

# *Analysis of Symbolic Meaning of Shipping Technique and Navigation*

## *Case Study of Sandeq Boat of the Mandar Tribe*

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**Abstract**—Sandeq boat is a kind of marine transportation, since long has been operated by fisherman or seaman of Mandar along the coastal water area, as well as for fishing in Sulawesi Barat. Surprisingly, it is still a lot of people including the younger generation of Mandar not knowing the ins and outs of their regional icons. Not to mention, children of fishermen or Mandar sailors do not even understand how to pay sandeq boat. They are less interested in digging and learning because they do not understand the meaning and message contained therein. Starting from the condition, this research entitled “Analysis of Meaning Symbolic Shipping Technique and Navigation Sandeq Boat Mandar Tribe” aims at categorize sandeq boat cruise and navigation and to analyze the symbolic meaning and messages in *paissangan sumobal*. This research is qualitative research that uses descriptive method with historical, sociological, and anthropological approaches. Methods of data collection are library research, observation and interview. All data that has been collected is analyzed through several stages, namely as follows: 1) scalling measurement (making transcript); 2) empirical generalization, and; 3) the last logical induction. Research result shows that if Mandar seaman will operated Sandeq boat, they utilize local knowledge called *paissangan sumobal*, such as determining the direction of sailing sandeq by looking at waves, stars and sun. From the technique of sailing and navigation it gives a message that the Mandar community are reflecting balance, simplicity, beauty, speed, accuracy, and toughness.

**Keywords**—*Sandeq boat; paissangan sumobal; Mandar*

### I. BACKGROUNDS

Indonesia is a maritime country which has thousands of islands with a vast territorial sea area. According to the map of the world, the land area of Indonesia is 1,904,569 km<sup>2</sup> and the sea area is 3,288,683 km<sup>2</sup> extends along the equator and lies between the Asian and Australian continents. It shows that the

sea area is wider than the land area, there are 5 big islands and hundreds of other small islands, both inhabited and uninhabited.

As a society with a high cultural identity, the sea area is of course not only linked to the strength of a nation or as the economic center of a region due to the potential of its marine resources but in terms of anthropology and sociology. Skill in conquering and across the sea to sail to various other areas either to trade or to go fishing does not directly give a symbolic message about life, character, or the culture of coastal communities in the region, including in the western region of South Sulawesi (which has bloomed into West Sulawesi province).

Sailors in the region of West Sulawesi known as great sailors since time immemorial. One of the characteristics of seafarers in the region of West Sulawesi is sandeq boat as a means of sailing. The existence of traditional sandeq boat itself was only seen in the early 1930s. German researchers, Horst H Liebner glance at the beauty of this sandeq boat as a form of culture that needs to be preserved [1].

Furthermore, Liebner considered that no traditional boats were as strong and as fast as sandeq, and considered the fastest traditional boats ever in Austronesia. Sandeq boat is an icon of maritime greatness Mandar tribe society. The greatness of Mandar's excellent sailors is evidenced through the cruise that uses this outrigger boat. The greatness of course does not just appear, but accompanied by a system of local knowledge, the technique of navigation and navigation known as *paissangan sumobal*. With *paissangan sumobal*, sandeq boat recorded in its history has proven able to sail to Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and Madagascar, Australia and America.

*Paissangan sumobal* is an inheritance of the ancestors of the Mandar community is invaluable and resulted from the process of reading to nature that is done wisely and wisely.

The birth of the knowledge system *paissangan sumobal* is a manifestation of the Mandar tribe to the nature of nature which is accompanied by the understanding of noble values that are held firm from time to time.

Surprisingly, it is still a lot of people including the younger generation of Mandar not knowing the ins and outs of their regional icons. Not to mention, children of fishermen or Mandar sailors do not even understand how to pay *sandeq* boat. They are less interested in digging and learning because they do not understand the meaning and message contained therein.

Whereas *sandeq* boat is one proof of the strength of Indonesian maritime culture that must be preserved existence and preservation. The above problems are caused by the lack of socialization of *sandeq* boats from the local government and in-depth writings on *paissangan sumobal* have not been found.

Starting from the condition, the lack of access to know the techniques and navigation boat *sandeq* systematically arranged in a book or journal so we wrote a study entitled "Analysis of Meaning Symbolic Mechanical Sailing and Navigation *Sandeq* Boat Mandar Tribe" with a focus on how the technique cruise and *sandeq* boat navigation and how the messages are contained from *paissangan sumobal*. This research is expected to Mandar tribal community did not lose a source of knowledge and *paissangan sumobal* be transmitted to the next generation.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### A. *Sandeq* Boat

*Sandeq* is a traditional boat type of Mandar tribe located in the province of West Sulawesi. According to Darwis Hamzah, as quoted by Ibrahim Abbas (1999, Tadjuddin, 2004), Mandar tribe itself comes from the language of Ulu Salu mountainous area meaning "Manda" which is similar to "Makassa" or "Masse" which means strong.

The production center and cultural center of *sandeq* boat located in Polewali Mandar Regency, precisely in Pambusuang and Karama Village. It is a kind of large boat, sized 8-16m with 3-4 ton. This boat use for fishing and delivering the haul, meaning *sandeq* boat sail the seas between Sulawesi, Kalimantan, even to Java, Sabah and Singapore. *Sandeq* boat is known as the fastest sailing ship in these areas with good wind that can reach 15-20 knots or about 30-40km.

*Sandeq* boat is one of boat manufacture of Austronesian tribes. The hull covered with the deck so that the waves that occur in the oceans cannot enter, the right way by using a different screen.

In Indonesian, *sandeq* means 'sharp' in terms of its construction, now classified in two main types, *sandeq tolol* (outrigger boats put into boat hulls) and *sandeq badenceng* (outrigger boats tied up on boat deck).

### B. Verbal Message in Communication

Message is one of the most important elements of a communication process. The message itself is a series use

of symbols or codes whether it is verbal and nonverbal. Therefore, communication cannot be separated from the so-called symbols and codes.

Simply put, nonverbal messages are all gestures that are not words. According to Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter in Mulyana (2013: 343), nonverbal communication encompasses all stimuli (except verbal stimuli) in a communication setting, produced by individuals and the environment use by individual, which has a potential message value for the sender or recipient. Thus, this definition includes both intentional and unintentional behavior as part of an overall communication.

Unwittingly, nonverbal communication holds an enormous share in everyday life. According to Ray L. Birdwhistell, 65% of face-to-face communication is nonverbal, while according to Albert Mehrabian, 93% of all social value in face-to-face communication are derived from nonverbal cues (Mulyana 2013: 351).

As the words, most nonverbal cues are also not universal, but are bound by culture so they need to be learned, not innate. Giving value to the non verbal code is strongly influenced by the socio-cultural system of the people who use it.

Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter share nonverbal messages into two broad categories: First, behavior consisting of appearance and dress, movement and posture, facial expressions, eye contact, touch, smells, and proverb. And the second; including space, time and silence (Mulyana 2013: 352).

## III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this research is descriptive research method with qualitative approach, history, sociology, and anthropology. Qualitative research requires information in the form of description and more desirable meaning behind the description of the data. According to Zuriah (2006: 47) research using descriptive method is research directed to provide the symptoms, facts or events in a systematic and accurate, regarding the characteristics of a particular population or region.

The location of this research was conducted in Polewali Mandar District, Tinambung Sub-district, Karama Village from April to May 2018. The withdrawal of research informant was done by snowball sampling technique, that is taking the research sample which keep increasing along with the observation time (Pawito, 2008: 92). Researchers depart from an informant as *key informant* (informant key) set by the researcher, a public figure in Karama Village which is an *opinion leader* named Muhammad Ali familiarly known as A'ba Pahrul. From key informants we obtained information on key informants, namely Pak Hasan and Pak Suaib and 4 other fishermen as additional informants.

For data collection is done by interview, observation, and literature study. All data that has been collected is analyzed through several stages, namely as follows: 1) scalling measurement (making transcript). The transcript is a detailed and complete description of what is seen and heard either

directly or from the recording; 2) *empirical generalization*, analysis of transcript content; 3) the last *logical induction*, by seeking a deep understanding of the social realities studied as social reality is understood by the subject of research, and to interpret the meaning behind the words and behavior of research subjects including drawing conclusions.

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

##### A. Sandeq Boat Cruise and Navigation Technique

Mandar Tribe Society is a tribe known as a great sailor since time immemorial. One characteristic of greatness sailors on the boat sandeq seen as a means of sailing. Sandeq boat is famous as the sailing boat in the region with a good wind can reach speeds of 15-20 knots or about 30-40 km / h (Leibner, 2002: 33). As was stated by Oppenheimer (2010) in Latif (2011: 129) that far BC, ancestors of Indonesia by boat technology bersistem "Outrigger" (balancing on the left and right) has crossed 70 km of high seas to reach Australia.

Mandar tribal encounters with geographical conditions that live close to and face the sea, inhabit the coast between Polewali, Polewali Mandar regency (Polman) and Malunda, Majene Regency make the sea as a fact of their daily life. Waves of sea, wind, storms, erratic weather are the real conditions they must face.

Thus, in order to adapt to its natural conditions, fishermen and Mandar mariners have a local knowledge system consisting of *paissangan aposasiang* (marine knowledge), *paissangan paqlopiang* (boat-making knowledge), and *paissangan asumombalang* (knowledge of sailing).

Paissangan asumombalang or sumobal explains the techniques of navigation and navigation used by Mandar fishermen in searching for fish that are also used by Mandar seafarers in the sea through the experience of their ancestors. This is evidenced by the words of one observer sandeq boat in Karama Village, Mr. Budi who is familiarly called A'ba Budi, he said "mengaplikasikannya nak ituji karna tiap hari, berdasarkan pengalaman. Kayak kitaji, sama dengan supir Makassar jika pertama kali ke Makassar belum terlalu hapal medan jalanan, 2-3 kali berangkat baru bisa hapal. Dibagian sini ada lubang, di sebelah sana ada warung, dan lain-lain".

Based on interviews conducted by the author, Mandar fishermen apply *paissangan sumobal* by looking at the natural conditions and their experience. Before they go looking for fish, fishermen will see the rise of the moon (hilal) and count it. In addition, a good sign for sailing in the opinion of the local community is when the *konda*, which is when the sea water in a calm condition, do not install or not receding. *Konda* was discovered at the height of the eighth month.

In determining the direction of the sandeq boat, Mandar seafarers use navigation by looking at the stars if at night. Meanwhile, during the day, they take advantage of the sun or the sound of waves. Determination of direction by looking at the star that is when the sky is in the form of the constellation is 7 then it shows the direction of the southeast wind.

To determine the south direction, they see the constellation that Mandar people call it boyangkepang. There is also a name

for the star that indicates the entry date of dawn, the constellation or the introduction of the sun.

In addition to observing the constellations, fishermen must also pay attention to the wind. Because although wind is a factor that speeds up the sandeq rate, it can trigger a sinking boat if the screen is not adjusted to the wind direction. If the sandeq boat is navigated westward then the screen should be in the inward position (from a straight position then tilted). However, if the wind from behind then the screen forwarded. While facing the wind from the front then the screen is closed again.

Mandar people's skill with sailing knowledge not only there, further Mr. Hasan a fisherman famous for his expertise in driving sandeq boat explained that they do not necessarily go to sea without knowing the existence of fish. That is, so that fishermen can get a lot of catch.

Thus, fishermen also have seasonal determination as their shipping technique. Everything comes back again by seeing the rise of the moon (hilal). At a mere ten to 15 months, the majority of fish will gather in high-depth marine areas. Meanwhile, if the moon rises at 16-30 then the fishermen will position their sandes and ships in low-depth marine areas.

Even in fishing, they make use of *paissangan sumobal*. Mr. Hasan explained, at 5:00 to 10:00 am many fish gathered so that fishing traps more easily eaten by fish. After 10:00 to 15:30, if the fishermen fishing at that hour will automatically induce them will fail. Because the fish began to go from the edge of the ship.

##### B. The symbolic meaning and message in Paissangan sumobal

*Paissangan sumobal* as a local culture owned by Mandar Tribe has become a means by the people of Mandar to comprehend the sailing technique and navigation of sandeq ship, they are able to understand the state of the sea without the touch of modernity or advanced technology.

This is reflected on how the maritime culture of Mandar's fisherman implied various meaning and prove the brilliance of Mandar's ancestor that were able to pass down the knowledge of sailing technique from generation to generation while signify the value system of Mandar's society which is exceptionally organized.

As discussed in theoretical framework, the message of communication is inseparable from the utilization of symbols or codes that are represented into various meaning, either in verbal or non-verbal form. Different from the tradition of Sandeq ship's ritual that has 2 forms of symbolization in verbal or non-verbal form, the symbolization of Sandeq's ship sailing technique and navigation (*paissangan sumobal*) is depicted through attitude, behavior, objects that are used by the fishermen, and the sandeq ship itself or in communication's world is called non-verbal symbol

If observed, the symbolic color that is used by the sandeq ship is white. This color is believed by the locals as a color that symbolized purity and cleanness. White is chosen as the main color so that the sandeq ship can be recognized and be

observed over a great distance because its color contrast with the color of the sea, which is blue.

Sandeq is navigated by a wood steering wheel (*guling*), its function is similar to car's steering wheel and placed at the back of the ship, if sandeq supposed to be turned to the right, the *guling* has to be pulled to the left and vice versa. Since the navigator of the *guling* is the one who control the speed of the sandeq, they have to follow the existing rules, which stated that while the *guling* is being installed, the navigator has to be in the state of *wudu* (pure). They are not allowed to relieve themselves or urinate let alone defecate while the *guling* is in the process of being installed. In the case where they break the rules, the sandeq ship will not be able to sail smoothly and fast.

The message from the symbolization of *paissangan sumobal* is clearly shown when the fishermen apply their knowledge to face the challenges in the ocean. The challenges that are usually faced by the fishermen are the blustery wind, rain, waves or high tides, and when the inner part of sandeq ship is broken. The four challenges potentially cause the sandeq ship to sink. Therefore, the fishermen or sailor of Mandar try to prevent them as much as possible by applying *paissangan sumobal*.

Supposed that in the journey, a sudden strong wind come, the measure that will be taken by the fishermen in accordance with their knowledge is to pull the sail of sandeq ship. Vice versa, if the wind is not really strong then the sail of sandeq ship will still be hoisted, however it will be directed in accordance to *guling* (steer) which is turned by the navigator of sandeq. Moreover to anticipate the torn of the sail, they keep a backup sail so that their journey will not be disturbed.

Other than the knowledge above, fishermen also use *kayang* leaf (*nipah*) on rainy season. It is used as a shade to protect the fishermen or sailor in Mandar from the rain. This *Kayang* leaf is made flexible so that they are foldable and be made into a wall similar to the foundation of a house. However, in the case that it is impossible to use the sandeq ship, they will have another alternatives, which is take shelter and sleep in a small room under the body of the ship.

Challenges other than the wind and rain is the wave or the high tides. The skill to overcome and handle the situation also being known by the fishermen through *paissangan sumobal*, that is by staying still in the sandeq. Which means, the sandeq ship is not allowed to be sailed when the tide is high. One of the fishermen will go down to swim and tie the ship to *rompong*. *Rompong* is a place for fishing, catch the fish and tie the ship. This is a self-made by the fishermen of Mandar using bamboo with 4-5 m long. Then they take a break while waiting for the tide to go back to its normal state.

A surprising fact from the data that we collected while interviewing Mr. Hasan, one of the fishermen as well as an expert sailor in sailing sandeq ship on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2018, said, "I have drowned for 10 times. When the sun sets I swim and take a rest by holding to the side of the ship. When the ship turns upside down we have to wait until the sun rise to fix it". From the information of Mr. Hasan. He explain that the ship is accidentally crashed into another ship. As a result, both

of sandeq ship were sunk. Fortunately, when they were checked in the morning, the sandeq ship's pillar was not broken, however the *palatto* was (balancer in the left and right part).

Finally, because the side of *palatto* sandeq was broken therefore the method to handle the problem in order to make the sandeq capable of sailing again is to pull out the *palatto* that was not broken. Then both sides of the sandeq are balance since the left and right part did not have *palatto*. As a substitute, Mr. Hasan and his friends sit on the broken part of the ship, then the sail was pulled out for the ship to sail not too fast. Hence, the previous limitation can be overcome.

*Paissangan sumobal* that is utilized by the fishermen of Mandar in that kind of situation has given a hint about the character of Mandar's tribe that revive the mutual cooperation, helping each other and obedient to the instruction of the leader that is proven by their method of following the instruction of *guling* navigator. When the navigator turn the sandeq, the crew will sprightly pull the sail.

The measurement that is taken by Mr. Hasan when he was drown gives a symbolic meaning that their sailing skill teach us to be patient while facing a challenge or obstacle, other than being patient we also have to try to overcome the current problem. The habit of Mandar's fishermen on keeping a backup sandeq sail implied a message that they will always be ready on a long journey. Overall, to applied *paissangan sumobal* in facing a challenge has given a non-verbal message about the principle of sailing for fishermen or sailor of Mandar that whatever happen in the sea, they have to be brave to face and its taboo to go home before getting the optimum result.

Closely observed, the messages in *paissangan sumobal* contain two main points, that the people of Mandar has the characteristic of balance, simplicity, beauty, speed, accuracy, toughness, tenacity, courage, and teamwork. Secondly, the sailing technique and navigation of sandeq ship gives the non-verbal message to us that local culture which usually viewed as the one that is left behind and old is wrong. Local culture like *paissangan sumobal* has proven that the brilliance of maritime's insight of Indonesia, especially West Sulawesi and the era development does not mean things that has local features has to be left behind as a whole, however it has to be developed to become an innovation that can be passed down from generation to generation and spread widely as a skill or knowledge.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the data that are retrieved by the author, the fishermen of Mandar applied *paissangan sumobal* by observed the state of nature and their own experience. Before going for fishing, the fishermen will observed the raise of the moon (*hilal*) and do calculation. Moreover, the good sign of sailing according to the locals is when the *konda*, the sea is in its calm state, not ebb and flow. In deciding the direction of sandeq ship, the sailor of Mandar using the navigation by observing starts at night. Meanwhile at daytime, they use sun or the sound of the wave.



Aside from observing the constellation of the stars, the fishermen also observing the wind. Because even though wind helps to raise the speed of sandeq, it also potentially cause the ship to sink if the sail is not adjusted with the direction of the wind. When the sandeq directed to the west, the sail supposed to face the inner part (from the straight position, then tilted to the side). However, when the wind coming from behind, the sail will be move forward. Meanwhile, when the wind come from the front, the sail will be pulled to move closer again.

Meanwhile for the messages in *paissangan sumobal*, when observed closely, contain two main points, that the people of Mandar has the characteristic of balance, simplicity, beauty, speed, accuracy, toughness, tenacity, courage, and teamwork. Secondly, the sailing technique and navigation of sandeq ship

gives the non-verbal message to us that local culture which usually viewed as the one that is left behind and old is wrong.

Local culture like *paissangan sumobal* has proven that the brilliance of maritime's insight of Indonesia, especially West Sulawesi and the era development does not mean things that has local features has to be left behind as a whole, however it has to be developed to become an innovation that can be passed down from generation to generation and spread widely as a skill or knowledge.

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