



# Cultural Communication Strategy in Maintaining: The Malay Identity of Riau, Indonesia

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## Abstract

*This study examines how the Malay cultural identity can be maintained through several strategies. This condition is very important to note or be the responsibility of the community, given the Malay culture dealing with the development of an increasingly globalized culture and the challenges of social change. The challenge is the culture that supported capitalism, markets and global forces cause local culture eroded and lost if not maintained and preserved. This study aims to explain the actions of the Riau people in exploring local cultural values and cultural symbols in discovering the Riau identity. The discovery in order to maintain the local culture of the threat of foreign culture and globalization in the future. The method used in this study is a qualitative method, which produces descriptive data. The data collection was done by free interviews with a number of informants by purposive sampling, in addition it was also done in-depth observation, documentation and library research. The results showed that the cultural communication strategy has been done by almost all elements of society in almost all aspects of Malay culture, such as ideas, cultural activities and results. Directing contact with the elements of society in the activities and results of culture such as cultural events, tourism, and the arts is the effective enough strategy. The new government can perform optimally defense, if continually renegotiating strategies and formulas to get the deal that suits Malay idealism on the one hand and the demands of the times on the other side.*

**Keywords:** Malay, Culture elements, Culture communication and Strategy.

## Introduction

In Riau society, concepts, understanding and discourse Malay is a very important thing in life practices. Malay is a word that has full of meaning and interpreted in a variety of purposes. The vision of Riau 2020, which would make Riau as the culture centre in Southeast Asia shows how the importance of the Malays. This statement as may be prescribed by the Local Government, Parliament and the people of Riau on the vision of regional development, namely: "The realization of Riau province as a center of Malay culture, economy and society in a religious environment, peace and inner` born 2020 in Southeast Asia (Strategic Plan Riau Province 2004-2008). Understanding Malay summarized in the vision include covers all elements of universal culture that distinguished the three major domains, ideas, activities and culture results.

The urgency of Malay culture for the people of Riau arose because the various meanings, especially the meaning of identity, as an absolute necessity to have. According to Fromm in Yusuf<sup>1</sup>, identity commensurate with the problem of "integrity." Someone who does not have a clear or blurred identity can be regarded as an individual who does not have the "integrity" strong personal. A weak area of integrity associated with the lack of community identity. Thus, identity is the need of every individual and society. Without identity, the existence of a regional collective will hardly be admitted.

This study examines the Malay or Malay cultural identity in the context of communication Country. Furthermore, this study will examine how the Malay cultural identity can be maintained through multiple communication strategy and culture. Through a variety of communication strategies and cultures that noble values contained in the Malay culture can be maintained in order to exist from generation to generation, given the Malay culture is now dealing with the development of a global culture and the challenges of social change.

In addition in order to build a strong identity in the face of globalization, another factor which motivates researchers to examine the issue of Malay culture is the fact that the cultural tide. Even a few decades ago, in the Riau Malay culture never "drowned" by the pressure of authoritarian regimes. Departing from the past plus the challenges of regional autonomy in the area which gives the freedom to develop local culture, people began to realize the importance of maintaining Riau and uphold the values of the local culture that is their identity.

Some of the theories and concepts are used as the basis of thinking in this study, first, what is meant by cultural strategy. Cultural strategy is a ploy by Van Peursen, human or strategy for tomorrow, a process of learning [learning process] which is always continuous. In the process, the creativity and intensity is a crucial factor because of concerns over the ethical considerations shifts that occurred in the culture<sup>2</sup>.

Further communication use create transition process and it is done through the exchange of symbols verbal and non-verbal language that can be understood together<sup>3</sup>. Communication and culture are two different concepts, but its existence cannot be separated, because communication is influenced by the local culture, while culture can exist and passed down from generation to generation through the process of communication. Culture was born as communication. With so each communication practice is essentially a representation of a culture, or rather a map of the above a reality [culture] is very complicated. As the, "culture is communication and communication is culture". Soon as we talk about communication, unavoidably, we are talking about culture.

Thus between communication and culture happen correlation or mutual relations, in this case Mulyana<sup>4</sup>, elaborates the dialectical relationship between cultural communication by saying that: "Culture and communication interact closely and dinamis. Inti culture is communication, because culture emerge through communication. But in turn created a culture that was affecting the way communicate the relevant members of the culture. The relationship between culture and communication is the lead balik. Budaya not exist without communication and any personal communication would exist without culture".

Thus, in understanding the culture in all its complexity is not possible without using the communication process. Culture socialized and passed through the communication process using either verbal or nonverbal language support. This is related to the function of communication as a means of socialization. The an interpreted as elements of cultural socialization or culture form [an idea, social systems, and objects].

Culture for a group of people has a very important meaning. Because through the culture, the community can be recognized by various parties, so culture is the identity for a particular community. Identity is a characteristic or characteristics of the physical [biological] person or group of people. Khun<sup>2</sup>, says that ethnic identity can essentially be divided into two, namely: individual identity and collective identity. Individualism could also be a collective identity. However, identity is not simply determining the characteristics or traits of physical/ biological se, but examines the cultural identity of a people through the order of thinking (thinking, orientation thinking), feeling [how to feel and sense of orientation], and how to act [or acts motivation action orientation].

There are two approaches to ethnic identity; objective approach (structural) and subjective approaches [phenomenological]. Objective perspective sees an ethnic group as a group that can be distinguished from other groups by cultural traits such as language, religion or national origin.

Furthermore, Martin and Nakayama<sup>5</sup>, says that ethnic identity can be seen as a set of ideas about membership in ethnic groups involving multiple dimensions, namely, i. identification ii.

knowledge of the traditions, customs, values and behavior of ethnic and, iii. a sense of belonging. Ethnic identity would basically involve feeling the origins and history. Individuals who have had the experience of ethnic identity means to the ethnic question and know everything about the ethnic culture is inherited.

In connection with the issue of ethnic identity, Roosens in Gudykunst<sup>6</sup>, stating that ethnic identity can be seen through a community caught up in claims of ethnicity. This can be observed when an ethnic located in other ethnic environments or in different groups. This difference can be observed by symbols, emblems or values [cultural elements]. So that identity can be defined<sup>2</sup> as part of the ethnicity which is also the culture of [the feeling of someone who recognizes that he is part of a particular cultural or ethnic group].

Based on previous description, it can be concluded that that the cultural identity has a significant meaning for the Malay community, namely as a "mecca", guidelines, instructions, image, self-esteem, binders and others in the running community life [Malay], therefore absolute cultural identity preserved for the people concerned.

## Methodology

This study used a qualitative method. Mulyana<sup>7</sup>, "says that research perspective subjective [qualitative] research methods include unstructured interviews [in-depth], participant observation, document analysis, and so forth. The research was conducted in Pekanbaru, Riau Province. Research subjects [in this study referred to the informant] are figures of culture and society in the name of cultural institutions, all informants obtained through purposive technique. Whereas the object of this research is Malay culture which is reflected in community activities that are implemented in their lives, as reflected in the use of clothing, the application of architectural, culinary, arts, tourism and cultural events.

## Results and Discussion

Actions taken by the people of Riau in dig (explore) cultural values, as a first step search [discovery] of meaning in maintaining the cultural identity of Malay, is done in all aspects of culture, both in the realm of ideas, activities, and the results of culture.

People who are actively and continuously revitalize and communicate ideas about the Malays are cultural institutions and the arts, mass media both newspapers and local television Riau. Similarly, Local Government, through various cultural programs strive continuously Malay ideas to the general public.

Much Malay cultural discourse about this, but the most powerful of which is the Malay discourse about universal and could be one global cultural ideas. In this case the provincial government in cooperation with various cultural institutions and

the public never held an international event called World Seminar on Malay Culture in 2003 and in 2008 which raised the issue of the universal Malay. Riau Malay world as the center has also been realized in a large vision legalized in a statute [36 of 2001], the Riau Vision 2020.

The next concrete step taken by the Government to retain a local Malay cultural identity, it is by issuing Regulation No.12 in 2001, the provisions on the use of the Malay fashion among civil servants, state [local enterprises], Students from elementary-high school which is still valid. In addition government outreach to all levels of society in order to use the model 'selembayung' in office buildings [public service].

Discourse on the Malay also continually communicated Malay is about purity and relevance to Islam. Malay Customary Institution [LAMR] to be one party that brings the spirit and culture of purification in the corridor Malay Islamic exclusivism. Progression of ideas appear Malay and of all activities undertaken by Effendy Tennes Foundation [TEF], which operates in the field of education. Malay should be the cornerstone of an intelligent society with a high level of literacy.

In addition to governments, institutions or communities that are part of the society also seeks concern in cultural activities in Riau Malay. Malay Customary Institution [LAMR] more in the realm of cultural activities such as academic seminars, discussion and dissemination of discourse through 'fatwa' and statements in the media by indigenous stakeholders. Meanwhile the County Arts Council (DKR) activities focus more on art activities such as dance and drama. Other institutions that claim to care about and doing cultural activities in Riau, Riau Communication Forum Community Care [FKPMR], who always defended the indigenous people, for example in obtaining the rights to its indigenous land [the land of the indigenous people]<sup>8</sup>.

In addition to ideas and cultural activities, there are some cultural events as Riau Malay cultural identity and sustainable famous until now, as well as being a promising tourist commodities such activities in 'Kuantan Singingi Paju Strip' [Kuansing], and the Festival of Lights Balimau Bath Plug. This event is a form of cultural activity of the most concrete and has a direct closeness to the people of Riau because the people themselves who run it.

Other agencies are more concerned about one Malay culture results include pages Sagang especially in the realm of culture and literary arts. Sagang create appreciation by organizing strategy Sagang Award every year (since 1996). This event is held to provide a boon to the artists [cultural figures], books, works of non-book, institutional [cultural arts institutions], artists [cultural 'serantau'], journalistic culture, and cultural studies work best. As with LAMR, Tennes Effendy Foundation (TEF) also took academic strategy. TEF main plan is to build a cultural complex building as the central representative meeting

[convention], research, and information, as well as Malay cultural education in Southeast Asia.

The mass media in Riau, such as Riau and Riau Pos TV, in the same corridor running strategy of mass-based culture. With columns and show that they have, Malay culture and its development continually communicated.

**Discussion:** Efforts to preserve the cultural identity of Malay done in all aspects of Malay culture, both in the realm of ideas, activities, and the results of culture. Understanding cultural ideas here include in them the values, norms, and suggestions philosophy underlying all activities leading to the cultures and cultural artifacts<sup>9</sup>.

The first and major institutions reveal a clear communication strategy in defining and communicating cultural symbols Malay is LAMR. Overall, LAMR execute formal strategies in cultural communication, in which they position themselves parallel and close to the government. Another strategy that do LAMR docked besides the government, also use ethnic solidarity is considered the most dominant, the Siak as union base.

Cultural symbols that have been agreed upon by the people of Riau as is the identity of the Malays in terms of architecture and fashion. Clothing Melayu Riau [Riau Community Cultural] identity needs to be revisited. The government needs to be done is to reinforce the regulations [12 of 2001] and made a series of strategies that effect could lead to a kind of awareness in the community. If people have the same consciousness, so when dressed Malay even if only on a Friday or just in certain customary events, they can provide the right reasons because they are Malays. Not because the obligation of government or due to unknown customs intent and meaning behind the habit. although minimal, the public has had consciousness. This awareness will make Malay symbols persist despite the fact must be transformed and have ups and downs.

## Conclusion

Based on the research results and the discussion above it can be concluded that: The need to confirm the identity and the challenge of natural environment contemporary society, urged people of Riau to return the local values in its function as a source of contextual policy and guarantee competitive future. Action or effort to restore, revitalize and preserve the identity of the Malay culture of Riau, carried and spread by the prevailing cultural communication as a whole, covering all elements of society and in every aspect of life based on the elements of the culture in which communication takes place, and based on cultural communicators itself is divided into three elements magnitude, namely the idea [ideal form], activity [action] and artifacts [work].

The idea of Malay and action communication appears in public cultural activities Riau. The most dominant activity is the arts

and cultural events conducted by various elements of society. There are several cultural events as Riau Malay cultural identity and sustainable famous until now, as well as being a promising tourist commodities such as Pacu Jalur in Kuantan Singingi [Kuansing], 'Mandi Balimau' and 'Lampu Colok Festival'.

In addition to ideas and cultural activities are artifacts, which include the results of ideas and cultural activities that can be diindra and cultural monuments. In Riau, cultural artifacts include historical heritage buildings, objects of cultural, culinary Malay and so on.

Various strategies were implemented related to communication practices in Riau Malay culture has been executed with the specific and contextual elements of culture. There is a formal cultural strategies and ethnic solidarity conducted by the Institute of Traditional Malay. Academic strategies carried out by people who are members of Tenas Effendy Foundation and the University of Riau. Meanwhile, the strategy is done by Sagang appreciation. Strategies folk art and mass culture performed by the Arts Council of Riau and Riau local media.

**Suggestion:** Based on the conclusions that have been described previously, the suggestions offered here: Malay cultural elements in the form of artifacts such as buildings and Malay fashion, its preservation should be carried out in two levels, namely the quality and quantity. Total use should always be expanded, reception and meaning to it also must be constantly deepened. Cultural institutions, in addition to strengthening the self, need to establish and direct relation with the wider society, as well as a harmonious relationship, dynamic with other institutions. Institutions also need to cooperate with the government in the right portions and relevance. That is, the interests of outside cultures should be set aside.

For the government, local regulations have to be established legally, including sanctions and scope. All forms of appeal also need to be legalized so that is not utilized by the parties interested in politics. The government needs to increase the amount of the budget for cultural events, because, among other elements, cultural event which proved to be most effective in encouraging conservation efforts Malay culture in Riau.

For society, the communication strategy should be undertaken involving all elements, which consist of diverse families [sub ethnic], socioeconomic level, and religion, and is expected to accommodate and cope with such diversity.

For the academic, cultural communication can be done improve the integration of the values of the proportional composition of Malay in all academic activities in the curriculum.

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