

Literature Review of Historical Heritage in Archipelago Folk Stories: Linguistic and Cultural Perspectives

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji warisan sejarah yang tercermin dalam cerita rakyat Nusantara ditinjau dari perspektif linguistik dan budaya melalui metode kajian literatur. Cerita rakyat merupakan wujud ekspresi budaya masyarakat yang diwariskan secara lisan dan menggambarkan realitas sosial, nilai moral, dan kondisi historis pada masa lampau. Analisis linguistik menunjukkan bahwa pilihan diksi, gaya bahasa, dan struktur naratif dalam cerita rakyat mengandung petunjuk kronologis dan ideologi masyarakat pendukungnya. Dari perspektif budaya, cerita rakyat mengandung simbol, mitos, dan kearifan lokal yang merefleksikan sistem kepercayaan serta dinamika sosial dari aktivitas masa lalu. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa cerita rakyat tidak hanya sebagai media hiburan, tetapi sebagai rekaman sejarah berbasis budaya melalui tuturan. Oleh karena itu, cerita rakyat dapat dijadikan alternatif media pembelajaran sejarah dan penguatan karakter. Penelitian merekomendasikan pengembangan kurikulum berbasis sastra dan sejarah lokal serta pemanfaatan cerita rakyat dalam pendidikan karakter dan literasi sejarah.

Kata kunci: cerita rakyat, warisan sejarah, budaya.

Abstract

This study aims to examine the historical heritage reflected in Indonesian folklore from a linguistic and cultural perspective through a literature review method. Folklore is a form of cultural expression passed down orally and depicts social realities, moral values, and historical conditions in the past. Linguistic analysis shows that the choice of diction, language style, and narrative structure in folklore contain clues to the chronology and ideology of the supporting community. From a cultural perspective, folklore contains symbols, myths, and local wisdom that reflect belief systems and the social dynamics of past activities. The results of the study indicate that folklore is not only a medium of entertainment, but also a record of culturally based history through speech. Therefore, folklore can be used as an alternative medium for learning history and strengthening character. The study recommends the development of a curriculum based on local literature and history and the use of folklore in character education and historical literacy.

Keywords: folklore, historical heritage, culture.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian folklore is a form of oral literature that has grown and developed within society as part of our ancestral cultural heritage. Folklore serves not only as a means of entertainment but also as a tool for moral education, a conveyor of traditional values, and an unwritten

document of history. This oral tradition has been an important part of shaping the nation's cultural identity. Historically, folklore reflects the lives of people in the past, including their outlook on life, leadership patterns, belief systems, and socio-political conditions. Several experts state that folklore stores historical data in

the form of symbolic narratives. folklore is a record of the social life of traditional societies. Linguistic and cultural studies of folklore provide a deeper understanding of how history is passed down from generation to generation through language and narrative. Therefore, it is important to conduct a literature review on the role of folklore as a historical heritage so that it can be utilized in education, strengthening local culture, and preserving national identity (Abrams, 2011).

Riches Nusantara Oral Traditions, with diversity its ethnic and geographical spread spacious, store riches intellectual not invaluable in form tradition oral. Folklore *in* this region No just fairytale introduction Sleep or entertainment only, but receptacle storage memory collective society. Since In the past, folklore worked as mechanism transmission values, social norms, and knowledge intergenerational (Dahlan, 2025). More from that, narratives This often contains traces past events, making it informal archives that record dynamics history civilization a possible nation No written in inscription and script palace (Setiarto, et.al, 2026).

Often, the boundary between myths and facts history in folklore becomes blurred. Many narratives traditional considered as work fiction mere because wrapped with supernatural and fantasy elements. However, experts history and anthropology the more realize

that behind metaphor and symbolism there is a "legacy" stored there valid history" starts from notes migration ancestors, disaster natural ancient, until intrigue political past kingdoms. Challenge academically is how decode or translate symbols the for separate layer imaginative from its historical core.

Urgency Perspective Linguistics and Culture for reveal layer history said, the approach monodisciplinary often not adequate. Required glasses double, namely Linguistics and Culture: a) Perspective Linguistics: Language in Folk tales often retain forms archaic (ancient), toponymy (origin of place names), and etymology which become instruction chronological and geographical movement humans in the past. Structure language and word choice can pointing to contact intercultural ever happened. b) Perspective Culture: Culture provide context for text. Ritual, system trust, and structure social depicted in folklore is reflection from condition society in a certain era. *"Folklore is fossil life from history culture human. Understand it means dig return identity buried by time"*.

Although Lots study has done about Indonesian folk tales, some of them big Still focus on analysis structure narrative (such as propp's scheme) or moral values alone. Still a little study literature that is systematic synthesize how aspect linguistics and culture work in a way

simultaneous for validate element history in stories said. Fragmentation studies this cause understanding about "people's history" became no intact.

Purpose of writing therefore that, article this aim for do study literature in depth to map and analyze How inheritance history manifested in Indonesian folklore. Through synthesis various studies previous article, this will answer question main: 1) How marker linguistics in folk tales can track footsteps historical Indonesian society?, 2) How symbols culture reconstruct incident implied history in narrative oral?. It is hoped that the study this can give framework solid theoretical for researchers furthermore in look at folklore as historical data sources credible alternative.

METHODS

Study this use method study qualitative with approach study literature (library research). This method chosen because focus study is analyze various source literature about inheritance history in Nusantara folklore through perspective linguistics and culture. Research No done in a way empirical field, but through search and analysis critical to source relevant written (Moleong, 2017).

Data obtained from various source literature, in the form of:

- a. Books about folklore, folklore, linguistics, and anthropology culture.
- b. Journal articles reputable national and international (Scopus, Sinta, WoS).
- c. Document digital history and archives.
- d. Research result previously related folklore and heritage culture.
- e. Trusted online sources like seminar proceedings, university repositories, and regulations culture national (Nurgiyantoro, 2019).

Data collection techniques were carried out through:

- a. Keyword identification such as: folklore, folklore, linguistics culture, memory collective, heritage history, symbols culture, tradition Indonesian oral language.
- b. Search documents and sources scientific through digital databases and libraries.
- c. Filtering source based on relevance, year published (minimum 10 years) last), credibility, and contribution scientific.
- d. Logging and coding content recording (Ratna, 2014).

Data analysis was performed with analysis content analysis and analysis descriptive interpretive, with stages as following:

- a. Data Reduction
Selecting and classifying source relevant literature with focus study
- b. Theme Categorization
Grouping findings based on indicator analysis, namely: representation historical heritage, elements linguistics in folk tales, values local culture and wisdom, symbols, figures and structures narrative, and relevance folklore about identity modern culture.
- c. Data Interpretation
Analyze meaning narrative, content linguistics, and symbols culture in folklore based on theory folklore, semiotics, memory collective, and linguistic cultural.
- a. Drawing Conclusions
Draw up illustrative conclusions How folklore becomes means preservation inheritance history past structure language, narrative, and values culture (Zuhdi, 2018).

Instrument main in study this is researchers itself (*human instrument*) which acts as data collector, interpreter, and analyst based on guidelines study literature. In addition, it is used table analysis and sheets data recording as tool help in organize category findings based on theory used (Wellek & Warren, 2014).

In a way systematic, steps study done as following:

Table 1. Procedure Study

Stage	Activity Study
1	Identification problem study

2	Determination of keywords and scope of literature
3	Collection and selection source scientific
4	Analysis content to literature
5	Interpretation based on perspective linguistics and culture
6	Formulation of results and conclusions

Study This only focuses on documented folklore in form text written. Does not include the inheritance process oral in a way directly in the community. Analysis done based on perspective linguistics and culture, not philology or literary performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Representation of Historical Heritage in Folklore

The literature review shows that Nusantara folklore serves as a medium for preserving the history of local communities. Many folktales reflect traces of past events, such as tribal migrations, kingdom conflicts, colonization, and the journeys of historical figures (Pelupessy, 2026).

For example, *Minangkabau legends* depict the history of migration and the dynamics of the matrilineal kinship system, while *the Malin Kundang Folktale* reflects the social values of coastal communities and the influence of maritime trade. From a historiographical perspective, folktales are categorized as indirect (non-documentary) historical

sources that, although not chronological, contain collective memories. This strengthens folktales' position as cultural archives that record the journey of local history and ethnic identity (Pudentia, 2015).

b. Linguistic Analysis of Folklore

Linguistic studies have found that the language of folktales contains narrative structures typical of oral traditions, such as repetitive formulas, the use of natural metaphors, and the use of symbolic language (Ferrer, et.al, 2025). This research identified three main tendencies:

Table 2. Linguistic Aspects of Folklore and Their Historical Meanings

Linguistic Aspects	Key Findings	Historical Meaning
Cultural metaphor	Mountains, seas and forests as symbols of strength	Representation of the geographical conditions of society
Repetition pattern	"In ancient times..."	Maintaining the continuity of historical memory
Dialectical variation	Regional languages (Lampung, Javanese, Bugis)	Preserving ethnolinguistic identity

According to Sapir-Whorf theory, the linguistic structure of folklore reflects how a society interprets history. This means that language becomes a marker of historical and cultural identity (Mustika, & Sinaga, 2026).

c. Cultural Values and Local Wisdom

Analysis shows that folk tales are full of local wisdom values, such as:

- Gotong royong (Javanese and Sumatran folklore)
- Nature conservation (Legend of Lake Toba, Origin of Watu Dodol)
- Loyalty to the homeland (Legend of the Bitter Tongue, Story of Princess Serindang Bulan)
- Ancestral veneration ritual (Dayang Sumbi's story, Minangkabau buffalo horns (Ihsan, 2026).

Folktales demonstrate how cultural values serve as social and spiritual defense strategies. In cultural anthropology theory, these values are passed down to *control societal behavior and preserve traditions* (Tarigan, 2013).

d. Traces of Symbols and Narrative Structure as Historical Heritage

Using a semiotic approach, it was found that most folk tales use symbols of animals, nature, and mythological figures as representations of historical facts:

Table 3. Symbols in Folklore and Their Historical Meanings

Symbol	Cultural Meaning	Historical Indications
Dragon (Barongsai, Toba Dragon)	Fertility and strength	Traces of China's trade interactions
Mountains (Semeru, Krakatoa)	Purity and the center of life	The influence of animist beliefs
Rivers (Mahakam, Kapuas)	Support of life	The spread of culture by waterways

This confirms that The narrative structure of folk tales can represent geographical conditions, beliefs, and the historical dynamics of the Indonesian people (Zulkarnain, 2020).

e. The Role of Folklore in Preserving Cultural Identity

This study found that folklore still plays a significant role in maintaining ethnic cultural identity, particularly through traditional art performances (wayang, mamanda, randai, and traditional oral stories) (Poon, 2026). Thus, folklore not only "tells history," but also revives cultural values through social and performative practices. Folk narratives are a form of transformation of reality into cultural symbols (Wu, 2026). Therefore, it can be concluded that folklore is a medium for transmitting history and cultural identity between generations (Simbolon, Matondang, & Manugeren, 2026).

f. Archipelago Folktales as Cultural Records of History and Character Education

In the era of globalization, despite the gradual decline of oral traditions, archipelago folktales continue to survive and function as cultural records of history through their adaptation into modern media such as films, children's literature, animation, and digital storytelling (Zaimar, 2013). These contemporary

reinterpretations do not merely transform folktales into entertainment products, but reaffirm their role as repositories of collective memory, historical experiences, and cultural values embedded within local communities.

The renewed presentation of folktales demonstrates that historical heritage remains dynamic and relevant, particularly in supporting history education and character education for younger generations. Through narrative structures, symbolic meanings, and moral messages, folktales transmit values such as responsibility, respect for tradition, social solidarity, and environmental awareness. Consequently, folktales contribute not only to the preservation of cultural identity but also to the development of educational practices, cultural tourism, and character-building initiatives rooted in local wisdom (Widodo & Firmansyah, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that Nusantara folklore plays a strategic role in preserving historical heritage and strengthening the cultural identity of the community. Folklore functions not only as a medium of entertainment or conveying moral values, but also as a form of collective memory that records the historical traces of local civilization through symbolic narratives, traditional

language structures, and cultural representations. From a linguistic perspective, the use of cultural metaphors, repetition patterns, local expressions, and regional dialects demonstrates how language in folklore serves as a means of transmitting historical knowledge, belief systems, and social norms from one generation to the next.

From a cultural perspective, folklore has proven to be a vehicle for transmitting local wisdom values such as mutual cooperation, respect for nature, spirituality, and community social relations. Through traditional art performances, customary rituals, and other cultural expressions, folklore lives on in social and performative practices, thereby strengthening ethnic identity and community solidarity. Furthermore, adaptations of folklore in modern media such as film, animation, children's books, and digital storytelling demonstrate that traditional narratives remain relevant in supporting character building, cultural education, and history-based tourism.

Thus, folklore is a cultural artifact that serves as a medium for historical preservation, a guardian of linguistic identity, and a means of strengthening cultural values in a modern context. Systematic efforts to preserve and revitalize folklore, whether through education, digitalization, or the development of the arts and the creative

economy, are essential to maintaining the sustainability of cultural heritage and strengthening national character amidst the challenges of globalization. Folklore not only tells stories of the past but also shapes the cultural awareness and identity of the Indonesian nation in the present and future.

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