

## Cultural Communication of Didong Jalu in Takengon, Central Aceh Regency

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### Abstrac

Didong Jalu is a traditional art from Aceh Tengah (central aceh) that performs 2 (two) Didong group in one performance. Didong Jalu is an art that combines vocal and motion art with a small pillow as the property. Didong Jalu is also used as a medium of communication among societies from different ethnics. The problems of the research are (1) How is the Didong Jalu performance of Kampung Toweren societies, Takengon Central aceh Regency if it is reviewed from Entomusicology?, (2) How is Didong Jalu performance used as a medium of cultural communication by Kampung Toweren societies, Takengon, Central aceh Regency?. The research method is qualitative with interdiscipline approach. The research design is case study, this research is only applicable for where the research was held. The research location is Kampung Toweren Takengon, Central aceh Regency. The research focused on Didong Jalu performance with performance concept and communication concept. The source of data was primary data involving artists, literature documents, and public figure, while the secondary data involves books, and references from previous research. The data collection techniques are observation, interview, and study document. The technique of data validity used data triangulation. Data analysis techniques consist of reduction, data presentation, data verification. The results of the research was that Didong Jalu performance observed used 2 (two) concepts, they are concept presented by Sal Murgiyanto, involving (a) beginning parts, (b) core parts, (c) final parts; (d) rhythm, (e) melody. Didong Jalu performance as a cultural communication can be seen clearly from the elements which influence communication system presented by Alo Liliweri, such as, Didong Jalu as a communicator, communicant, message, media, effect, atmosphere, and disturbance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Didong Jalu is a match of art between 2 (two) groups called ulu (kelop) (Melalatoa, 2001:2). Didong itself has another form of performance called Didong Jalu. Usually, Didong Jalu is played by each kelop that consists of 30 players, divided into 2 main categories, *ceh* and *penunung* or *penyur* (Melalatoa, 2001:11). Become a *Ceh* has to fulfill requirements, such as having a good voice, (*ling temas*), having a capability to compose lyrics or poetries which will be sung with their own melody. Beside that, the performer must have sufficient knowledge about background of the societies' custom (*edet*) including its development or its changing that happen, and also knowlwdge about a vast environment.

The system of Didong jalu match requires a *ceh* to have an ability to compose spontaneous lyrics (*munapak*), the result of an improvisation and creativity in the middle of the match arena. The spontaneous and sudden lyrics are an outstanding ability born from the match system of Didong jalu which not everyone (*ceh*) has. Here is the expression of thought and created feeling. This ability will be judged by the audience and moreover by the judges who will give the decision word "win or lose" at the end of the final morning match. In each group, it usually has 2-3 pairs of *Ceh* which performs in duet or trio. Rarely a *ceh* sings solely except to sing melody for mourning lyrics (*sebuk*). At the beginning, Didong only relies on the power of hand clapping without aids, but now it uses a small pillow. It was popularized by *Ceh To'et* in 1964 in village, in a Didong Jalu. *To'et* started to use pillow to clap in Didong (based on the report of Cultural Service of Central aceh Regency, 2016).

The research found a beginning fact of Didong Jalu art that beside the speciality from Central Aceh Regency, Didong Jalu is also performed in big custom events, such as, wedding ceremony, especially in the evening after wedding party which usually lasts from 9.00 p.m. till 4.00 a.m. it shows a linguistic intelligent of Didong Jalu artist. Albayan (2016:

7) states that it is not easy to be Didong artists because they have to have adequate linguistics knowledge. Didong Jalu grows to be a social identity of local community. Damanik (2017: 5) states that Didong has been part of media in the social life of Central Aceh societies, so it has been a social identity there. In the Didong Jalu performance, there are so many messages in a very subtle local language, not many people understand what Didong Jalu artists delivered. This is stated by Manda (2016: 4) that Didong is a traditional art of Central aceh society that has a strong semiotics concept. It is uncovered from the lyrics sung by the artists along the performance.

Base on the statement above that there are 2 things which become discussion topic titled "The Cultural Communication of Didong Jalu art in Kampung Toweren Central aceh Regency", with the formulation of problems, (1) How is the Didong Jalu performance of Kampung Toweren societies, Takengon Central aceh Regency if it is reviewed from Entomusicology?, (2) How is Didong Jalu performance used as a medium of cultural communication by Kampung Toweren societies, Takengon, Central aceh Regency? To answer the above problem, the reseacher uses two theories as a base, the theory of performing arts presented by Sal Murgiyanto that outlines the performance in three parts, i.e., the beginning, the core, the final. The theory presented by Alo Liliweri explains the process of cultural communication based on 7 (seven) elements, they are communicator, communicant, message/symbol, media, effect or feedback, athmosphere, and disturbance.

## METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative, while the approach used interdiscipline that involves the science of sociology and ethnomusicology. Ethnomusicology is used to analyze the intresthetic of Didong Jalu art. Sociology is used to observe its extraesthetic i.e., the cultural communication of Gayo societies in Takengon

Central aceh Regency. The techniques of interview, observation, and documentation are used in this research. The research was held in Toweren, Takengon, Central aceh Regency, Aceh. The choosen setting of background which then becomes a center of attention in the research was custom events in the Central aceh because Didong Jalu performances only hold in custom ceremonies, such as wedding and welcoming the local authorities.

The subjects of the research were artists and traditional chairman in Toweren village central aceh regency. The data validity was based on credibility criterion with triangulation technique. The analysis strategy used in this research is case description. It is stated by K. Yin (1997: 134-137) that with case strategy the research analysis was explained in a form of topics and sub topics relevant with the problem and the research problems. In its operation, the analysis process is carried out with three flow of activities performed simultaneously which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion / verification (Miles dan Huberman, 1992: 15-21).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Form of Didong Jalu Performance

The form of Didong Jalu performance is very simple, both in the process of music arranging and in performing it, however its beauty is always be a consideration in performing it. Theory used to dicuss the form of Didong Jalu performance is Sal Murgiyanto's theory which divides the form of oerformance in 3 (three) parts, the beginning, the core, the end (final).

### The Beginning of the Performance

Didong Jalu performance begins with an introduction of each member and Ceh at the time of the performance. Then, when the performance begins, each goup will present a homage of greetings and thanks through a special poem shown on the opponent and the owner of the event. Lyric 1 shows an expression of greeting in a poem of Didong Jalu:

“o..kaom, kaom bebujang kaom, o..kaom, kaom pelin kemara, ari kaom toa ngekumalehen langkah, besilo ngesawah beloh atan acara, so mana Teruna, obon ken lewen semelah, selo perahumu pecah, munarong samudera. Bapak Ismail Wahab, woe sinte beruah, riak bereriak, morom iwani pesta, dari tanjung pinang, besannya ramah tamah, datang ke Aceh Tengah, menonton seni budaya”.

“o..kaum, kaum bebujang kaum, o..kaom, semua kaum kemara, dari kaum Toa mau berangkat, sekarang sampai di dalam acara, di sana Teruna, lawan dari sebelah, mana perahu pecah, mengarungi samudra. Bapak Ismail Wahab, yang punya acara, sangat bersemangat, bersama dalam pesta, dari tanjung pinang, besannya ramah tamah, datang ke Aceh Tengah, menyaksikan seni budaya”, Lyrics 1, a poem of greetings in Didong Jalu. (Dokumentation: Ismail Wahab, 2015).

Lyric 1 is an opening greetings that are usually done before the core of Didong Jalu show. This part determines the first impression for audiences, how good the group is in stringing the words in the poem as the opening for Didong Jalu performance as well as accompanied by a tap that already has its own characteristics, to accompany Didong Jalu performance. We can see from the picture 1.



**Picture 1.** Artists compose Didong Jalu lyrics

### The Core of Didong Jalu Performance

The core of Didong Jalu performance is providing a response to the opponent in the form of subtle allusions that tickle the audience

expressed through poetry of Didong Jalu. Not a coarse, overly frontal allusion that can cause a commotion. Those allusions are called tep onem. The following is a presentation of tep onem in the core of Didong Jalu performance:

“gere lupen ku rakan sebet, kaom ku ongot bujang kemara, didong ni enge ken edet, tersiret arip udara, muhibur muramin buet, tentekuet seni budaya, beta juga ku pak Maliudin rom pak Nurdin si kunul iatan ni meja mudoa sehat lahir batin ngeterjamin arap jadi juara”.

“tidak lupa ke sahabat, kaumku yang terdiam bujang kemara, didong ini untuk adat, tersirat dari udara, menghibur kegiatan yang ramai, seni budaya yang kuat, begitu juga ke pak Maliudi sama pak Nurdi yang duduk diatas meja ini, berdoa supaya sehat lahir batin biar terjamin selanjutnya jadi juara”, Lyrics 2, the main poem is addressed to the opponent of Didong Jalu. (Documentation: Ismail Wahab, 2015).

Lyric 2 shows a characteristic of Didong Jalu that presents tep onem meaning subtle allusions loaded as it is, combined with a little body movement, and hands taps as an accompaniment. Those are done by both groups. In the core part, each group attacks each other alternately. The assesment is not how funny the allusions are, hut how good the rhythm, melody that cover its allusion is. It will not only funny but also beautiful to be enjoyed by the audience. It can be seen from picture 2.



**Picture 2.** When performed tep onem

### **The Final Part of Didong Jalu Performance**

A closing is the last part of the performance of Didong Jalu when each group will do sebuku. It is a form of lamentation which the content of the asks for permission to end Didong Jalu performance, ask for an apology to the opponent, and thank to the owner of the event.

### **Cultural Communication of Didong Jalu Art of Gayo Sociaties**

The communication system in Didong Jalu performance through tep onem is interesting to observe. Therefore, to answer the problems the researcher used Alo Liliweri's theory which explains the process of cultural communication based on 7 (seven) elements, they are commmunicator, communicant, message/symbol, media, effect or feedback, athmosphere, and disturbance.

#### **Communicator**

Communicator of intercultural communication is a party that begins a communication. It means that Didong Jalu that inisiates to send certain messages to another party is called Communicant. In this case, Didong Jalu acts as a communicator inisiating a communication on another culture which is strengthen by didong jalu lyrics that have been strung as it is, so that other ethnics can understand the messages delivered. This is in accordance with the opinion of Sumaryanto, Sunarto, and Indrawan (2016: 4) that one of alternative da'wah method that can be found nowadays uses art media. The wide range of knowledge has to be balanced with vocabulary repertory, expression, symbol of thought, so that the beautiful simultaneous deep sharp and actual messages of lyrics can be revealed here. Like in the Sunarto dan Leo (2016: 5), about Senjang music. The content of senjang is adjusted with the current circumstances, for example in the wedding events, the content is related to the wedding ceremony. It also happens with events held by government or other private institution, such as independence day commemoration, the content of senjang is related to proclamation

spirit, struggle of nasionalism. Like Senjang, Didong Jalu is also created based on a present phenomenon, so that the role of a communicator is very influential to the society of Takengon. Sumaryanto, Cahyono, and Septiana (2016: 7-8) reveal that values obtained when humans relate to others is like a condition or a way done to succeed a performance.

### Communicant

A Communicant which is from another culture is not concerned only to societies, but also other aspects, such as economy, religion, politic. A communicant here is not only for subject, but also for object, for example, Didong Jalu is performed and used as a means of political oration in a massal campaign at certain time. The communicants here are not always the societies but the events also. It means that they understand the explicit messages and the implicit as well. Didong Jalu is the supportance of the communicator in those events.

### Message/Symbol

Didong Jalu has strong messages and symbols in its lyrics, made based on its purpose. Wedding ceremony is the official stage of Didong Jalu. Symbols owned by Didong Jalu performance are costume and place to hold the performance. See picture 3.



**Picture 3.** Didong Jalu Performance

Didong Jalu held in wedding ceremony is a message to the societies that cultural characteristic of Aceh Tengah is Didong Jalu. It can be seen from the lyric that Didong Jalu has a high value. To compose the lyrics need a good musical knowledge. Sumaryanto (2000: 2) states that musical ability is an inherent innate ability

of a person on music regardless the influence of environment. For example in the following lyric 3:

“ku karang didong, inele ku jangan lagu, ngebata bang sebuku, ganti pepongoten, aku termenong, ku tongkoken ulu, muninget kisah si lalu, ngebene tayang ni kuyu, osop wan gelep ilen, Bijakni cencempala ilen, so i bobong ni umah, sana de male ku erah, oteh, mungkin jamu ari sihen”

“ Ku karang didong, aku lantukan lagu, seperti itu sebuku, ganti pepomgoten, aku termenung, ku tundukan kepala, mengingat kisah yang lalu, yang terbang dibawa angin, hilang tertelan bulan, bijaknya burung cincimpala, itu di atas atap rumah, apa lagi yang mau ku cari, oteh, mungkin tamu dari mana”. Lyrics 3, the main poem is addressed to the societies. (Documentation: Putra Afriadi, 2018).

The meaning of lyrics 3 above interprets the messages of customs. It is in line with the research Firduansyah, Rohidi dan Utomo (2016: 5-6) about the meaning of guritan that the messages delivered from spoken literature contains prayers for the bride to have a peaceful, loving, and caring family (sakinah mawwadah warrahmah) and safe in the world and hereafter. The poem delivered by guritan speaker in the wedding is guritan rimbai. It can be captured from the lyrics that there has been held a wedding ceremony, and the performance held is to enliven the event.

### Media

Media is important to use in this sophisticated era nowadays, and it is a challenge for artists to preserve the cultural values of Didong Jalu so that the wider community does not misinterpret Didong Jalu. Then, it also needs a support from Aceh Tengah government so that Didong Jalu will not lose its cultural values, and continuously holds a renewal as an effort to preserve Didong Jalu. Because to be a Didong Jalu artist who understands the cultural values needs a long period of time, and done

continuously and periodically. It is like the expalantion of Bagong in Wadiyo and Lubis (2016: 5) that the social action is actions which are done individually or in group in a certain interaction and social situation.

### **Effect or Feed Back**

The effect or feedback of Didong Jalu performance can be various possibilities, such as, Didong Jalu is used as a means of politics oration. The positive effect is that the legislative candidates can gain much support from the societies. For this purpose, not all lyrics use local language, but in Indonesian language, for example lyrics 4.

“harimau tidur di hutan rimba,  
jangan kau ajak berpoto selfi, kalau kau  
kasar sama arita, itu sama saja kau cari  
mati”. Lyrics 4, allusions in Indonesian  
language are addressed directly to the  
opponent. (Documentation, Putra  
Afriadi, 2018).

Lyrics 4 from Didong Jalu performance raises feedback effects, positive and negative. The positive effect is that the group from another candidate will down their self-esteem if they can not respond with high value lyrics. The negative effect is that the societies will be misunderstood if the sentences used in the lyrics are exaggerating. When an action done, it will raise reactions based on the contacts gained. (Wadiyo dan Maragani, 2016: 6).

### **Athmosphere (Setting and Context)**

According to Sumaryanto and Hayati (2016: 3), traditional arts is a form of culture growing in an area. The athmosphere of Didong Jalu depends on what purpose it is performed. Like explained at the beginning part of this article that Didong Jalu is not only performed a wedding ceremonies, but also in local big events, in welcoming distinguished guests which it will influence the communication among cultures delivered through Didong Jalu perfomance. Societies are a social system consisting of related elements and integrated in a balance. (Wadiyo dan Lontoh, 2016: 4).

### **Disturbance (Noise atau Interferensi)**

Things that influence Didong Jalu performance are in the society itself. Sometimes, Didong Jalu that has been famous with high custom values, beautiful songs chanting, beautiful literature, on the contrary it is undermined by the demands of the society by presenting the too frontal words/lyrics. Didong Jalu is watched not only by the adults but also the teens and the children that someday they become the heirs or the generations of Didong Jalu in the future. And nowadays it will influence on the mind of local children also. Then, the other disturbance is about economical achievement of Didong Jalu artists. Although they do not want any material reward, but the owner of the show gives enough fee for each group of Didong Jalu. These anxiety and disturbance diminish cultural values at every performance of Didong Jalu. It is explained by Cahyono and Verulitasari (2016: 2) that the cultural values reflect factors of trust in forming Aceh's cultural identity. It means that the slightest disturbance will affect the cultural values of the art.

### **CONCLUSION**

Didong Jalu is the result of a very interesting local culture of Central Aceh. The performance of Didong Jalu in the show is divided into three parts, namely the beginning, which gives the message of greeting opening and thanks to the owner of the event. The core part, giving a presentation of a mutual treat between the two groups called tep onem. Finally, in this section each group will perform a form of sebuku with the intention of giving thanks, asking permission, and asking an apology to the opponent during the performance. Didong Jalu is a good cultural communicator so that it gives a positive impact to Aceh Tengah itself. With the presence of Didong Jalu, Central Aceh became more known by the outside culture that spread to foreign countries. In addition, Didong Jalu is being used as a means of entertainment, is also used as other means such as the delivery of customs, morals, and religion, and Didong

Jalu must be preserved and more introduced to the public without reducing the values contained therein.

The suggestion is addressed to the local community so as not to change what has been inherited by previous ancestors about Didong Jalu, in order to avoid a decline in cultural values that became the main point at Didong Jalu performance. Didong Jalu can be used by art teachers in the Central Aceh region as a medium to convey local customs, so that awareness of traditional arts and cultural values in it is maintained well.

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