

**Function and Meaning of Oral Literature of The Besemah Tribes of Muaradua  
Kisam, South Oku (Literary Anthropological Study)**

**Yesvica Apryanti<sup>1</sup>, Siti Rukiyah<sup>2</sup>, Darwin Effendi<sup>3</sup>**  
<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas PGRI Palembang

**Corresponding Author:** [yesvica19@gmail.com](mailto:yesvica19@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

The aim of this research is to determine the function and. The meaning of guritan oral literature in the Besemah tribe community in Muaradua Kisam. South Oku is reviewed and studied by literary anthropology, especially aspects of religious language and customs. This research uses the method, descriptive qualitative analysis. Data collection techniques in this research user observation techniques, interview techniques, SLC (Simak Libat Cakap) listening techniques, recording techniques and not-taking techniques. Data sources in this research include aspects and primary data, namely data in the form of videos of oral literature from the people of Besemah Muaradua Kisam Oku South in traditional events. Apart from that, other sources of data are secondary data, namely data sourced from books and journals relate to the problems in the research. Based on research conducted, there are 47 poems which are included in language aspect, 27 poems which are included in the religious aspect, and 13 poems which are included in the customs aspect.

**Keywords:** Besemah Society, Guritan Oral Literature, Literary Anthropology

---

**Article history**

<i>Received:</i> 18-10-2023	<i>Revised:</i> 15-01-2024	<i>Accepted:</i> 31-03-2024	<i>Published:</i> 05-04-2024
--------------------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------

---

**Introduction**

In language there is spoken language and written language, spoken language is literature which includes the literary expressions of the people of a culture which are spread and passed down by oral literature (by word of mouth). Meanwhile, written language is in the form of printed or written literary works. As part of culture, spoken language cannot be separated from the influence of values that live and develop in society (Astika & Yasa, 2014, p. 2).

There are many varieties of spoken language, depending on context, perspective, geographical area, culture or customs. Customs are rules that have been established to protect society. Indonesian society is a society consisting of various ethnic groups who have cultures that are different from one another. Each tribe has different literature,

both oral and written literature. One of the oral literature found in Indonesia is the art of guritan in the Besemah community. The Besemah community is one of the ethnic groups that still upholds its cultural values. The Besemah community still preserves every cultural identity, one of which is the guritan oral literature.

Guritan is a literary art of speech that is sung through songs which has its own characteristics and its own meaning, which is not the same as other literary arts. According to Bayu (Nopriani, 2021, p. 58), states that guritan is a form of artistic expression that is spoken to convey a historical message. Guritan also contains many values that can be used as guidelines in everyday life.

In the South Oku area, specifically in Muaradua Kisam, oral literature, namely guritan, is still maintained. However, with the development of the times and technology, guritan is now very rarely used because it is very rare for local people to speak the Kisam dialect of Besemah fluently due to many factors such as inter-regional marriages. To preserve guritan oral literature in society, various efforts need to be made, such as holding festivals with regional literature themes. One way to preserve guritan oral literature is by knowing the meaning and function contained in guritan art. By knowing the meaning of guritan art, it will be easy to make or create further guritan art. Apart from knowing the meaning contained in it, another way to better understand regional literature is to see its relationship to other aspects, such as language aspects, religious aspects and customs aspects. These three aspects are tied into the study of literary anthropology. According to Ratna (Sitanggang, Sinambela, Simanjuntak & Lubis, 2021, p. 81), literary anthropology is the analysis and understanding of literary works in relation to culture.

This research is motivated by the importance of preserving and developing guritan oral literature in the Besemah community in Muaradua Kisam, South Oku, which may one day disappear due to the decreasing number of guritan speakers, the reluctance of the younger generation to inherit regional literature, developments over time, and the rapid pace of communication technology that is replacing the existence of guritan. regional literature, especially guritan oral literature.

Through this research, it is hoped that Guritan oral literature can be used again so that the younger generation can preserve the oral literature that was once the identity of the Besemah community.

## **Method**

Research methods are basically scientific ways to obtain data with specific purposes and uses. Based on this, there are four key words that need to be considered, namely, scientific methods, data, objectives and uses (Sugiyono, 2014 p. 2). The method in this research is a qualitative descriptive method.

Qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, used to research the conditions of natural objects, (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative. , and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. Qualitative methods are used to obtain in-depth data, data that contains meaning. Meaning is actual data, data that is definitely a value behind the visible data. Therefore, qualitative research does not emphasize generalization, but rather emphasizes meaning (Sugiyono, 2014 p. 8-9).

---

## **Discussion**

Based on the previous description, the researcher then carried out data analysis according to the problems raised in this research. In analyzing data regarding the function and meaning of the oral literature of the guritan of the Besemah Muaradua Kisam tribe, South Oku, it is reviewed using literary anthropology studies. The elements of literary anthropology discussed in this research are seen from the aspects of language, religion and customs. From the results of the researcher's description of the data, it was found that the number of utterances in the oral literary poetry of the Besemah tribe that has been researched and seen in literary anthropology studies is 47 poems which are included in the language aspect, 27 poems which are included in the religious aspect, and 13 poems which are included in the religious aspect. customs.

Based on the opinions of several informants above who are traditional stakeholders at the research site, the researcher can conclude that the function of guritan oral literature is as a container for art which is expressed in the form of poetry by singing it. Guritan oral literature is usually found at large events, such as weddings, traditional events and other sacred events. Through this oral literature, poets can convey meaningful expressions of feelings and advice.

Based on the opinions of several informants above who are traditional stakeholders at the research site, the researcher can conclude that every poem in the Guritan oral literature has a meaning, it's just that the meaning of the Guritan oral literature itself can be adjusted to the circumstances or situations in which the Guritan oral literature is being developed. . For example, at a wedding, the poems and meanings conveyed are messages of emotion and joy for the bride and groom, their parents and relatives. It would be different if the oral guritan literature was sung during a mourning event or funeral, then the meaning of the poetry greetings conveyed is an expression of sadness and a message of condolence for the family left behind, as well as prayers offered for the person who has died. So, we return the meaning of oral literature to the situation or circumstances when the poems were being sung.

In this research, there are 47 poems which are included in the language aspect, 27 poems which are included in the religious aspect, and 13 poems which are included in the customs aspect.

### **a) Language**

Language can reflect cultural characteristics that can be seen from the regional terms of that community. Language can also take the form of referring to people or the names of public figures. Such mentions play an important role in a literary work, including in guritan oral literature.

#### **(Recording 1)**

In one recording, it can be seen that the guritan was played during a wedding, because in the Besemah community, especially in Muaradua Kisam, there are still several wedding parties that still preserve cultural customs. One way is to develop guritan oral literature. As we know, the function of guritan oral literature itself is as a container for art expressed in the form of sung poetry. Meanwhile, the meaning of Guritan oral literature can be adjusted to the circumstances or situations in which Guritan oral literature is being developed. In recording one, it can be concluded that the meaning conveyed is an expression of joy addressed to the bride's parents because with joy and emotion they have sent their daughter to shelter the household ship.

There are several poems in Tembang Guritan which contain literary anthropological studies from the language aspect, as follows:

*Bird spots, all the birds..*

---

It can be seen from the words in bold, that *segale* or in Indonesian which means all or all. If in Indonesian it ends with the letter A, it is different from the Besemah language which ends with the letter E. This is also a characteristic of the Besemah language, therefore this word is included in the study of literary anthropology in the linguistic aspect.

#### b) Religion

Religion is a belief in a higher power by which humans communicate and relate to God. In a literary work, religious aspects can be seen from various points of view, one of which is the expression of humanity's gratitude to the creator or it could also be in the form of good prayers offered to God.

(Recording 1)

In one recording, it can be seen that the guritan was played during a wedding, because in the Besemah community, especially in Muaradua Kisam, there are still several wedding parties that still preserve cultural customs. One way is to develop guritan oral literature.

There are several poems in the song Guritan which contain literary anthropological studies from a religious aspect, as follows:

*Apologize, ask for kate, ask for shortening*

*If I'm too lazy, I'm wrong, because I'm a normal human being. Of course there are lots of mistakes...*

*It means:*

*Apologize, ask for words, ask for guidance*

*If later I say something wrong because I'm just an ordinary person, of course there will be many mistakes.*

In the quotation from the poem, it can be seen that the poet apologizes to the audience if there are errors in the words conveyed. Because in essence humans are imperfect people and never escape from mistakes and sins. Therefore, this poem is included in the study of literary anthropology in a religious aspect.

#### c) Customs

If seen from anthropological studies, in the oral art of guritan there are many cultural customs of the Besemah people. This can be seen from the guritan poems that are sung.

(Recording 1)

In one recording, it can be seen that the guritan was played during a wedding, because in the Besemah community, especially in Muaradua Kisam, there are still several wedding parties that still preserve cultural customs. One way is to develop guritan oral literature.

There are several poems in the tembang guritan which contain literary anthropological studies from the aspect of customs, as follows:

*Mak, this is the care of life in the land of Besemah*

*Care is old and obsolete, let's dig this one out, ahi*

*It means:*

*This is the way of life in the land of Besemah.*

*The old way is obsolete, now we will explore it again*

In this poem, the poet tries to tell the audience that many old cultures are almost extinct. The poet also conveys an invitation to continue to preserve the culture of the Besemah people, especially the oral guritan literature. Therefore, this poem is included in the study of literary anthropology in the aspect of customs.

---

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of this data, the researcher can conclude that the function of guritan oral literature is as a container for art expressed in the form of poetry in a sung way that is usually found at traditional events and wedding parties. Meanwhile, the meaning of guritan oral literature itself is as a way to convey the advice contained in each poem and is one way to attract public interest so that they are more insightful regarding the cultural meaning, religious meaning and meaning of customs contained in each poem. guritan oral literature itself.

Based on the results of data analysis from the five data recordings, there are 47 poems which are included in the language aspect, 27 poems which are included in the religious aspect, and 13 poems which are included in the customs aspect. From the results of this research, the poems contained in guritan oral literature which were developed when examined in literary anthropology studies are more often included in the language aspect. Because Guritan oral literature is literature found in the Besemah tribe, of course every poem uses the Besemah language. The Besemah language also certainly has its own characteristics that differentiate it from the languages of other tribes. These characteristics are what can make this poetry included in the study of literary anthropology in the linguistic aspect. However, apart from the linguistic aspect in these five recordings, there are also religious and customary aspects. The religious aspect in the results of the data analysis was taken from several recordings whose poetry contains advice for us as humans to always remember God. Aspects of customs are also present in the results of this analysis, because from several of the existing recordings the poems contain reminders for us, especially the Besemah tribal community, to always preserve the oral literature of Guritan so that its sustainability is maintained.

## **References**

- Astika, I. M., & Yasa, I. N. (2014). *Oral Literature; Theory and Application*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.
- Nopriani, H. (2021). The Value of Character Education in Guritan Besemah. *Disastra Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Education* Vol.3 No.1, 58-59.
- Sitanggang, J. M., Sinambela, M., Simanjuntak, E., & Lubis, F. (2021). Anthropological Study of Literature in the Novels *Kau Aku* and *Sepuncuk Ampau Merah*. *Serunai Bahasa Indonesia* Vol.18 No.2, 81.
- Sugiyono. (2014). *Quantitative, Qualitative and R&D Research Methods*. Bandung: Alfabeta.