

The Relationship between Language and Culture in the Context of Makassar Fishermen's Beliefs and Character

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Abstract: Language as an element of culture is manifested in the form of ideas or thoughts that give birth to a cultural existence. So that the existence of language in a culture is very fundamental in building, forming and maintaining cultural values that live and grow in society. This research aims to analyze relationship of language and culture particular in context "Makassar Fisherman, Beliefs, and Character" as part of the divergences Indonesian culture that very sophisticate. In collecting data, researcher used library research especially some investigated, books and journals related to issue of Makassar fisherman and their characteristic culture. There is a very close relationship between the existence of a culture and language as a medium, icon, term or symbol attached to that culture. So it is language that interprets all forms of events that occur in Makassar society, particularly in building its culture. The result shown that the birth of culture in Makassar society is greatly influenced by beliefs, social values that are held in high esteem and the level of people's trust in what has been adhered to and maintained by their ancestors in the past. And the richness of linguistic potential is also a factor in the advancement of culture, as is the case in Makassar society. The Makassar Fisherman Community has characteristics both in social structure, kinship, and in religious life and beliefs which are the richness of its culture.

Keywords: Makassar Fishermen, Language, Beliefs, and Character

I. INTRODUCTION

Universally, culture has seven elements, namely a livelihood system (economy), a system of tools and equipment for life (technology), a social system, language, arts, a knowledge system and a religious system (Maknun, 2012; Surya et al., 2021; Abdullah et al., 2017). These seven elements are compressed into three forms of culture, namely: 1) the form of culture as a complex of ideas, notions, values, norms, regulations (ideas); 2) the manifestation of culture as a complex of activities and patterned actions of humans in society (activities); and 3) the form of culture as objects created by humans (artifacts) (Battiste, 2000).

Based on the elements of culture which are then expressed in three forms of culture, it can be said that language, as one of the elements of culture, is manifested in the form of ideas or notions that give birth to a cultural existence. So that the existence of language in a culture is very fundamental in building, forming and maintaining cultural values that live and grow in society (Rahman, 2019; Akhmar et al., 2023; Dalyan et al., 2022). In this regard, Masinambouw said that language and culture are two systems inherent in humans. If culture is a system that regulates human interaction in society, then language is a system that functions as a means of carrying out that interaction.

Language is a fundamental aspect of human life that functions not only as a tool of interaction but also as a cultural symbol that shapes social patterns within a community (Rahman et al., 2022; Mahdori et al., 2025). Culture that grows and develops in society is communicated through shared ideas and concepts, which are collectively understood and agreed upon by its members. Through this mutual agreement, language becomes the primary medium for maintaining, sustaining, and transmitting cultural values and practices from one generation to the next, ensuring the continuity of culture over time (Syukri, 2021a).

The fisherman community in Makassar is a group that is interesting to study. One of the things about them is their strong beliefs and character when it comes to fishing. The tradition of Makassar fishermen includes singing songs, which they call "Kelong," while they are fishing at the beach or in the sea. These fishermen believe that singing these songs helps attract fish and brings them together. Because of this, the author feels that more research is needed to understand their beliefs and character better. It is also important to highlight their unique culture, which is part of their daily activities, and to help others who are interested in Makassar's culture recognize and appreciate it (Ali, 2017).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Perspective Relationship Between Language and Culture

Tursunova (2024) pointed out that a language is a part of a culture that is an essential part, and they cannot be separated from each other. When we talk about language, we are also talking about culture. Language specifically includes the ability to communicate, a way to express everything, and the vocabulary, grammar, sentences, words, and anything else related to language, which are all part of the culture. Further, language and culture are important parts of society, and they help society grow and change over time. Culture includes things like beliefs, knowledge, traditions, and scientific achievements, as well as historical sites and artistic creations. It shows up in the way people think, their values, how they live, and what they do. There are two main ways to understand what culture means: one looks at it from a social point of view, and the other focuses on how people think and understand the world (Ninsiana, 2018; Febriani et al., 2026; Xolboyevna, 2025).

B. What Is Beliefs And Characters?

Beliefs is a fundamentals aspect in a culture, it is related to the spiritual activities, faith and obedience, also way to whisping the God and following all command and avoid all His forbidden (Dermawan, 2019). In a culture, beliefs are connected to the nature and its surroundings, and this relationship shows how humans, as users of nature, can benefit from its resources in a good way, while also taking care of and managing them properly (Arif, 2016). From another point of view, belief can be the confidence that humans, as creations of God, should be friendly and good towards the universe. If you want to know how to communicate fairly, the universe gives everything humans need to live. So, since humans are part of the universe, they should build good communication to maintain each other. (Syukri et.al, 2022; Wattimena, 2020; Rahman & Letlora, 2018).

Characters is everthing about human's behavior, personality, attitude, and acting which is effect to the others. Lickona (2009) argued that, character specifically in education perspective, considering of honesty, diciplines, obidency, glory, and good personality when they in specific environment such as in school, university, or a certain community. Additionally, there is a character mentioned who has a habit that is considered part of their culture. In this situation, most people in that culture have similar habits, like searching for fish in the beach, sea, or large parts of the ocean, and they often work together to gain benefits. A person needs to build a strong connection with the universe, take care of nature's resources, and use them wisely by showing good values and behavior (Nuranisa et al., 2023).

III. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach, specifically describing how Makassar fishermen are viewed from the perspective of belief and character. The lives of Makassar fishermen have been extensively researched by several experts, highlighting the way they fish at sea, incorporating natural values, religion, beliefs, and strong character traits (Idrus et al., 2021; Syukri, 2021b; Surya et al., 2021). In collecting data, researchers used library research, particularly some investigated books and journals related to the issue of Makassar fisherman and their characteristic culture.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Perspective of Galesong

"Legend of the Name *Galesong*, *Gaukang*, *Jukuk Torani*" which explains how a place name, a belief, or a character is associated with an event behind it. We start from "the origin of the name *Galesong*". Here it is argued that the naming of *Galesong* as a royal region began with an important event which was based on it, namely the existence of the "Big Gong" (*Galiga*) and "Dijunjung" (*Nisongong*). These two terms then combined the words *galai* and *songsong* to become *Galesong* which means "a capable warship." against the direction of the current." This is where the naming of *Galesong* began, from the name of a warship from the Gowa Kingdom and then finally formed as the name of an important kingdom in the Gowa, particularly South Sulawesi Island at the past.(Maknun et.all, 2020)

Next, we see "the origin of the name *Jukuk Torani* (flying fish), where it is stated that the name originates from the journey of the *Galesong* royal troops to Banten (West Java) and then catching fish in the sea. Because those who caught the fish were the brave men of the *Galesong* kingdom (*To baranina Karaenga*) the fish was called *Jukuk Torani* which is now better known as *Patorani*. From this naming, it eventually becomes a symbol or icon of the culture of the people regarding the existence or characteristics of the local culture, the values contained in the term which are closely related to the important events behind it, so that it becomes part of the culture that is preserved, upheld and preserved. by the owners of that culture.

Then, "the origin of *Gaukang/deeds of karaeng/king of Galesong*" which is a term from the background of an incident experienced by fishermen who went to sea to fish, but during this activity discovered an object that was originally like a string of music that played throughout the night. The *Galesong* karaeng and fishermen consider this object to be a gift from Allah The God, so it is sacred by the *Galesong* people as an object that has strength and glory. It started from here that *Galesong* was always looked after and maintained by the community by serving traditional dishes every Friday night at the end of the month of *Rajab* as a form of gratitude for God's gift. This became a symbol for the *Galesong* kingdom to raise the spirit of the *Tubaraninna Galesong* in facing the struggle against the Dutch in the past. To see the connection between all traditions. as part of culture and language as a medium in it, you can see the chart below:

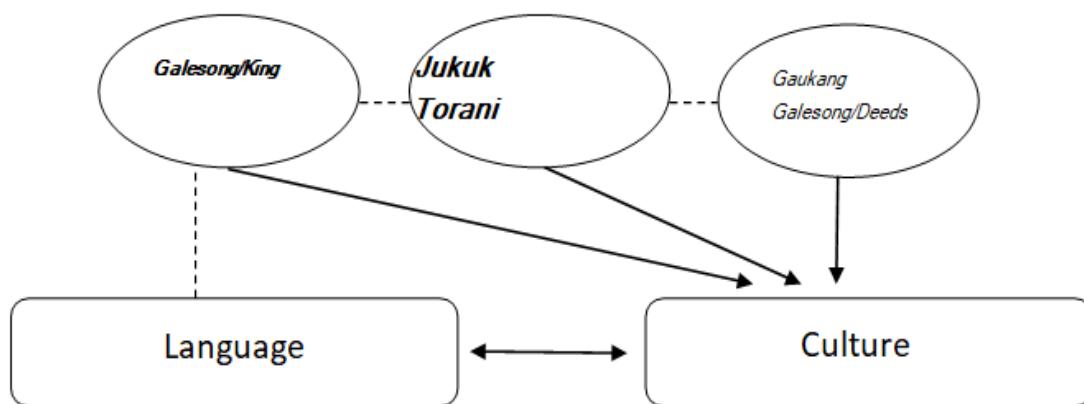


Diagram 1. Relationship Language and Culture

Legend:

----- is the history of mentioning/naming places, objects and traditions with language as a symbol.

→ is that *Galesong*, *Jukuk Torani*, and *Gaukang Galesong* are cultural products resulting from a long process from one generation to the next which is formed and built through language symbols..

↔ is a very close relationship between the existence of a culture and language as a medium, icon, term or symbol attached to that culture. So it is language that interprets all forms of events that occur in Makassar society, especially in building its culture.

By looking at the picture above, it can be stated that the birth of culture in Makassar society was greatly influenced by beliefs, social values that are held in high esteem and the level of people's trust in what their ancestors had adhered to and defended in the past. And the richness of linguistic potential is also a factor in the advancement of culture, as is the case in Makassar society (Natalia et al., 2023).

B. Language, Culture, and Society of Makassar

Culture cannot possibly arise without society and the existence of society is made possible by culture Harsojo in Maknun (2012), culture in which there is language as a medium of interaction also influences the formation of the order or pattern of social life of the people who own that culture. If we look at the structure of society in Makassar culture, we can see how social stratification is named and given boundaries at each layer, as we can see as follows:

1. Social Structure

As we know, Makassar society has 3 main layers in its social structure, Of the 3 social strata above *karaeng*/nobleman, *tumaradeka*/free people, and *ata*/slave, if you put them next to each other, the meaning in Indonesian is the same as the terms king, middle class, traders, etc., and servants. The three terms in the social layers of Makassar society have become symbols that represent their respective social statuses. *Karaeng* is a symbol of rulers, kings, government and nobles. *Tumaradeka*/free people is a symbol of businessmen, traders, scholars, wise men and common people. In general, *Ata* is a symbol of a slave or known as a slave, a servant under control (Badaruddin et.al, 2016; Badewi, 2019; Boas, 1942).

namely:



Diagram 2. Main Layers of Makassar Society

2. Social Institutions and Kinship

Next, on social institutions in kinship, we see how Makassar society has an ideal marriage system:

Passialleangna memang (/very cousins)

Interprate as good marriage

Passialleang bajikna (/cousins twice)

Interprate as ideal marriage

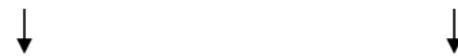
Nipakambani bellaya (/third cousins etc)

It is interpreted that this is a marriage with distant relatives

The three terms above are full of philosophical meaning that the Makassar people really maintain their lineage and maintain family ties.

3. Institutions of Religion and Belief

Annisik ----- appasilik (bathing a 7 month pregnant woman)



Interpreted as cleansing of evil spirits around the boat

Accaru-caru (offerings to spirits)

From the three social, kinship and religious institutions above, it can be seen that the symbols of culture (language), tradition (culture) and social layers are very clearly related to one another. To see this connection, look at chart 2 below:

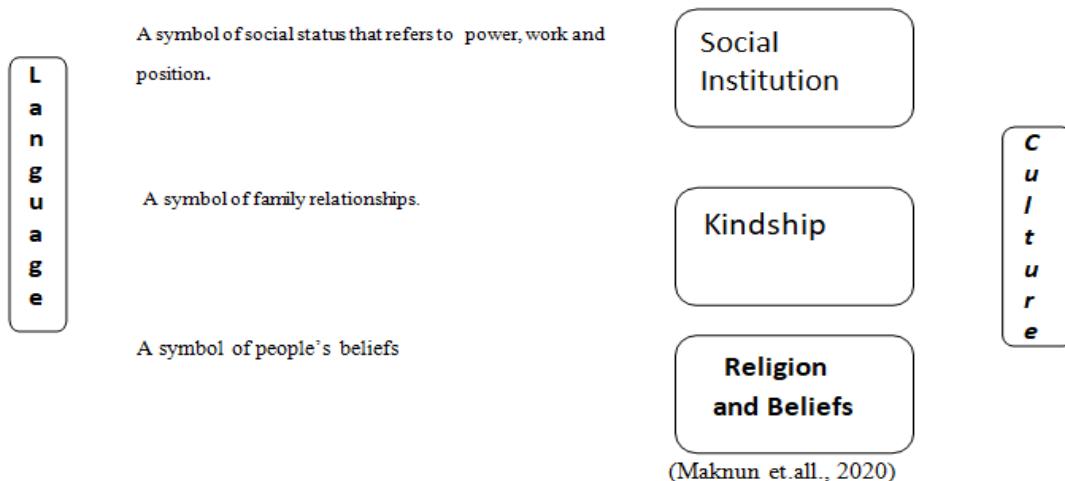


Diagram 3. Static Culture and Dynamic Culture in the Makassar Fishing Community

In the Makassar fishing community, there are habits that are still ongoing and maintained, whether they are traditions from one generation to generation or habits that exist due to the influence of assimilation or contact with other cultures, giving birth to a new trait or characteristic in their culture. What are old habits and new things can be categorized as static culture and dynamic culture.

A culture is said to be static if the culture does not provide significant changes in order and civilization to the owner of the culture, while a culture is said to be dynamic if the culture has a positive impact and provides changes in both patterns of thinking and changes in the progress of civilization to the owner of the culture. For this reason, in the Makassar fishing community, several cultures can be identified which are classified as static and dynamic cultures in table 1 below:

Table1. Static and Dynamic Culture

Static Culture		Dinamic Culture	
1)	Animist beliefs	1)	Knowledge of Islamic Religion
2)	Grouping good days and months for determining time for a particular activity.	2)	People's knowledge and beliefs regarding good and bad times in the present.
3)	Mantras	3)	Perception of time and its relationship to progress.
4)	Gaukang (Deeds/behavior) of Karaeng/King Galesong	4)	Kelong/Songs
5)	Abstinence /forbidden		

Sources: (Maknun, 2012).

a. Static Culture

1) Animist Beliefs

In their daily lives they carry out Islamic religious law, but from generation to generation they still practice animist beliefs. They still believe in the existence of supernatural powers or spirits that function as guardians of the coast and sea, big trees, they even believe that by drinking the water from the Bunging Barania well, the 'brave well', they will receive blessings and a courageous spirit and avoid disaster (Maknun, 1991).

Based on the definition above, the animistic beliefs of the Makassar fishing community are often associated with their natural life, especially their livelihood as fishermen. However, from the perspective of the Islamic religion, such a belief is an act that is contrary to the teachings of the Islamic religion, especially in matters of faith, which will ultimately affect the blessings of a life that is not blessed, blessed and far from the love of God (Syukri et al., 2022).

2) Grouping of good days and months for determining time for a particular activity.

In the Makassar fishing community, there is a belief that good days influence the success of all affairs and work that will be carried out based on the rising of the month of Qamariah.

3) In fact, such beliefs are only based on the habits of their parents who carry out certain activities that are associated with their life as fishermen.

Meanwhile, from another point of view, belief in good days or good months has no basis in Islamic sharia. This means that religion does not teach differences in the days or months that Allah created because in fact all days and months are good in the view of Allah Almighty as their creator for the benefit of humans. And the effects of beliefs and beliefs like that will greatly influence the mindset and lifestyle which is always covered by good and bad considerations for carrying out their daily activities. In fact, it will only damage their faith, and justifying certain days or months as bad days or months will slow down their progress in pursuing a life that increasingly requires hard work and speed in facing life's competition. *Mantras, Gaukang/Deeds of Galesong, dan Abstinence or Pemali* (terms of the culture) (Badaruddin et.all., 2016; Muhdar, 2015; Said, 2022).

The three forms of habits mentioned above are the same as the polytheistic values found in animist beliefs. Because this belief, even though it is always based on faith and belief in carrying out Islamic religious law, is also always linked to the existence of

other forces that are considered to have an impact on their safety, sustenance, and other things in their lives.

The three dimensions of culture above all rely on supernatural powers, spirits and the spirits of ancestors, which they believe must be paid attention to and upheld by society. However, if they do

not follow all the rituals related to the habits of their predecessors, it will have a bad impact on their lives. This is the side of religion that is still filled with animist beliefs which causes their culture to become static. Because it turns out, this habit also has an impact on inconsistency in implementing Islamic law seriously in one's life.

b. Dinamic Culture

4) The Knowledge of Islamic Religion

In fact, with knowledge of the Islamic religion, if it is carried out correctly and truly studied, it will ward off the characteristics of shirk and belief in other creatures of Allah The God who do not exceed His strength and greatness. Consistently carrying out and obeying all of His teachings will lead to a personality, morals and living habits that are always under the guidance of Allah Almighty. So one positive thing for the Makassar fishing community is that they are willing to accept Islamic teachings and try to implement them, even though they are still mixed with old habits from their ancestral heritage regarding other beliefs and beliefs in the supernatural, mysticism and other animism (Ramdhania & Wahidin, 2022; Muhdar, 2015).

5) People's knowledge and beliefs regarding good and bad times in the present.

There are some members of society who already have different views, or in other words have experienced shifting perceptions of good days and bad days as well as good months and bad months (Badaruddin et.all, 2016) This shift was caused by several factors, namely:

- a) The educational factor, namely the higher the level of education, the more it will influence perception by considering reason and ratios which no longer emphasize the inner aspect, imagination and feelings.
- b) The technological progress factor, namely changes in patterns of actions and activities caused by the increasingly complex technological equipment provided by humans as modern products that do not have to depend on considerations of days or months either because the system is systematic and sophisticated.
- c) The Lontarak Illiteracy Factor, namely the current generation's lack of interest in exploring culture originating from Lontarak manuscripts, so that understanding of the cultural values and traditions of the people of a culture is no longer legible, resulting in the interruption of cultural inheritance from generation to generation.

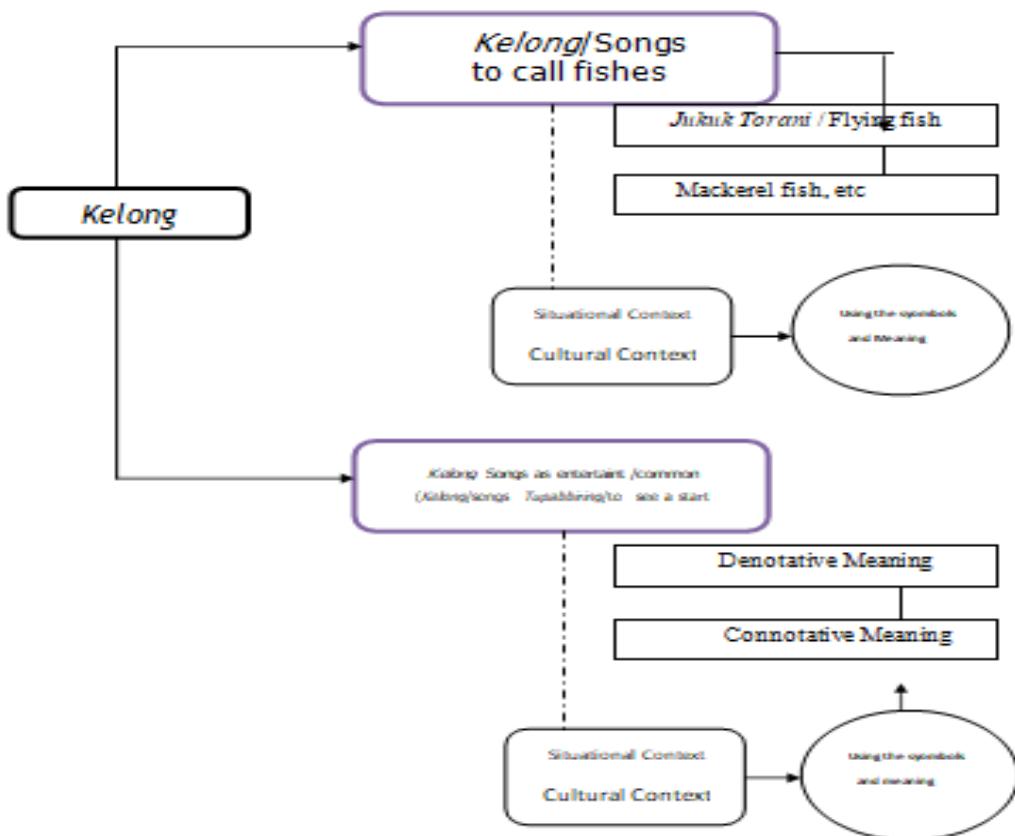
6) Perception of time and its relationship to progress

The development of science and technology has shaped people's mental attitude in looking at their future to continue to change and progress in accordance with the realities that occur in the midst of their lives. With a mental attitude that leads to the desire to progress and develop, it becomes a strong foundation and a positive change in mindset for a better future. The changes that are expected to occur are of course oriented towards improving the quality of life, morals and personality based on harmonious cultural and religious values, so that an ideal society that is happy and prosperous is formed (Nieto, 2001)

7) Kelong/Songs

The word kelong in Makassar can be equated with poetry or song. Kelong can mean poetry if you look at it in terms of form and rhythm. The shape has a certain pattern. Furthermore, kelong can mean singing if it is expressed in certain situations by humming it and usually accompanied by a harp instrument (Maknun, 1991).

Figure 1.

**Diagram 4.** Kelong/Songs Scheme and its Positive Value for the Fisher Community of Makassar

The Positive Values of *Kelong/Songs* :

- Media for fishermen to always have high enthusiasm to get lots of catches, especially *Torani* fish (Flying fish), mackerel, and so on.
- The association of fishermen as women and *Torani* fish as men (metaphorical expression) describes the values of the cosmos that fishermen need *Torani* to establish love with the virgin in the hope that they will gather and enter their fishing gear, so that there will be lots of fish and eggs obtained to take home.
- The use of linguistic symbols that refer to parts of the cosmos (universe) illustrates the knowledge values embedded in fishermen in seeking a living in the middle of a sea that is full of great challenges, and also reflects the existence of human dependence as part of the environment.
- The relationship between the singer (*Sawi* / men who sing a songs/*kelong*) and the listener (*Ponggawa biseang*/The Capten of the Ship) is a permanent relationship as one unit in the work organization.
- The use of spoken language (monologue) accompanied by harp through *kelong/songs* is for entertainment, as a self-evaluation that they have experienced such a fate, as advice in navigating the ark of life, and as a generator of work enthusiasm (work ethic) and solidarity in terms of advising each other. (Boonkit, 2010), (Baker & Westrup, 2003), and (Boas, 1942).
- One of the denotative meanings of *kelong/songs* is that whatever happens, for example waves are thundering, information or news is circulating, don't be quick to believe it in case it's just a provocation, while the connotative meaning is to always advise us to

always filter or select the information or news that is circulating. Because it could just be a provocation that will damage social integration and cultural harmony.

Makassar fishermen adhere to the principle that sustenance must be sought in all corners of the world because whenever death comes, any place in the world can become a grave, including the ocean and waves.

V. CONCLUSION

The birth of culture in Makassar society is greatly influenced by beliefs, social values that are held in high esteem and the level of public trust in what has been adhered to and maintained by their ancestors in the past. The richness of linguistic potential is also a factor in the advancement of culture, as is the case in the Makassar fishing community. Besides, The Makassar Fishing Community has characteristics both in terms of social structure, kinship, and religious life and beliefs which are the richness of its culture. Cultural integration, which is categorized as either a static culture or a dynamic culture, is the potential it has to continue to develop and seek its identity so that the entire culture brings change to progress. Additionally, these changes are oriented towards producing a modern culture accompanied by improving the quality of life, education and positive and dignified cultural attitudes.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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