Folklore on Kayori: An Oral Tradition about Natural Disasters in Central Sulawesi

Otniel Aurelius Nole

Master in Sociology of Religion, Faculty of Theology, Satya Wacana Christian University, Indonesia
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1232-4236

niellarta09@gmail.com

The characteristics of Indonesian society are firmly attached to the image of expressing language orally, which has been done since long ago and has survived until now. Folk beliefs and imagination are the main essences of cultured human life when creating stories. Although the current situation signifies a modern life, the researcher argued that folklore is an oral tradition still relevant to life's context substantially and functionally, as on *kayori* from Central Sulawesi. This research aimed to revitalise *kayori* as folklore in Central Sulawesi, an oral tradition about natural disasters. The researcher generated knowledge in this research qualitatively as a method that included a literature review study. The researcher collected and used reference sources related to the variables of this study. The research showed that *kayori* is a folklore that affirms oral tradition as an art to express the function of learning and remembering the messages in poems and sounds. The messages of *kayori* have implications for practical actions for the community regarding natural disaster mitigation related to disaster policy, ethics, religiosity, and ecological values. In the end, the verbal art of *kayori* remained a part of the futuristic world because it provided knowledge on humanitarian and environmental aspects related to natural disasters in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Central Sulawesi, Folklore, Kayori, Natural Disasters, Oral Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a rich country in terms of culture. With many diverse tribes, the culture of Indonesian society is different from one another. This difference indicates the uniqueness of Indonesian society. They live based on local beliefs that influence their behaviour to act. In acting, they have two-way communication. Because life is about influencing, they also pass down the legacy to the next generation. That legacy is visible in their local beliefs in communication. Essentially, the ancients always had a form of word-of-mouth communication. In this sense, orality is a description of communication that characterises humans as creatures who use their mouths for language (Ong, 2002).

When locals speak, it is a communication that contains statements. The expression of statements through language occurs because of their beliefs. Beliefs can arise based on their awareness of the transcendent and magical. On the other hand, statements exist because they can be imagined from experiences. Imagination is the uniqueness of local people's minds in producing and sharing knowledge as truth from their perspective. The integration of the uniqueness of local people based on belief and imagination directs their behaviour to form or produce a work of orality art as a phenomenon called folklore.

There is undoubtedly no agreed definition of folklore. Nevertheless, it can be described as cultural expressions, such as narratives, jokes, beliefs, proverbs, legends, myths, music, songs, dances, costumes, food, and festivals, through which individuals and groups shape and disseminate a shared identity (Magdalenić, 2008, p. 827). The idea of folklore consolidates the attributes of traditionalism, irrationality, rurality, anonymity, communality, and universality, including primacy and oral circulation (Ben-Amos, 2020, p. 5). It is a folk word-of-mouth action with a story model that becomes a legacy from generation to generation (Michalopoulos & Xue, 2021). Folklore is the scope of verbal and nonverbal oral literature (Srivastava, 2013). However, although folklore occurs in oral literature (face-to-face), it can also transition into written form (Eller, 2022). Folklore becomes a collective memory for specific communities whose memoirs are long-term. In the Indonesian context, folklore is undoubtedly diverse, so each contains messages and meanings that speak of particular circumstances and situations.

Previous studies have stated that folklore can benefit the world of education, specifically student character building because it is a medium of learning and entertainment that has implications for student development (Kuswara & Sumayana, 2020). Folklores contain moral values supporting character building (Indiarti, 2017). Folklore can be used as teaching materials, for example, in Indonesian language subjects (Martha & Andini, 2019; Rinasari, Leksono, & Rohman, 2023), including English (Anggraini, Derin, Warman, Putri, & Nursafira, 2022). Furthermore, folklore also contains ethical messages that influence human behaviour and inform human aspects and prophetic voices (Qomariyah, Doyin, Zuliyanti, & Prabaningrum, 2019). Some global service organisations argue that folklore has features related to traditional knowledge, originality, or locality. Nevertheless, there appears to be a threat to the original habitat that requires protection in the twenty-first century (Bronner, 2017, p. 45).

The construction of the modern world challenges the existence of folklore. When folklore begins to be unfamiliar to modern people with rational and empirical thinking, there is still a tendency to regard it as mere fiction; there are doubts because it is not factual. The influence of modernisation makes modern society more concerned with reliability. On the other hand, the study of folklore has received little attention because it is less relevant to the futuristic world civilisation, and most modern people, including the current generation, prioritise modern and scientific stories. Nevertheless, folklore contains information that is more useful for human life.

Folklore has a unity of meaning etymologically; folk means social stories, and lore means expressive, similar to knowledge, so folk statements also contain knowledge (Bronner, 2013). Epistemologically, how local people construct knowledge can also arise from sources of intellect and experience. In this regard, there is a folktale called *kayori* from Central Sulawesi. The elders created *kayori* as an art to sing as a reminder of past natural disasters so that the present can remain vigilant (Suntoro, Wahyuni, Ismeti, & Utomo, 2023).

Kayori refers to a set of historical individual and communal statements that contain ideas, thoughts, doctrines, advice, moral values, and social functions (Hasan, 2015). One of the contents of the oral tradition is in the form of poems that also deal with natural disasters (Palogai & Bohang, 2021). As ancient oral literature voiced by the Kaili people, *kayori* contains warnings about human behaviour

that can lead to natural disasters (Hajid & Marta, 2019). *Kayori* can be a learning motif for the people of Central Sulawesi who live in the modern world, even life after natural disasters, as Middle Celebes is prone to natural disasters; for example, on 28 September 2018 (Nole, Ranimpi, & Tampake, 2024; Rajindra et al., 2019; Yulianto, Yusanta, Utari, & Satyawan, 2021).

The problem in this research is why *kayori* as folklore is so significant for modern society, specifically for communities in Central Sulawesi. The researcher argues that folklore is an oral tradition that continues to be substantially and functionally relevant to the life journey of modern society, specifically about *kayori* from Central Sulawesi, which provides meanings related to the phenomena of natural disasters. Therefore, this research aims to revitalise *kayori* as folklore in Central Sulawesi, an oral tradition about natural disasters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research method was a qualitative study-based literature review. The researcher used various scientific references related to the research variables (Snyder, 2019). The researcher selected book chapters, journal articles, and proceedings and then searched them based on keywords related to *kayori*, folklore, oral tradition, and natural disasters. Inclusion criteria included articles in Indonesian and English based on databases from Google Scholar, Sinta, SpringerLink, DOAJ, and Scopus. Then, the researcher discussed the data with other reference sources with news on the website.

In the literature review study, the researcher analysed the data with a discerning approach to finding theme categories (Popenoe, Langius-Eklöf, Stenwall, & Jervaeus, 2021): Firstly, the researcher correctly identified the various references relevant to the research variables. Secondly, the researcher reviewed those references by condensing and coding each main or core idea to summarise. Thirdly, the researcher classified the findings to create thematic categories aligned with the research objectives. The researcher presents the subsequent research flow as follows.

In the flow of results and discussion, the researcher explained *kayori* as an art of orality that also described the content of natural disasters and alluded to memoirs about natural disasters in Central Sulawesi on 28 September 2018. Then, the researcher said that *kayori* is not just a mere statement but also a source of learning and a warning to know and be careful. Next, the researcher explained the potential of *kayori* to support human participation in responding to natural disasters with mitigation. Finally, the researcher concluded that the significance of *kayori* as an ancient culture remains relevant to contemporary society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kayori as Art
Language is a medium for humans to convey messages based on the context of its use (Nole, 2023). In addition, the use of language always implicates the emotions of the giver and receiver, which includes cultural transformation so that it becomes an indicator of social change and manifestation (Park, 2020). The language contains several signs or sounds in meaningful sentences and has more meaning in its parts (Lycan, 2019). The ability to speak lowers human activities to have conversations collectively, giving birth to folklore representing their thoughts, experiences, and feelings (Marsellaa & Putri, 2020). Human cognition produces folklore as precedents and practices that are iterative-repetitive, in fact, varieties because they recognise that artworks have connotations (Bronner, 2017). Folklore reflects human endeavours to organise oral communication assembled in historical times into an oral tradition whose distinctiveness still survives today (Purwantiasning, Kurniawan, & Suniarti, 2019). *Oral tradition* is an art that allows people to think backwards and look at the past to find meaning while welcoming the future (Hasanah & Andari, 2020).

Regarding oral tradition, the Kaili community has a culture of orality, one of which is *kayori*, which has existed since the 1938 natural disasters in Central Sulawesi (Nursyamsi, Asri B, Tamrin, & Bismawati, 2023). The Kaili community produces knowledge about natural disasters through orality art based on experience with belief and imagination. The Kaili use the art of storytelling or speaking to memorialise certain events or circumstances (Suntoro et al., 2023). An elder tells *kayori* while sounding *yori* (a musical instrument) to evoke memories of natural disasters (Damayanti et al., 2021). As oral literature in the form of Kaili poems, an elder, Panambulu, recites *kayori* poems that originated from his parents but have become rare over time (Damayanti et al., 2021; Hajid & Marta, 2019; Nursyamsi et al., 2023). In use, older people understand *kayori* better, let alone the few people who can speak Kaili and chant *kayori* (Prawoto & Octavia, 2021). Nevertheless, it is urgent to

recognise *kayori* in the context of natural disasters in Central Sulawesi.

Palu and its surrounding areas are prone to natural disasters (Palogai & Bohang, 2021). One of the darkest events in the region occurred on 28 September 2018, and significant natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and liquefaction, also occurred around Palu (Nole et al., 2024; Rajindra et al., 2019). The cause of the natural disaster certainly stems from the status of Palu and its surroundings as an identified location of the influence of the Palu-Koro fault (Maulana & Prasetyo, 2019). It is a prime fault in Eastern Indonesia, particularly around Central Sulawesi, and can produce significant earthquakes (Patria & Putra, 2020). Natural disasters result in losses for people and the environment, so people suffer and experience social changes and new adaptations.

The community remains cautious and alert in anticipating potential natural disasters that could occur in the future, as Palu and its surrounding areas are prone to natural disasters. In this regard, the local wisdom on *kayori* contains anticipation and vigilance against natural disasters. It is an oral literature that gives ancient poems about the past, one of which is a warning about natural disasters (Nursyamsi et al., 2023). Some people in Central Sulawesi recognised *kayori* as an ancient art form after the natural disasters 2018.

Kayori has a sociocultural context and condition. In other words, *kayori* contains one context about natural disasters and is an oral culture of the Kaili tribe in Central Sulawesi. *Kayori* became a metaphor from the Kaili perception to explain that natural disasters are very vulnerable in the Palu Valley area (Dwitriansyah, Herman, & Bo'do, 2024). Before the natural disaster, most people had forgotten *kayori*, and some did not know it. However, after the natural disasters of Palu, Sigi, and Donggala, people began to recall the oral literature of the Kaili Tribe in Central Sulawesi, which contains ancient history, namely *kayori* as a collective memory (Prawoto & Octavia, 2021). Folklore is an integral part of culture that reveals organic phenomena (Ben-Amos, 2020). Furthermore, *kayori* has a learning and warning function.

Kayori as Learning and Warning
The Kaili people made *kayori* based on the testimony of the 1938 natural disasters, thus chanted (Palogai & Bohang, 2021): *Goya goya gontiro; Toka bonga Loli'o; Palu, Tondo, Mamboro Matoyomo; Kamolue melantomo* (Rocking in Ganti; Looking down at the people of Kabonga and Loli

Oge; Palu, Tondo, and Mamboro have sunk; Kayumalue remains floating). Here is another famous *kayori* poems (Suntoro et al., 2023): *Manggita adana ri tana Kaili; Ade domo ranga rapeilira; Radeikimo pangajari; Ane Mamala tana Kaili ragoya vai; Rapaka tala, vehia adata niuli totua* (Let us see the customs in the land of Kaili; If you do not pay attention; Let us teach them; If the ground of Kaili is shaken again; In Sink, that is the custom that parents tell). From that, the *kayori* poems inform us about the importance of language that gives messages.

Language is a part of culture passed down through learning based on discussing past experiences and benefiting from them for the future (Kottak, 2020). The identification of language in folklore is that it has unique values that are relevant to learning and warning (Marsellaa & Putri, 2020). In this regard, the Kaili people appear to recognise life experiences and memories as "theorems" that appear in artworks in the form of *kayori*, specifically about the occurrence of natural disasters; the phenomenon becomes a memoir story as well as a legacy that is learned and wanted (Nursyamsi et al., 2023; Palogai & Bohang, 2021; Suntoro et al., 2023). They believe in the relationship between human behaviour and natural disasters, as the message on *kayori*. That contains an intersecting message of obedience to live according to customary and religious injunctions, as punishment for violating them occurs (Suntoro et al., 2023).

If people do well throughout their lives, then natural disasters will hardly occur in their area. However, natural disasters will arise if they live defiantly and commit crimes (Prawoto & Octavia, 2021). Life must align with the divine will to do good, including living in harmony with nature (Nursyamsi et al., 2023). The lives of unscrupulous people will have implications for the onset of devastating natural disasters, as believed in the events of 28 September 2018 (Hajid & Marta, 2019). The *kayori* poems contain a causality between human actions and natural disasters, reflecting a moral message to maintain good behaviour.

One *kayori* statement expresses, "*Sava Naturu Ri Tondo Nu Duyu, Bengga Naturu Sabingga Ri Bavona*" (Snakes sleep on the edge of landslides, buffaloes sleep on them), implying that the characteristics of snakes are a representation of the Palu-Koro fault (Dwitriansyah et al., 2024). If analysed, the buffalo may represent the existence of the community. Such imagery helps to understand that if the snake, whose body is elongated, moves (awakens), then the buffalo on top also moves,

shaking the place. In this sense, *kayori* is not just an ancient poem; it contains moral information based on local beliefs. In addition, the oral tradition's famous statement "*Agina Mainga, Ne Maonga*" (Better to be careful than to drown) serves as a command to the community (Suntoro et al., 2023). People need to be careful not to commit crimes in order to create an environment that remains safe.

Kayori's Potential for Natural Disaster Mitigation

The values of oral traditions that contain local wisdom positively affect the physical and psychological, providing answers and lessons regarding natural disaster mitigation (Fakhriati et al., 2023). Folklore has a function and role in motivating and driving behaviour regarding natural disaster mitigation (Anwar, Oktavianus, Khanh, & Khanh, 2023; Widyaningsih & Arwansyah, 2023), like folklore on *kayori*. It is a traditional expression that contains advice on the value of mitigation (Nursyamsi et al., 2023).

Kayori means oral tradition as a collective memory of indigenous people in Central Sulawesi. The *kayori* encourages the community to read traditional signs to avoid natural disasters with introspection regarding behaviour (Damayanti et al., 2021). The message of *kayori* as an oral tradition contains much meaning that directs their lives to continue to mitigate prudence in responding to natural disaster phenomena (Dwitriansyah et al., 2024). The value of mitigation on *kayori* is living a righteous and good character and avoiding sin and evil (Nursyamsi et al., 2023).

As a modern-day reminder, *kayori* characterises an ancient way of reminding current and future generations about past events, for example, related to natural disasters (Suntoro et al., 2023). People today can take the wisdom and knowledge of *kayori* about the past as lessons that reveal the mitigation of the present to welcome a future that is still a mystery (Nursyamsi et al., 2023). The knowledge of *kayori* is undoubtedly significant to preserve and pass on to the next generation to continue to explain the resilience of the community's anticipation of the arrival of natural disasters again in Central Sulawesi. *Kayori* is educative so that people remain alert and vigilant against natural disasters and understand the right areas to become settlement locations (Nursyamsi et al., 2023). This folklore can help government programmes consider settlement designations, including directing communities and religious communities to live in kindness, togetherness, care for nature, and respect for diversity. Local wisdom, such as *kayori*, should be a

learning material for natural disaster mitigation (Arif, 2024).

Folklore is highly noteworthy in contemporary times, as is *kayori*, which also contains messages and meanings to direct human life by maintaining a balance between nature, humans, and that which protects them (Suntoro et al., 2023). Although *kayori* is only a part of language, prophetic folklore can influence actions to reduce disasters by always radiating benevolence to others and the environment. Language can shape and reflect values, attitudes, and beliefs (Adler, Rodman, & Pré, 2016). Folklore on *kayori* can influence the policies and perceptions of others to take concrete actions. Regarding natural disaster mitigation, local wisdom, like *kayori*, motivates people to always live with positive morals and preparedness in life in the environment (Arif, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Kayori is a product derived from the work of indigenous people in Central Sulawesi, namely from the Kaili tribe. One of the contents of *kayori* emphasises the significance of natural disasters and their causes. *Kayori* contains folklore art with functions such as learning and warning, and it has the potential to be a mitigation against natural disasters. As an oral tradition, *kayori* contains disaster policy, ethics, religiosity, and ecological values. The Kaili people inherit and revive *kayori* culture through oral and orality as they are used to talking and speaking. *Kayori*, as an oral tradition, is preserved and kept alive through writing and literacy so that the valuable culture can be eternal. Although an ancient oral literature, *kayori* is beneficial for life in the contemporary era for modern society to learn to do good and be careful of natural disasters.

This research contributes to revitalising *kayori* folklore as an art that emphasises mitigation meanings so that modern society continues to live with good morals, be vigilant, and protect the environment. Governments can take further action to build remarkable resilience for the comfort and safety of the community based on the knowledge of the meaning of local wisdom on *kayori*. With the representation of this research, readers find that folklore always contains uniqueness and moral messages, for example, through *kayori*, so it should be valued as local wisdom and preserved by current and future generations in Indonesia, including being able to become a global concern.

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