

# The Preservation of *Lesong* Dayak Mualang Dance In Belitang Sekadau Regency

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**Abstract**—*Lesong* dance is a welcoming dance for the harvesting of new paddy. New paddy is the first paddy (Berkat Pam) that is just harvested. The uniqueness of *Lesong* dance is performed by biting *Lesong* weighing twenty Kilograms. This study aimed to describe how *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance in Belitang, Sekadau, West Kalimantan was preserved. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach assisted by a functional approach from Talcott Parson and the sociology of art. The results inform that through AGIL theory of Talcott Parson, the Adaptation is needed as a system of adaptation to nature and environment, Goal achievement is needed as a system of forming gratitude and joy, Integration is defined as a cooperative relationship between society and Dayak Mualang, and Latency is considered as a preservation effort through maintenance of the patterns that are manifested in every *Lesong* dance performance program, namely Berkat Pam, Bertomu Gaok, Gawai Dayak, Guest Welcoming, Building Inauguration, Festival and Art Competition. This preservation effort is supported through a dance practice learning system in the *Lesong* Menuah studio.

**Keywords**—*Preservation of Lesong Dance, Functional, Sociology of Art*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Preservation efforts can be done through a cultural strategy, both towards indigenous tribes and mixed cultures. The purpose of the preservation of tradition dance is to keep the elements of culture of the past and is moulded into a new performance without removing meaning and hallmark. The risk caused by lack of effort or attempt to conserve traditional dance is the extinction of such dance in the midst of society's life. The negative effect of it is accessible opportunity for other countries to learn and claim a masterpiece of dance which does not get any attention from its original country owner. Based on the progress, social sector, economic sector and technology lead to decrease and degradation in the tradition dance, and tradition music in the community rural, such as urban transformation of the Greek Society has affected traditional practices and structures of the social Fabric (Lykesas, 2018 ). Therefore, the sector has also affected the development of the art in the Country of Indonesia. This causes a new challenge. The best way to overcome this problem was through the preservation of traditional dance. The purpose of preserving traditional dance is to keep maintaining and developing the elements of art and culture existing as a form of wealth of the Indonesian state and heritage from previous ancestors. Essentially, the preservation of dance in an indigenous tribe is conducted by different ways, such as the tradition of Dayak Mualang.

Dayak Mualang preserved the traditions of their ancestors well, including the culture of attention and suitable planting, customs, culture, arts, crafts, ceremonies, rites, and beliefs (Van Loon & Kapusin, 1999). One of the traditions of the ancestors of Dayak Mualang Tribe who was very influential in its life is the *Lesong* dance. Dance can strengthen prosperity and safety and dance can serve to expel or reject the bad forces that cause illness and other disasters (Chaire, 2000). It means that dance can function as ritual media to *prevent bala* or to avoid disaster and to bring prosperity in each society's life. Any dance using ritual matter is more traditional and mythical in nature, in which each performance execution of the dance has a certain meaning and purpose. As for example, *Bunga Ayu* dance is believed to be the cure of any disease and *Lesong* Mualang dance symbolizes prosperity which is realized into a paddy harvesting party. In addition, of various types of Dayak Mualang dance, which is traditional and mythical, *Lesong* dance is one of the dances whose existence is continued to preserve. *Lesong* dance is a traditional dance of Dayak Mualang. *Lesong* dance is derived from two words 'dance' and '*Lesong*'. Dance can be defined as a picture or an expression of an individual poured in a work of motion. Meanwhile, *Lesong*, a Dayak Mualang vocabulary, refers to rice pounder. The uniqueness of this dance is shown by the technique of biting *Lesong* with teeth. Basically, *Lesong* dance also belongs to other tribes, such as Javanese and Malay. For them, the dance is called by *Lesung* dance. Furthermore, in Dayak sub-tribe environment, the label and performance realization of *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance is also different from other Dayak sub-tribes, such as *Ngajat Lesung* from Dayak Iban sub-tribe. *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance is performed by five performers. Meanwhile, the other tradition, such as from Dayak Iban, is performed by three dancers.

In general, *Lesong* Dayak Mualang Dance has never been analyzed and reviewed as a research field (writing scientific papers). This causes in the absence of physical evidence in the form of thesis, journal and so on. Writing or research activities are a form of conservation activities, in which in researching, a researcher must be able to learn the dance presentation and be able to implement or apply learning about dance into the education system, whether formal, informal or non-formal. From this system, it can increase the knowledge of children in schools, community knowledge or the knowledge and skills of studio children in processing of traditional dance in their area. Other than science, the purpose of writing is to add references to cultural documents and as a stage of reactivating dance. Therefore, the absence of a writing can cause a lack of knowledge, information, library resources and inactive dance. The inactivity of

*Lesong* Mualang dance learning in dance practice and theory (history, meaning and so on) can threaten the existence of dance in the community.

The *Lesong* Mualang dance was basically threatened with extinction. However, it does not happen at present days. It is because the traditional dance has been begun to learn and to be developed again, as for example *Lesong* dance. *Lesong* dance has been developed again in the middle of society life. It has positive impacts for the developers of the dance and its surrounding people. It is especially for Dayak Mualang life which has been acknowledged as intangible inheritance or asset for them in Belitang district, Sekadau municipality. The factors that cause the reborn of this dance (Bagja, 2007) are: 1) internal factors (community), and 2) external factors (outside of the community). This is what drives the emergence of efforts to preserve traditional arts of the community. Preservation efforts from outside of the community are with the establishment of the *Lesong* Mualang dance studio. The studio is used as a learning place for *Lesong* dance.

One method to preserve traditional culture expressions as intangible culture legacies is through preservation and conservation (Santyaningtyas & Noor, 2016). The effort to preserve *Lesong* dance has shifted from its original function as a traditional dance that is always displayed in the customs and traditions of Dayak Mualang tradition into an entertainment function, namely Festival and Art Competition. The preservation of this dance can be done through efforts to develop from something that exists, but cannot be separated from the original source of tradition.

## II. METHOD

Qualitative research methods are used to describe how the preservation of *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance in Belitang, Sekadau Regency. In qualitative research, data collection techniques were carried out by observation, interviews and documentation. Observations were conducted at a dance studio in Central Belitang District in June 2018, interviews were conducted directly through dance trainers at *Lesong Menuah* studio and documentations that were in the form of photos and videos were taken from dance performances by *Lesong Menuah* studio, along with some documents belonging to the dish.

This research was conducted in Maboh Permai Village, Belitang Subdistrict, Sekadau Regency. The purpose of research conducted in Belitang sub-district is because Belitang is the existence place of Dayak Mualang tribe, where Belitang is divided into Belitang Hilir, Tengah (Maboh Permai) and Hulu. Data analysis techniques used were interactive models, including data reduction, data display, data conclusions.

The data validity was done through triangulation techniques and source. Triangulation of sources was done by rechecking the obtained information from the informants, namely Lazarus and Lugu. Lazarus is an artisan of the Dayak Mualang *Lesong* dance. Meanwhile, Lugu is a customary leader of the sub-tribe in Maboh Permai village. Technical triangulation was done by comparing information in the form of data that had been obtained through observation results in the studio, interviewees, and documentation of dance performances in the field.

The structural functional approach of Talcott Parson is used to explain the concept of social action and social roles, where society is a system which is structured and interconnected to one another. Parson (Campbell, 1994) argues that a society must have four subsystems (or main parts) that fulfill functional prerequisites, namely (1) Goal achievement, (2) Adaptation, (3) Integration, (4) Latency (Pattern Maintenance).

In addition, the art sociology approach is used to help reveal the facts existing in the community through the assessment of the actors and supporters of art. The sociology of art can be understood as the science of analytical frameworks or human approaches related to all forms of artistic activity (Jazuli, 2014). The discussion in the art sociology approach covers all actors involved in art activities namely dance artists, studios, dance communities, and Dayak Mualang. Billet (2004) states that the process of individual involvement with the social world (the community in which work takes place) is based on the interdependence relationship between the individual and the social world. This explains that individuals (Dayak Mualang groups) need each other and depend on other tribes in terms of livelihoods, arts, and family relationships

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Lesong* dance is one of Dayak Mualang Tribe dances originating from mystical stories. This dance is shown and re-performed in the real world based on one's experience gained from the results of *Lesong* dance practice in another world (*Sebayan*). This happened between real time or just like in a dream. *Lesong* dance is a welcoming dance for the harvesting of the first paddy (*Berkat Pam*), for example in the process of making chips. This *Lesong* dance was in the Central Belitang District in 1949.

This dance was brought from Hulu Belitang area by Nyamin, then it was re-developed by Laja *Lesong*. In 1986, the dance was studied by Lazarus. Lazarus is an art performer who often studies Dayak traditional dance such as *Bunga Ayu* dance, *Lesong* dance and *Ngayau* dance. *Lesong* dance develops in SP II (Maboh Permai Village) within Dayak Mualang Tribe in *Lesong Menuah* studio. The word *Lesong Menuah* consists of two words namely *Lesong* which is inspired by the *Lesong* dance, and the word *Menuah* is taken from the name of *Menuah* wood tree which is a strong wood.

### A. Form of *Lesong* Dance Performing

The supporting elements of *Lesong* dance are :

1. The motion in the *Lesong* dance is described as pounding, rejecting paddy, and biting *Lesong*.
2. These dancers are consisted of five people. Two female dancers use *Alu*, two dancers use *Tampik* and one male dancer uses *Lesong*. The dance can be performed by both males and females. The purpose is to express joy of the ancient Dayak tribe. It could be seen while they are pondering, which is mostly the females' jobs, in harvesting paddy. Meanwhile, biting *Lesong* as a movement, demonstrated by males, is a realization of power or manhood of Dayak males.

3. Clothing used in *Lesong* dance are *Kapuak* tree bark. Nowadays, the clothing used is the creation of Dayak clothing.



Picture 1. *Kapuak*

(Source : Documentation Hesty Pangestu,2019)

4. Formerly, the make-up used is natural touch but today, female dancers can use foundation, eyebrows, eyeliner, eyelashes, lipstick, and blush. Whereas male dancers do not use make-up.



Picture 2. Make-up Female and Male

(Source : Documentation of Hesty Pangestu, 2019)

5. The instruments used are *Tawak* and *Entebong*. *Tawak* is made of copper or brass. Whereas, *Entebong* is made from goat or deer skin and Selangking wood.



*Entebong*



*Tawak*

Picture 3. *Entebong* and *Tawak*

(Source : Documentation Hesty Pangestu, 2019)

6. The property used is two *Tampik*, two *Alu* and a *Lesong* weighing 20 Kg.



*Tampik*



*Alu*



*Lesong*

Picture 4. *Tampik*, *Alu* and *Lesong*

(Source : Documentation Hesty Pangestu, 2019)

7. The venue for *Lesong Dayak Mualang* dance performance is on the stage or in an open courtyard.
8. Offerings. In general, traditional events and Dayak Mualang traditions cannot be separated from the ritual context or *Badarak*. *Badarak* is held at the beginning and ends of the Dayak Mualang traditional event. According to Dayak Mualang Tribe, *Badarak* is a ritual that must be performed to summon ancestral spirits consisting of rulers of land, water, wind and so on. The offerings provided are *Tuak*, chicken, egg, rice, paddy (*Emprekak*) and meat from each part of the animal's body (parts of the tongue, heart, liver, eyes, feet, and all parts of the pig's body) (Lazarus & Lugu, 2018). Besides, if the offerings offered are not complete, it is not allowed (*Pamalik*), and if it is overturned, it will be disastrous



Picture 5. Offerings (*Badarak*)

(Source : Documentation Hesty Pangestu,2019)

### B. Functional Application of Talcott Parson

According to Parson there are four functional imperatives (AGIL) needed for the survival of all systems, namely:

#### 1. Adaptation

Dayak Mualang community is very active in maintaining its social role, especially in adjusting itself to nature and the environment. Nature and the environment are used to meet the needs of Dayak Tribe. Nature is used as a medium for farming processed into agricultural land (planting rice and vegetables) and plantations. Meanwhile, the environment includes the state of natural resources around the community that can affect life.

This factor fosters Dayak society's awareness towards life. Where, a life will always be related to nature with permission from the creator or ruler. Therefore, this awareness is commemorated through a traditional art event which is manifested in the form of *Lesong* dance. The interaction between humans and is concerned with the creation of art work both in terms of the motivation of creation and the results later (Soedarsono, 2006). *Lesong* dance is meant as a dance of thanks giving for welcoming new paddy. From this belief, it can be concluded that humans are objects that can be influenced and affect the natural surroundings.

#### 2. Goals achievement

Initially, *Lesong* dance performance was featured in the program of *Berkat Pam* or first paddy. The purpose of *Lesong* dance performance in *Berkat Pam* is 1) to express gratitude (*Petara*) for the new paddy (getting luck), 2) to express the joy of Dayak Mualang community. Meanwhile, in its preservation, this dance can be addressed in other events that are still associated with the reception of something new (as the meaning of *Berkat Pam*). The shifting appearance of *Lesong* dance into various events is to elevate *Lesong* dance as a legacy of Mualang tradition.

#### 3. Integration

In this system, it can be demonstrated through cooperative relationships formed between Dayak Tribal communities. This activity was attended by various community groups such as local government, traditional dance communities, Dayak Mualang society (customary chiefs or customary Tomonggongs), other Dayak Tribes, Malays, Javanese, and so on. The unifying effort of cultural and social group differences can be formed into a harmonious unity that is manifested in Gathering and Guest Welcoming event (New Building) through *Lesong* Mualang dance performance.

#### 4. Latency (Pattern Maintenance)

The ancient *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance performance was only displayed in *Berkat Pam* event. By the development of the current era, the show has been activated and performed in various events. In the show, the dance must cover the opening and welcoming of something new to commemorate how history of this dance story was anciently created.

Performances that are often performed repeatedly can maintain the patterns contained in the dance. To do so, this pattern is formed from several values, namely the value of social care, the value of togetherness, the value of

patriotism, the values of culture and the values of religion. In addition, in every customary event and Dayak Mualang tradition, it always begins and ends with a ritual (*Badarak*) as a form of asking permission from all authorities with prayer readings and offerings. This pattern is a characteristic that cannot be abandoned by Dayak Mualang Tribe as humans who obey the spirits of their ancestors. If these four systems can be carried out simultaneously, then a Dayak Tribe identity is created through *Lesong* dance, which is one of Dayak Mualang tribal dances.

### C. The existence of Non-formal Education in Lesong Menuah Studio Maboh Permai Village, Belitang District, Sekadau Regency

Non-formal education can be related to art learning activities through studios. Sanggar (Dance Studio) means a group of dancers gathering as a unit to execute or organize an agenda, or arts events such as dance training, performance or other art events (Saearani et al., 2014). *Lesong Menuah* Studio is a studio owned by the Mualang Dayak Community, located in Belitang Subdistrict, Sungai Maboh Sub-District. This studio is well known by the active lesson of *Lesong* dance. However, there are other dances that are taught in this studio. The purpose of establishing this studio as *Lesong Menuah* is to remember the culture and traditions of the ancients. Besides, it is to preserve and practice *Lesong* dance as a traditional dance from the region of Mualang.

The observation result of the study showed that in the studio children were taught how to dance using appropriate techniques and to bite *Lesong* correctly. A studio for children attracted students of elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and surrounding communities. From this research, the children studio is expected to be able to comprehend, understand and participate in preserving traditional dance of their region.

### D. Preservation of Lesong Dance

The factors that influence the emergence of *Lesong* dance in Dayak Mualang are: 1) internal factors consisting of community encouragement, and 2) external factors consisting of external impulses from the community. The former factor is signified by the issuance of patents by Dayak Mualang community towards this traditional dance as one of the assets of Dayak Mualang that must be preserved. The latter factor involves encouragement from the local government such as the subdistrict head, village head, and the cultural office helped revive *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance which was supported by the ratification of *Lesong Menuah* dance studio in Belitang District.

In addition, *Lesong* dance is also owned by other tribes. The difference between *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance and *Ngajat Lesong* Dayak Iban in Seluas Village lies in the motion, number of dancers, property and accompanying music. *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance was first danced during the reception of new paddy (*Berkat Pam*), whereas, *Ngajat Lesong* Dayak Iban dance began as an event to show female dexterity by men to find a mate and be carried out alternately by every man as a container of

dexterity (Saputra, et al., 2019). However, it has similarities in the model of biting *Lesong*. *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance can be performed in various events, such as;

1. *Berkat Pam*.

Formely, *Lesong* dance was first shown at the *Berkat Pam* event. *Berkat Pam* is interpreted as new paddy. *Berkat Pam*, it was the first time, the paddy was harvested. Basically, this dance is performed as a thanksgiving, so the paddy harvest can be abundant. In the period after the rice being harvested is called *Berkat Benih*, where it is interpreted as a thanksgiving for the harvest. Nowadays, Dayak society have never celebrated *Berkat Pam* and *Berkat Benih* again. This is caused by two factors: 1) the fading of elements of tradition related to the life of Dayak society, 2) advances in technology in processing rice yields. This is the cause of the shifting function of *Lesong* dance towards custom, traditional and entertainment events.

2. *Bertomu Gaok*.

*Bertomu Gaok* was symbolized as an activity to connect family relations, especially among Dayak Tribes that is held twice a year. This event was held like a gawai or party, which was attended by various Dayak tribes and other tribes, from within and outside the region. In *Bertomu Gaok*, it is always held entertainment such as *Pungkak* (rant), drinking wine competition, dance, music and singing together. This illustrates that Dayak Mualang Tribe is a tribe that cares about each other in their community. In *Bertomu Gaok* event, *Lesong* dance is always performed as a culture and tradition of Dayak Mualang Tribe.



Picture 6. *Lesong* Mualang Dance Performance In *Bertomu Gaok* event (Source : Documentation Hesty Pangestu, 2018)

3. *Gawai Dayak* is a party of Dayak Tribes in various regions.

*Gawai Dayak* is celebrated in various Dayak Tribes every year. *Gawai Dayak* can be celebrated in various places and ritual locations, for example in Traditional House or *Rumah Betang*, Panjai, gate, house and various other places. In Dayak Mualang Tribe, *Gawai Dayak* is enlivened with entertainment events such as dancing, music, *berpantun* and so on. One of the traditional dances shown is *Lesong*. This dance is displayed as the culture of Dayak Mualang community.

4. Welcoming Guests and Building Inauguration

Welcoming is defined as welcoming new things such as new people, new buildings and new places. *Lesong* dance was formerly featured in a new paddy harvest event which connects *Lesong* dance as a symbol of receiving something new. Welcoming guests such as regents, sub-district heads, invited guests from Jakarta, welcoming new brides and so

on. Churches, schools and new villages are included as new building.

5. Festivals and Art Competition

*Lesong* dance can be performed at festivals and art competitions which it does not change from its special dance element. The difference in performing is not using *Badarak* ritual and dancer guards.



Picture 7. Performance *Lesong* Dance In Jakarta (Source : Documentation of Robie Mudan, 2019)

Based on the explanation above, it was explained that the *Berkat Pam*, *Bertomu Gaok*, *Gawai Dayak*, Welcoming Guests, and Building Inauguration were traditional events as part of Dayak Mualang tradition. Meanwhile, Festival and Art Competition are only as entertainment for the people. *Lesong* dance is a cultural asset of the Dayak Mualang tribe that must be guarded. The situational level in cultural practices must be able to be renegotiated, as individuals who can interpret, remake and spread it (Billett, 2008). This statement confirms that the task of the Dayak Mualang community is to be able to reinterpret, process dance performances and then spread through efforts to preserve *Lesong* dance into various customs, traditions and entertainment events

IV. CONCLUSION

*Lesong* dance is a traditional dance of Dayak Mualang Tribe that is featured in *Berkat Pam* event. The uniqueness of *Lesong* dance is biting *Lesong* weighing 20 kg. The actors driving the revival of *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance are internal factors from the community and internal factors from outside the community, such as the Regent, Sub-district heads, Village head, and the local Culture Office. Conservation efforts that are assisted by outside communities such as the establishment of the *Lesong* Menuah studio as a non-formal educational institution practices *Lesong* Mualang dancing and other dances.

In an effort to shape the traditional identity of Dayak Mualang Tribe, four functional imperatives (AGIL) are used, namely Adaptation, Goals achievement, Integration, and Latency of Talcott Parson. Adaptation is needed as a system related to nature and the environment.

Goals chievement is needed as a system explaining the purpose of *Lesong* Dayak Mualang dance performance as an expression of gratitude for the reception of new paddy and as a form of joy of Dayak Mualang Tribe, Integration is a system that can show the relationship between Dayak Mualang community and other tribes, and Latency which is

shown from the maintenance of patterns that are carried out repeatedly through events namely *Berkat Pam, Bertomu Gaok, Gawai Dayak*, Welcoming Guests, Building Inauguration, Festival and Art Competition. This research can be used as a reference for the Dayak Studio. The weakness of this research is the absence of previous research on *Lesong* Mualang dance. Therefore, further research is needed regarding this traditional dance.

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