

Lullaby Songs as a Medium of Cultural Education: A Gender Perspective

Yulianeta[†]

Department of Indonesian Language Education and Literature, Faculty of Language Education and Art,
Indonesia University of Education, Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract. This paper looks into the lullaby songs as a medium of cultural education from the perspective of gender in the inherited Javanese culture (as the mother tongue). This has become interesting since the discussion of first language acquisition has become a global issue which attract debates among scholars. Local culture comes with the mother tongue, which one of it is in the form of Javanese oral literature such as *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung*. This song is a lullaby song which plays as a medium of cultural education, and at the same time as a medium to upkeep the mother tongue. This study shows that the lullaby song *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung* carries the element of gender equality. In the culture of Javanese which is strong in patriarchal ideology, clearly shown the cultural artefact which contains wisdom values and equality in term of position, role, and the stature of man and women in the society.

Keywords: Lullaby Songs, Education, Equality, Gender Perspective.

1. Introduction

In the mother tongue or in the popular term which is not accurate, also known as regional language contains various regional cultural inheritances, which one of it is in the form of oral tradition. The oral tradition which evolves in the society will not be excluded from values, premises, as well as belief that take place in the society which owns it. One of the earliest oral tradition which is conveyed in the society in the socialization process is songs sung by the elders or close next of kin when putting children to bed (refer Savitri dkk, 1991).

Now, this tradition is replaced by TV, radio, cassette, cd, etc whereas music, songs, humming are part of the element which cannot be separated from human life. From the cradle to the end of life, universally people in the various cultures recognise music and songs according to their own way. As something that cannot be separated from the humanity itself, music and songs presence is acknowledge and accepted in a natural way (refer Opie and Opie, 1997).

In regard of early cultivation of cultural knowledge on one's individual socialization process (including in it gender socialization), it is acquired from the family parameter. To cultivate the value of gender equality to a child, by using oral tradition as a medium of cultural education with a gender perspective, among it is in the form of lullaby songs. Hence, this study will scrutinised the intrinsic element of *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung* as a medium of cultural education based on a gender perspective.

2. A Brief Meaning of *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung* Song

Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung as one of a lullaby songs is one of the cultural artefact which up to the present days is recognised as part of Javanese community. Lullaby songs are one of the folksongs. According to Brunvand (1968) lullaby is a kind of singing which contains a fine and soothing kind of lyric and rhythm. Apart from that, lullaby songs is sung repeatedly, added in it is the words of love, and able to raise relaxation feeling, prosperous and at the end, will make a child sleepy hearing from it. The songs contain advises and hopes which is pass from one generation to another (normally is conveyed by elders or nanny to the child).

Lullaby songs are one form of folksongs which is disseminated orally and is inherited traditionally from one generation to another in a society. Because of its dissemination not in the form of writing or documented;

[†]Corresponding Author: Tel: 00628122225532
E-mail: nismara@live.com

but is passed orally from one individual to another, hence this song is always experiencing changes and creating different versions. Apart from that, this kind of folksongs will probably be extinct from one's community culture, unless it is maintained.

In regard of *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung* which became the subject of this study, it is a song that always be sung by the elders whenever putting their children to sleep. The song of *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung* is also being popularised by Waljinah, a well-known Javanese *langgam* singer. The lyrics of the songs are as follows.

Original Version	Translation
<i>Tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung</i>	Tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung
<i>Tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung cup meneng ojo pijer nangis anakku sing ayu rupane yèn nangis ndak ilang ayune</i>	Tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung Please be quiet my princess, please don't cry Oh my beautiful princess If you cry, your beauty will perish
<i>tak gadang bisa urip mulya dadia wanita utama luhurke asmane wong tuwa dadiya pendekaré bangsa</i>	May you have a noble life Becoming a leading lady Honouring the good name of your parents Becoming the warrior of the people
<i>wis cep menenga anakku kae mbulane ndadari koyo buta nggegilani lagi nggoleki cah nangis</i>	Enough, please be quiet my princess Look at the full moon Like a scary monster Seeking a crying child
<i>tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung cup meneng aja pijer nangis tak gendhong lendang batik kawung yèn nangis romo ibu bingung</i>	Tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung O, be quiet and don't keep on crying I cradle you with a kawung batik scarf If you cry, mum and dad will be confused

Fig. 1: Translation of *Tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung*

This *tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung* song is sung at the moment the parent is putting their child. The rhythm of this song is melancholic and soothing, repeated several times, added with words of love, and able to generate the feeling of relaxation, peaceful, and finally making a child sleepy.

The meaning of the first stanza *tak lelo-lelo-lelo ledhung cup meneng ojo pijer nangis anakku sing ayu rupane yèn nangis ndak ilang ayune* refers to the hope of the parent that the child will not cry easily, but should be quiet as soon as he can after he manages to let out the *uneg-uneg* of frustration by crying. A child is forbidden to continue crying. He or she has to try to become a gracious human being. This is further stressed with an expression "*ndak ilang baguse atau ayune*".

The meaning of the second stanza, *tak gadhang iso urip mulyo, dadiya pria/wanita séng utomo. ngluhurak é asman è wong tuwa, dadiyo pendekaréng bangsa*; whether the child is a boy or a girl, they have equal opportunities and both of them are expected to achieve their ambitions with the hope that they will be able to get a noble life in the future and become responsible, stand firm and good heart to fulfil the duty as a human being. This has to be so, and they have to keep their parent's good names as well to contribute their intellectuality and energy to the society and nation.

The meaning of the third stanza: *wis cep menenga anakku, kae mbulane ndadari, koyo buta nggegilani, lagi nggoleki cah nangis* is that while doing a certain task, whether it concerned the family or the country, should be done with full awareness and responsibility, because all what is done will be questioned by almighty god. The phrase "*mbulan kang lagi ndadari*" which means like an existence of a scary monster is to remind human being those who disturb the peacefulness of the monster (as a symbol of evil) will become the enemy of the monster and the monster will not hesitate to do chaos to mankind, and that is the reason why mankind should always worship god.

The fourth stanza; *tak lelo-lelo lelo ledhung cup meneng aja pijer nangis tak gendhong lendang batik kawung yen nangis romo ibu bingung*, it says please be quiet and don't keep on crying because the child's nody is already wrapped and warmed by the scarf "batik kawung". The usage of batik kawung's motif is to remind mankind to be always remember of their roots. In those days, the motif of batik kawung is worn by government officers. The officers who worn the batik kawung reflected his personal attitude as a leader who could handle his lust as well as to safe guard his conscience so as to keep the balance in the mankind's action. Hence forth, the elders is reminding their children, as in the future regardless whether he or she, could control themselves from carnality as well as not to forget their roots and by doing so, it is hoped that they will become useful mankind for the others, society and nation.

Other then the stanza mentioned above, the phrase the meaning of *cup meneng ojo pijer nangis, tak emban nganggo jarit kawung, yen nangis mundhak bapak bingung* is intended as a last reminder so that 'tetap-teteg', which means they have to stand firm facing any temptation and test, which is accompanied by love song, elders prayers and god's help.

3. Gender Perspective

The word gender means a characteristics of sex. Webster New Dictionary (1994), defines gender as the difference that can be differentiate between man and woman from the perspective of values and behaviours. Lips (refer Umar, 1999) defines gender as the expectation of culture towards man and woman. This is reconfirmed by Udasmoro (2009: 1) that gender is defined as a social relation between different sexual orientation which involves social construction, politic, and cultural. The latter's opinion is similar to what is perceived by Lindsey (1990), whom had assumed that what a given society define as masculine or feminine is a component of gender. In the other hands, Elaine Showalter defines gender as more than the difference between man and woman, but also a perception of the construction of social culture. It stresses on an analytic concept that is adopt to clarify something.

The concept of gender analysis evolves from the woman or feminism movement. Due to the various movement of woman and feminism, henceforth brings a lot of varieties in the interpretation of woman or gender study (see Mosse, 1996: Fakhri, 1997; Saptari & Holzner, 1997). However, in general it can be said that gender perspective is trying to bring woman to the surface until the gender justice and gender equality (structural and cultural form) can be achieved. According to Saptari and Holzner (1997), there are two intentions of gender perspective, (1) to comprehend understanding regarding the development of mechanism in asymmetries relation on the basis of sex, race and class in a society as well as it's sustainability, and (2) to find strategies which can change the a situation to another situation which forms a more symmetries relationship.

4. The Value of Gender Equality in *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung*

Now days, gender equality has become an interesting global issue which attract the world's attention. Gender equality means the equal condition for man and woman and their rights as human, so that they are able to function and participate in the political activities, economy, social, cultural, and national peace, and equally enjoy the all benefit that they are suppose to have.

The concept of gender equality is clearly seen in the song of *Tak lelo lelo ledhung* through the message conveyed either in an explicit or implicit way. This song is not only dedicated to the boy, but also to the girl which means that, both girl and boy are entitle to receive the same amount of endless love and care from their parents, without any subject to discrimination.

In the second stanza, *tak gadang bisa urip mulya, dadia wanita utama, luhurke asmane wong tuwa, dadiya pendekare bangsa*; is an aspiration of the parent that they put on the girl that she will become a woman with a high stature in the society, and at the same time, emerge a champion to the society. It is here that we can see the equality in gender, where boys and girls age given equal opportunities to acquire their rights as mankind, so that they are able to function and anticipate in politics, economy, social, culture, and national peace, and like what was mentioned earlier, could enjoy the same benefit derived from the situations.

In the midst of strong patriarchal culture which is difficult to be eradicate in the Javanese society, the reminder that women should become the warrior of the race is an enlightenment that should be considered. In the Javanese culture, the woman's role is not only subjected merely to cooking, to give birth, or to make themselves to be presentable all the time. For a woman to become a leader, it is a difficult and winding task. They have to learn a lot of things, especially, "*dadio pandekare bongso*" or to become a social champion, they have to strive before they can be accepted as a leader. To achieve this noble stature, a woman need a lot of courage from various aspects, to strive before finally their contributions are recognise and they gain respect from the society.

Apart from that, women are also expected to become leaders with personalities, able to control temptation, as well as to have conscience so that there is a balance in their life. Having that scenario, the elders remind so that in future, their children could take care of themselves from carnality and also not forgetting their roots. This hopefully will make them to become useful mankind for the others, society and country.

The intentions of having the equality of rights in gender is not something that is easy, but need extra struggle because this matter is strongly related with the change of cultural values or construction of social culture which is rooted in the society. In the other hand, because all the values in the society is man- made, hence on the principal basis, this things can be changed but requires a long process until finally, the gender equality and justice in the society could be achieved.

5. Enclosure

The song of *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung* as an oral tradition which was introduced among the patriarchal culture is significantly contains the values of equality in the perspective of position, role, and the stature of man and women.

This song plays an important role as one of the cultural information and socialization (particularly in the equality of gender) on each individual character. Hence, it is a right move that the song of *Tak Lelo Lelo Lelo Ledhung* to become a cultural practise again in the society. The least benefit by having this song back in the society, it can become a medium of cultural education to children and thus enable the sustainability of mother tongue and socialization of gender equality since early childhood. This hopefully, will create a generation that is able to perceive that man and woman are equal and both are having same opportunities to be actively involved in the framework of nation development because "man and women are different but not to be differentiated".

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