



## Remoh Madura in Cultural Communication Perspective

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v6i1.914>

### **Abstract**

The communication code in the Remoh tradition is a form of communication that has special meaning. In this Remoh activity, there are lots of codes. One of them is when a member of Remoh arrives, he takes a weapon and it is a sickle, but he does not throw the sickle in its place, it is intended to generate a code to look like he will going to challenge the host of Remoh. In addition, guests who arrive first will be recorded by the reception guests to be called first by the host at the Shandur show as a form of respect for those concerned. This research uses Speech Code Theory, because this theory can be used to see the true meaning of the codes in the Remoh tradition.

**Keywords:** Cultural Communication; Madura; Remoh; Speech Code

### **Introduction**

Indonesia is a country with diversity in religion, ethnicity, race, language, culture and customs, so Indonesia is known as a heterogeneous country. Each tribe has a different tradition which is distinguished and influenced by the history background of its cultural development adapted from the surrounding environment. Fredrik Barth explains that cultural or ethnic groups are the groups of people who have the ability to survive and develop. They also have values and sense of togetherness in the cultural frames, and form communication networks that are able to characterize their groups and certainly different from other groups (Barth, 1998).

Culture is a form of civilization that will historically contribute to the progress and interests of humanity. History and civilization are two things side by side that can tell many things from the existence of human culture. History provides a narrative, while civilization is the highest form of culture that has been achieved by a society (Muktiyo, 2011). Cultural background will form a tradition that results from the process by which habits in a tribe or ethnicity are carried out for generations. Tradition is a habit in a culture that has been carried out since a long time ago which was carried out and passed down from generation to generation.

Traditions in cultural meanings according to Kluckhohn include; the whole way of life of society, the social inheritance obtained by individuals from groups, ways of thinking, feeling and believing, abstraction from behavior, normative behavioral structuring mechanisms, techniques for adapting to the natural and social environment, and a historical deposit (Geertz, 1992). The personality of a nation or

society, can be seen from how tradition revolves around it. Customs in a society cannot be eliminated even though the level of civilization and way of life has shifted towards a modern way of life. Various forms of diversity in the culture of Indonesian are Marosok in Minangkabau, Mitoni tradition in Java, *Remoh* in Madura, Sawer in Sunda, the tradition of cutting fingers in Papua, and many more.

Madurese society has a different, unique, stereotypical, and stigmatized culture. Ethnic Madurese have cultural specialties that are not shared by other ethnic groups. Submission, obedience, and submission to Buppa, Babu, Guruh, Ban Ratoh (Father, Mother, Teacher and Government Leader) is one form of the specificity of Madurese culture that adheres to the four main groups in society. For most people when they hear the word Madura, the shadow is sinister and the violence attached to them. Their behavior and character are sometimes portrayed through sickles and sharpness. Madurese news coverage in the media that always highlights violence and conflict, increasingly shows the negative side of Madurese ethnicity in the wider community (Wahyudi et al. 2015).

Madurese culture is considered as a form of generalization of individuals and groups of Madurese people in behaving and living. Their lives and behavior at home and abroad make others understand that what they do reflects the Madurese community in general. So that people with Madurese ethnicity often get social and cultural treatment that is felt to be less proportional physically or psychologically (Taufiqurrahman, 2007). Having a stereotype as a tribe that is rude, hard-nosed, and often commits violence once attached to the Madurese tribe.

Madurese stereotypes occur because of the incomplete information received by people outside Madura, so the ethnic Madurese look like ethnicity who are hard-nosed so that they are underestimated. This is reinforced from the opinions or viewpoints of others who are subjective. In practice, stereotypes about Madurese hamper the process of effective intercultural communication caused by wrong views or perceptions about Madura and its people. In addition to stereotypes, there are other obstacles to effective intercultural communication, namely prejudice, racism and ethnocentrism (Wahyudi et al. 2015).

Through this stereotype, we treat all Madurese as hard, cruel people, often committing acts of violence and rigidity, without seeing their personal and good attitude. By giving a stereotype of the Madurese, we sometimes choose to avoid any interaction with Madurese so that the communication that occurs cannot take place effectively and smoothly. As in America, the negative stereotype of African-Negro people makes them accustomed to be treated as criminals.

In fact, contrary to the negative stereotypes that have developed in the wider community, Madurese people are actually a solid group, because they uphold family values and kinship. Broadly speaking, the strata of the Madurese community according to "Wiyata" are divided into three layers, namely the lower layer called the "Orang Kene", the middle layer called "Pongghaba", and the upper layer commonly called "Panjaji" or "Priyayi" (Wiyata L., 2003).

Abdurrahman, in his book "Wiyata" explained, if the social strata are seen in terms of religion, then it is only divided into two layers, namely "santri" (Santre) and "not santri" (Banne santre) (Wiyata L., Carok Conflict of Violence and Self-Esteem of Madurese, 2002 Carok Konflik Kekerasan dan Harga Diri Orang Madura, 2002). In addition to the distribution of the strata, there are terms "taretani" or relatives. "Taretan" is a person who has a social relationship that is considered honest and sincere even though there is no blood relationship or marriage bond. In order for the kinship relationship to be stronger and not broken, the Ethnic Madurese community formed a tradition to gather all relatives, friends, or relatives who aim to strengthen kinship. This is done in order to be able to communicate again with a new atmosphere of warmth, or can be said to hold a "hatajan" (a gathering to pray together) with the aim of being able to regroup with friends and family. This program is usually eaten with "*Remoh*" or "To'-oto".

The *Remoh* tradition for Madurese ethnicity is a cultural heritage that is so inherent and difficult to eliminate. This happens because the values in the *Remoh* tradition form thoughts, attitudes, and interactions that are done intentionally or unintentionally. Until now *Remoh* still exists and becomes a local culture that is quite effective as a social unifying media. As a tradition, *Remoh* becomes a social and cultural group that can bring economic benefits to its participants. This *Remoh* Tradition is a category in Sociocultural Traditions where this is related to interaction and communication.

Sociocultural tradition provides a continuation of the phenomenological tradition because cultural interpretation has a heuristic and sociocultural orientation. Every ethnic and cultural group (especially Madura) creates meaning, values, and activities through communication (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). The sociocultural tradition views social order as an important issue and sees communication as the glue of society. In this context, Indonesia is known to be rich in sociocultural traditions that are very diverse with various ethnicities and cultures, so as to enrich the treasure of communication in Indonesia.

One of the ethnic groups in Indonesia that has a distinctive communication is the Madurese ethnic. Madurese people have different characteristics from other ethnic groups in Indonesia, especially from a socio-cultural perspective. In the social life of the Madurese community, in addition to "*Ratoh*", "*Priyayi*", and "*Kyai*" as village social elites who have a large influence in the Madurese community, there is another social elite that is "*Oreng Blater*". The term "*Blater*" is very popular especially in western Madura, specifically Bangkalan and Sampang (H. & Pigeud, 2001).

*Blater* labeling does not come from itself. "*Blater*" is a nickname given by the community. It can be said that *Blater* is an assigned status as a social status given by the society. "*Blater*" was not obtained from hereditary families, but usually, in a family, one or two family members were "*Blater*". The researcher was interested in conducting research on Madura culture in the midst of information flows and globalization, as well as the influence of cultural acculturation in each region. "*Remoh*" tradition is still carried out under and above and generally in the *Blater* circles.

## **Methodology**

This research uses field studies, which are carried out in certain fields by directly seeing what happens in social communities. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study method. Instrumental case study is a case study carried out to provide deep understanding or re-explain a process of generalization. In other words, the case is positioned as a means (instrument) to show a deep explanation and understanding of something other than what is commonly described. Through the cases examined, the researcher intends to show that there is something unique that can be learned from a case, which is different from the explanation obtained from other objects. This collective case study type of case study is the development of instrumental studies in several cases. If cases are studied and understood more thoroughly and in detail, the formulation of the theory may be better (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009).

Case studies as a type of research are chosen to be used to answer how and why. In addition to answering how and why of the research, this tradition is quite unique and has certain characteristics that other cultures do not have. The type of research that will be conducted by researcher is intrinsic case study. Definitely the case study requires a study with specific and unique characteristics. In this case the researcher already has a view that in the location in question there is a problem that is different, maybe even deviating (Ratna, 2010). Case studies are very appropriate when associated with cultural studies research because, first, in accordance with the nature of the object of cultural studies is everything that is done by culture such as actual problems that surface. Two, case studies give voice rights to people who are not powerless or voiceless.

This approach was taken because this study intends to review and explain the social symptoms that exist in the research location. Furthermore, data collection is done by observation techniques and in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted for informants from Madurese who participated in *Remoh*. While observations were made on the culture displayed by the community. Furthermore, to support the data obtained, a literature review of previous studies was carried out with the same theme. Research continues with validation testing using triangulation technique sources or data. This validation does not aim to determine which data is right and wrong. However, it is more directed to show empirical evidence to provide an understanding of these cases observed from various perspectives. Finally, more comprehensive conclusions can be obtained.

## **Result and Discussion**

*Blater* group communication is very interesting to study, because this group has a distinctive character both in accent or communication patterns that are recognized by group members, idioms used, and speech acts used. In addition, *Blater* community's communication media uses special vehicles, special scope and work, and special communication characteristics. This makes them a unique community of Madurese ethnic cultural interaction and communication that is not found in other ethnic groups in Indonesia.

*Blater* group is an informal figure played by Madurese, whose existence has begun to spread out of Madura. In the world of "*Blateran*" there are several traditions of Madurese culture that are inherent in *Blater*, one of which is *Remoh* culture. *Remoh* is a gathering place for *Blater* and good people from various villages, districts. It does not complete if a *Blater* is not a member of *Remoh*. Through the media *Remoh* they can introduce their capacity to obtain social recognition from other members of *Remoh*, but not all *Blater* participate in *Remoh*, this can occur due to economic factors.

The community used to call *Remoh* members the term "*aBlater*" (the prefix *a* in the Madurese language indicates the active verb). But there are also those who use the term "*abajing*", but the meaning remains the same. In *Blater Remoh* associations there is usually entertainment in the form of Madurese sandur. Usually, this meeting is in order to hold Madurese folk art called "*Sandur*". Crumb is an activity that is not much different from saving or "*arisan*" activities, the difference is, if saving is done in a place or institution, *Remoh* is done on one person or for each individual participant who participated in the activity.

*Blater* people are people who have special intelligence in terms of "*kanuragan*" (inner energy), sometimes also accompanied by the science of immunity and magical abilities that add to other charismatic powers. He also has abilities in the science of religion, but is limited to his own development. What stands out is precisely the role of "*social*" as a strong person in the village (Rozaki, 2004). In this area, *Blater* flourished and until now its existence influenced the socio-cultural life of the Madurese community. *Blater* social media which is very well known in Madura is *Remoh*. In *Remoh*, *Blater* socializes to build friendships, share, and give some money to the organizers or host of *Remoh*, which is similar to *arisan* (Wiyata L., 2002).

## **Communication Actions**

According to Habermas, the act of communication is an action that directs itself to consensus. That is, each action becomes a rational action oriented to understanding, agreement and mutual understanding. Such consensus, for Habermas, can only be achieved through practical discourse which is nothing but a communication procedure. Practical discourse is a procedure or way for people to communicate with each other rationally with inter subjective understanding. In this type of discourse community members

question the exact claims of the norms that govern their actions. To achieve a generally accepted rational consensus, Habermas proposes three communication prerequisites as follows:

First, the participation in a discourse is only possible, if people use the same language and consistently adhere to the logical and semantic rules of the language. Second, equality in obtaining opportunities in discourse can only be realized, if each participant has the intention to reach a consensus that does not take sides and views other participants as sincere autonomous individuals, equally responsible and does not consider them as mere means. Third, there must be rules that are adhered to in general which secure the discourse process of pressure and discrimination. These rules must ensure that people reach consensus thanks to "the coercion not to force from a better argument". Through practical discourse with rational communication procedures, Habermas believes that the risk of disagreement that leads people to disintegration can be dammed (Budi, 2010).

Communication in various ethnic communities, will have many different events that are assessed as part of the communication style, a variety of behaviors that are considered appropriate in all these events and may have different rules for how to communicate. On the other hand, they may have the same type and function of communication. Behavior in local communities creates shared meaning by using codes that have a number of understandings, which can be understood by the ethnic community.

Gery Philipsen, an expert in ethnographic communication defines speech code. Speech Code according to Gerry is a meaning system that is built socially, historically, which is related to communicative behavior (Griffin, 2011). Speech Code is an unwritten culture and is often a conscious "guidebook" for how to communicate in culture (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). Griffin divides several assumptions:

- *Proposition 1: Wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is to be found a distinctive speech code.*
- *Proposition 2: In any given speech community, multiple speech codes are deployed.*
- *Proposition 3: A speech code involves a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric.*
- *Proposition 4: The significance of speaking depends on the speech codes used by speakers and listeners to create and interpret their communication.*
- *Proposition 5: The terms, rules, and premises of a speech code are inextricably woven into speaking itself.*
- *Proposition 6: The artful use of a shared speech code is a sufficient condition for predicting, explaining, and controlling the form of discourse about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of communication conduct.*

Philipsen said that those six propositions which could explain this Speech Code theory, the first was the distinctiveness of speech code which explained that every human population would find a culture, and from that there would be different speech codes and peculiarities. Second, the substance of speech codes explains that speech codes include psychology, sociology, and rhetoric. In the context of psychology, the codes conveyed from the way they communicate are typically the original side of their individualism. According to Philipsen, each of these codes is an individual characteristic in how to provide facts. The teamsterville code confirms that people are bound as social roles. Whereas in the context of sociology, Philipsen thinks that a speech code provides a system of answers about what is related to him and the other can be clearly searched, and symbolic sources are properly employed in seeking that relationship. The pattern of speaking between individuals includes answers to relationships between themselves and others. With regard to rhetoric, Philipsen defines rhetoric as persuasion and knowledge.

Third, the interpretation of speech code, which is to discuss about significant conversation, depends on the interpretation of communication between the communication actors. Finally, the force of speech code in discussions, namely the use of speech code, is to create conditions to predict, to explain, to be wise and to be careful, and maintain the morality of communication behavior. Culture reflects the behavior, actions, and communication of every society in all corners of the world so that each other behaves, acts, and communicates appears unique when they do that. However, because in every country in the world they have their own culture so that the interlocutor can understand what the speaker wants to say sometimes experiences miss communication so it is highly recommended that the community learn the culture of a particular country for a specified period of time before setting foot on that country. And the last one, Speech Code is very strong. They form a basis on which culture will evaluate and communicate. The ability or quality of performance in communication is considered and evaluated based on Speech Code requirements. A moral court is made about whether individuals and groups communicate appropriately and use it well in the form of cultural communication.

### *Remoh Madura: The Hidden Exoticism*

*Remoh* is one of the interactions of certain classes in Madura, even *Remoh* is only available in West Madura which makes it unique. It means that Local Wisdom still exists and is very strong in Madura. Although the era of technology and globalization has hit the Madurese, *Remoh's* cultural media is still an act of communication for *Blater* circles in Madura.

Tradition is a proof of the existence of a social group community. If the tradition carried out by certain social groups of society gradually fades, it can be said that the group began to become extinct. The tradition that developed among *Blater* groups in Madura is a combination of the fulfillment of personal interests that are needed by exploiting the potential that exists in the surrounding environment.

Each *Blater* member in a group certainly has its own role in the group, although basically there is no clearly structure stated in a *Blater* group, each *Blater* member has the same motivation and goals that they have in a group giving rise to a feeling of belonging between one another. It can be seen how communication is so close and so intensive in a group that they even often assume that they have become part of the family with others and vice versa.

The communication between *Blater* can be seen from how they communicate in attending a *Remoh* event. It is not difficult for the *Remoh* chairman to gather other group members to fulfill the invitation to attend *Remoh*, even though members in a *Blater* group can sometimes reach 50 people or even more. The Chairman of *Remoh* has a very important role and is a communicator in his efforts to convey messages to members who are scattered in his area. This was reinforced by the explanation of Mr. Muniri as chairman of the *Remoh* group in Karangbarat village

*“Mon terro daddiya Blater ya kodhu noro’ acara bhubuwan, maksodda to’oto’ otaba se biasa ekoca Remoh, lamba’ Remoh reya kebiasaanna sesepuh oreng madhura se eghuna’aghi kaagghuy kompolla oreng Blater ban kenenganna kaagghuy ajher alako se pantes, mon noro’ Remoh harga dirina oreng cepet ongghle’ ”*

It means: “If you want to be *Blater*, you have to take part in a bubuhan program, which is to’oto’ or commonly called *Remoh*. This *Remoh* used to be the custom of the Madurese elders who were used to connect the relationship between family relatives, but now it is used as a *Blater* community association, socialization and means of socializing to learn good behavior. If you follow this, someone's self esteem quickly rises, brother.”

Syukron, the informant, told the author that there were no significant obstacles in the communication between *Blater* group members, it also explained how the role of the chairman of *Remoh* was very important in shaping the character of the group, so that the chairman of *Remoh* must be able to force his group members to be able to live in a group that is harmonious well with communication and intimacy which is also certainly well intertwined.

In the explanation conveyed by the informant, it was implied information about the responsibility of the chairman of *Remoh*, that later on the eve of the event, all matters relating to the attendance of the participants were the responsibility of the chairman of *Remoh* and his representatives to gather other group members. This was felt very easy for the chairman of *Blater* because he only had to communicate this news with other *Blater* group members either verbally or through invitation. At present, the development of telecommunications has increased rapidly, so inviting members is easier to do. In the past, invitations were made through written invitations, now usually done by telephone, SMS, or WA. The following is an example of *Remoh* invitation:



Figure 1: *Remoh* invitation. Source (Researcher, 2018)

Each group member has the same goals and interests in a group. They assume that with them they continue to exist in the group, they really believe that the group they currently have can fulfill all the needs and desires of each group member, it becomes the basis of how each group member continues to exist in his group today. In addition, continuing a tradition is also believed to be the main driving factor for the strength of each group member to persevere and serve the group (Oktowira, 2013).

Inter-group communication in *Remoh* is the beginning of the closeness and sense of belonging between members with the same purpose and background. With that initial foundation, a group will consider other groups as partners and even as an integral part in a *Remoh*. Not infrequently they will consider other groups as their own family even though there is actually no blood tie. This is a characteristic of the Madurese as people who are known to be easy to get along with each other.

The Madurese when they are familiar and close to other people, that closeness will be more intense than other people who have been known before. They will sometimes regard the Madurese as their brother. This is different from Madurese who still don't know each other. There is a feeling of closing yourself first to other members of *Blater's* group. This was also reinforced by the speaker with his explanation stating that in a *Remoh*, there was a feeling of guarding one another and causing information or news to be managed properly so that it did not spread to just anyone.

*Blater* group members try to maintain and build their self-image and group image towards other groups in a *Remoh* with the aim of gaining authority as a group. It became very important in showing the existence of a *Blater* group in the future. If the authority is properly embedded in a group, a strong and "respected" group will be created by another group in the *Remoh*. Communication can be established anywhere and anytime. The communication can take place without being planned and we realize it beforehand. In *Blater's* life too. Not only in a *Remoh* they can gather together to tighten the cordial

relationship and brotherhood among others, but also in a hobby that will be able to bring them back together.

### *Implication Theory*

The communication code in *Remoh* is communication that has special meaning. Crumb has its own code, for example when someone carries a weapon but does not put a sharp weapon in its place, it is a code that the person is challenging the host. In addition, guests who arrive first will be recorded by the reception guests to be called first by the host at the *Shandur* show as a form of respect for those concerned.



**Figure 2: The Process of Giving Bhubuhan**

The conversation community can have multiple speech codes. According to Mr. Tohir, one of the *Remoh* perpetrators, that the objectives of *Remoh* actually vary among others:

1. *Remoh* is held with the intention of gratitude to the Almighty by holding a party and deliberately inviting other people, neighbors, or *Blater* members to show wealth.
2. *Remoh* are held with the aim of raising money with certain purposes, for example to get married children, and others.
3. *Remoh* was held with the aim of covering up the family's disgrace that had just happened so that with the holding of the *Remoh*, as if nothing had happened in the family of the *Remoh* host.
4. *Remoh* was held with the aim of showing power, collecting money, mobilizing other people to vote for the host in a village head election.

The *Remoh* tradition cannot be separated from the *Blater* group community, where the *Blater* group has its own codes in the conversation between *Blater* members. Not every community understands these codes. There is a meaning behind the meaning. In the implementation of *Remoh*, each invitation is required to bring money to be given to the host (the Madurese call it *Bubuan*).

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

Speech Code in the *Remoh* tradition is very strong, meaning that it is a strong feature and characteristic of *Remoh* culture in Madura, especially western Madura. *Remoh* is not found in eastern Madura (Pamekasan, Sumenep, and Madura Islands). *Remoh* celebration is very much attached to the



world of men. Even the dancers are men dressed in women. According to the sources asked by researchers, this was done to avoid excessive slander and to safeguard the values of Islam, because *Remoh* is usually held at night until early morning.

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