



## Exploring the Educational Values of Oral Texts of Balinese Oral Tradition



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### Abstract

The main concern of the present study is to analyze the educational values of the oral text of genjek oral tradition performed by several genjek groups in Karangasem, the eastern part of Bali. Genjek is one of the most popular oral traditions in Bali and it is a spontaneous performing oral art by a group of young villagers to express their feeling, though, and criticisms to the existing conditions of the country. All criticisms and suggestions are conveyed through songs in common Balinese language accompanied by acoustic Balinese bamboo music instruments. Their performances are usually funny and entertaining. Most of the lyrics are created spontaneously during the performance. As an oral traditional, genjek is mainly performed for entertainment and the education of their supporting society. This study found that most of the oral text of genjek Karangasem contains educational values which are really important to maintain the harmony of the social life of the society. In addition, the present study revealed that genjek is also an effective way of educating a big crowd of people. Therefore, it is recommended that genjek should be utilized more extensively, especially in social education and in conveying mass information which is needed to be known by the society.

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## 1. Introduction

Education today should be focused on the development of the students' intellectual intelligence and their scientific ability. This is vital to the building of good characters and cultural values within the students. The fragility of the characters in the life of the nation may cause a decline in civilization. On the other hand, any nation which has a strong character and cultural values will further strengthen their existence in this globalization era. Therefore, National education should serve the enhancement of character development and civilization of the nation's dignity. The students' potentials which should be excessively developed in order for them to become a people of faith to Almighty God, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent and become democratic and responsible citizens. As a matter of fact, these fundamental characters are not expressly implemented in educational policy and school practices.

There are a number of cases in our education systems which are not in line with the ethics, morality, manners or behaviors. This proves that education is not yet successful in shaping the characters of the students. In such conditions, it seems relevant enough to disclose the old paradigm of education, namely education as the inheritance of values. The learning process in all educational institutions should be strongly dedicated to the development of the students' character in order for them to be able to live in harmony with the society. Apart from formal education, the students' should also learn various educational values from cultural tradition. One of the traditions which belong to the oral tradition of Bali is *genjek*. There are various educational values found in oral texts of *genjek* which certainly benefit the human life.

Historically *genjek* was developed spontaneously; emerging in the community of Karangasem (Sendratari and Margi, 2015). *Genjek* oral tradition is one of the oral traditions which have been concentrated in the performing arts. It is a blend of vocal art and body movement. Etymologically, the meaning of *genjek* is unclear. Communities believe the word *genjek* comes from the word *gonjak* which means making jokes and having fun. *Genjek* performance on the island of Bali has been popular since 1960's and even now has become part of the life of the community. Widiassa Keniten (2014) adds that this performance is increasingly growing among the younger generation as a forum to express their imagination in the form of fun song lyrics. This is due to Bali having a strong social culture and actually, all Balinese live within their culture. Kutha Ratna (2007) extensively explains the closeness of culture and literary works of the community.

*Genjek* oral tradition can be considered as a means of communication for the community to deliver the great meaningful values of human life through satire, ridicule, solicitation, advice, and suggestions which are delivered with style and a wonderful rhythm. In regard to *genjek* as an oral discourse, Danandjaja in Sukatman (2011: 2) explains that a collective culture is inherited from generation to generation in oral form. Therefore, oral activity and verbal inheritance are often called oral culture or oral traditions. *Genjek* can be classified as an oral tradition because the oral text of *genjek* is delivered orally. Sibarani (2012: 27) describes that oral tradition does not only contain the artistic elements, but it also contains a variety of information about the traditional cultural values.

There has been no previous study conducted to study the educational values of the oral discourse of *genjek*. As a matter of fact, there is hardly any research related to *genjek* as an oral discourse at all. A few researchers investigated *genjek* as an oral tradition especially *genjek* in its nature as a process of delivery of educational values. Several studies merely investigated *genjek* as an art performance to see its spontaneous actions. *Genjek* as literary should be critically analyzed to get the essence of their meanings. Teeuw (2013) suggests that literary discourse should be overseen as a whole to reveal the real meanings and the values existed in the discourse in order to be useful for human beings. Moreover, Carter (2006) suggests that there are several literary theories that can be employed to uncover the meanings of literary works to obtain the clear insight of the discourse. Van Dijk in Badara (2012: 17) argues that discourse is actually a theoretical abstraction. Therefore, discourse cannot be seen as a physical manifestation of language and as an embodiment of the language. Meanwhile, Hoed (2011) suggests that literary discourse should be viewed in context with its cultural significance. In addition, Shi (2009) suggests that a discourse analysis should be based on the utilization of various social paradigms.

Considering the above views, therefore, it is considered very important to study the values in the oral texts of *genjek*, especially education values so it can be used as guidance for the improvement of our children's education and their wellbeing.

## 2. Research Method

This study merely focused on analyzing the educational values of the oral discourse of *genjek* in Karangasem regency, Bali province. *Genjek* is selected as the focus of this study and based on the facts that *genjek* is very popular in the Karangasem community and has become a cultural heritage. This research is a descriptive

qualitative research. In this study, the researcher analysed the educational values of genjek oral discourse. The data was collected through recordings of the genjek performances and then transcribed into written text. The translation was also done to understand the actual meanings of the texts. The texts were analyzed by employing the characteristics of educational values found in the texts. Endraswara (2008) suggests that literary works can be analyzed in order that the essence of the text can be found and can be used for the improvement of social life empowerment. Moreover, Martin (2004) suggests that a discourse should be analyzed critically based on various perspectives to make this world a better place to live. Therefore, a deconstruction of a text is ideologically based on its related social variables.

### 3. Results and Analysis

Genjek is a literary work that is performed to the public as a performing art to entertain and educate the community. Its popularity is due to its meaningful significance to the community life. The text of genjek is in the form of lyrics which developed using common Balinese language to establish communication between genjek players and genjek audience. Genjek is performed to deliver all forms of human life values. Through genjek performances, the players can express something which will help to educate the community.

The oral text of genjek as part of cultural expression contains educational values. This is in line with the concept of culture as a system of knowledge that enables a culture to make the people know, understand, and appreciate the views of value. These views applied to the teaching of the community leads individuals to be able to put themselves, both in the context of human relationships and in the context of religious living. Thus, education is a process of harmonization for a person to be a culturally civilized human being or to be a better human being.

The educational values in the oral text of genjek are used as advice and teachings of life, for members of the community. The values of education can be seen in genjek text entitled Karma Pala (fruits of the actions). In this genjek text, educational values are submitted by the players of genjek to remind that everyone should always remember the kindness and truth of all actions undertaken will always come to results. This genjek oral text gives advice on the importance of upholding fairness and honesty in this life. It cannot be ruled out.

In the past, education was passed by parents to future generations through stories and song-song. Genjek is one of the oral traditions that serve as a means of education. The text of genjek entitled nyesel awak (regretting oneself) provides educational information about premarital sex which may happen, such as unwanted pregnancy and irresponsible men. This text of genjek conveys information about how the younger generation should keep themselves well in order not to be exposed to the wrong sexual habits, such as young men should not engage in sexual acts before marriage, bad deeds and bad influences from others. This text contains about how to be good in social life and how to improve their education to get a better life.

Educational values in genjek text mainly about the lives of the younger generation in order not to be ensnared by bad deeds which can damage their life. The text of genjek entitled Masuwitra (making friends) presents education values about the importance of having a lot of good friends because there are a lot of things we can learn from our friends. Getting involved in a group is good but it should be a group that can give us an education on how to be a better human being. Learning to live together with others is important since it is impossible to live alone in this ever changing world. The text of genjek entitled masewitra is also a reflection of Balinese young men who love sitting together while drinking local semi-alcoholic drink which is commonly called tuak. This drink is made from palm flower. Classically they drink together by using one drinking glass as a symbol of their friendship. Using one drinking glass for drinking is not common in Bali as there are several respected clans as well many holy people on the island. However, the tradition of using one glass is common to all young people especially when they are playing genjek performance.

Educational values also found in genjek text titled Ngalih Suwitra (making friends). This text describes the concerns of the parents about their children in the social relationship. The text provides the insight on how the younger generation should keep good relationships with others. The concern of the parent is understood due to many negative influences that have come to Bali with the ever-increasing tourist population. Culturally, Bali has been exploited to suit the needs of the tourism industry, consequently, the harmony of village lives is also disrupted and in some respect, it tends to change the cultural identity.

Educational values are also found in genjek text titled Narkoba (drugs). The song has very beneficial educational values. In this genjek text, it can be found that genjek players want to give knowledge to the audience about the danger of drug use. The players of genjek suggest the community especially young people avoid drugs because it is very dangerous and can ruin our lives. This song is very informative for the general

public who do not know the harm that drugs can cause, so this genjek has a role in shaping their mindset to stay away from drugs. The lyric of genjek provides education to the community to be vigilant against the spread of drugs developed in the society. Drugs must be destroyed because it is damaging the society and bringing suffering to the people, such as psychiatric disorders and even death. Players of genjek very much hope that after delivering, the community can avoid drugs that endanger lives and the future of their society

Genjek in the society has become a very vital tradition to educate the community and it gets a very positive public response, even when the message is delivered through direct insinuation it does not make the community feel insulted. This is the power of genjek as an oral tradition. This shows that genjek as a tradition that is performed to the public is not only used as entertainment but it also to deliver many educational values to improve the living standard of the community.

Text genjek entitled Pedas-Pedasin (paying attention) contains educational values concerning the importance of being careful in making friends. The text advises to not be easily involved in bad groups of people. The text suggests that young people should make friends with those who are truly good and kind people. Friends are not only a companion in life but friends are your life too. Loyalty, honesty, tolerance, and solidarity are the foundation that will make the friendship stronger. Basically, it is easier to see the mistakes of others than to see one's own mistakes, which may be even worse than the others. In this text, it is also illustrated the fact that no one is perfect, so it is not good if people can only see and blame others for their mistakes. We must be responsible for the things we do if not we would only mislead ourselves, so therefore good deeds should be executed in order to have a better and happier life.

Educational values are also found in genjek oral text entailed mobil sewaan (Car rental). This text contains educational values about being careful to a rich looking man. Many cases occur when the man looks rich by driving a new car because he rents it from a car rental. The text educates that wealth is not everything. The most important is a real love. This will bring eternal happiness to our life. Through this genjek text, genjek players want to convey to the audience that happiness cannot be attained by just having a luxurious life. The text provides an example of how a lot of men pretend to be a rich man to attract women because he thinks that all women will be happy if he can provide a rich life. This text is an analogy of what commonly happens in a poor community life.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Living in harmony for the Balinese community is a vital objective in their daily life. Balanced life and peaceful living are essential for the Balinese to carry out all of their religious and social activities. The educational values found in the oral text of Genjek are certainly beneficial to maintain those desired living standards among the Balinese community. Genjek is often performed to give advice, suggestion and other teachings for a better community life.

Genjek is already firmly attached and has become a social identity and a pride for the community, especially people of Karangasem, Bali. Genjek is developed in the community and is used as a means to entertain the community. Genjek is also used as a means to convey guidance and educational values for the sake of a better life. As an oral tradition, genjek has very significant educational values and various noble values, which are very useful for the entire life of the people, especially the people of Karangasem, Bali.

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