

## 4. Conclusion

Conservation and development of oral literature in Bali in the globalization era is done through socio-drama, storytelling, and story reading. Materials of the story presented can take oral literature which spread in various regions in the country such as folklore, legend, myth, and fable. Well-told stories can be inspiring, can assist the development of cultural appreciation and emotional intelligence, can expand children's knowledge and create happiness. Listening to stories will help the children understand their world and how they interact with other people. Through socio-drama, storytelling and story reading can awaken the tradition of oral literature, which is on the brink of extinction. These three models can also awaken literature as it is the role of the storyteller to express the story, and the role of the listener to appreciate the literature. Oral literature is the noble teaching of the country's ancestors, which is recognized as world cultural heritage as it contains advice which neither patronizes nor dictates.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this research.

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