



Learning Indonesian Culture through an Indonesian TV Series Si Doel Anak Sekolahan

Puji Lestari¹, Lambok Hermanto Sihombing²

Department of English Education, Indraprasta University¹

Department of Communication, President University²

Article Info

Article History:

Received: 2022-11-09

Revised: 2022-11-17

Accepted: 2022-11-21

Keywords:

Betawi culture;
Representation;
Scenes.

ABSTRACT

Indonesian culture is one of the issues that are important and interesting to be learned in teaching and learning process. One of the cultures the students can learn is the Betawi culture. Teachers could create an engaging instructional activity, such as watching films about Indonesian culture. 'Si Doel Anak Sekolahan' is the most recommended one. It is one of Indonesian TV series that strongly depicts the life of Betawi culture. Thus, in this study, the researchers aim to analyze how "Si Doel Anak Sekolahan" represents the identity of Betawi culture. The object of this study was taken from RCTI YouTube Channel, *Layar Drama Indonesia* entitled *SI DOEL ANAK SEKOLAHAN - Atun Pengen Kagetin Babe Pake Tanjidor* episode 9. To seek how the identity of Betawi culture depicted in that movie, the researchers used a qualitative approach and applied *Mise en Scene* theory from Manon de Reeper and Cultural Identity theory from Stuart Hall. The result shows that traditional house, oplet, and musical instruments shown in some selected scenes represent Betawinese cultural identity.

Informasi Artikel


Kata Kunci:

Budaya Betawi;
Representasi;
Adegan.

ABSTRAK

Budaya Indonesia adalah salah satu isu yang penting dan menarik untuk dipelajari dalam kegiatan belajar dan mengajar. Salah satu budaya yang dapat dipelajari siswa-siswi adalah budaya Betawi. Para guru dapat menciptakan kegiatan yang menyenangkan seperti menonton film tentang kebudayaan Indonesia. 'Si Doel Anak Sekolahan' adalah salah satu rekomendasi film terbaik. Film ini merupakan drama Indonesia yang kental menggambarkan budaya Betawi. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa representasi identitas budaya Betawi di Indonesia yang dihadirkan dalam film 'Si Doel Anak Sekolahan'. Objek penelitian ini diambil dari RCTI YouTube Channel, *Layar Drama Indonesia* yang berjudul *SI DOEL ANAK SEKOLAHAN - Atun Pengen Kagetin Babe Pake Tanjidor* episode 9. Untuk melihat bagaimana identitas budaya Betawi ini digambarkan dalam film tersebut, penulis menggunakan metode kualitatif dan menerapkan teori *Mise en Scene* dari Manon de Reeper dan teori Identitas Budaya dari Stuart Hall. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa rumah adat, mobil oplet, dan alat musik yang merepresentasikan identitas budaya Betawi.

Publishing Info

Copyright © 2022 Lestari, P. and Sihombing, L. H. (s). Published by Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, Indonesia.  This is an open access article licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

✉ **Corresponding Author:** (1) Puji Lestari (2) English Education Department (3) Indraprasta University (4) TB. Simatupang, Nangka Raya Street, No.58 C, RW.5, Jagakarsa, South Jakarta, 12530, Indonesia (5) puji.indraprasta@gmail.com

Introduction

The film is sometimes referred to as a movie or moving picture. It is a series of sound-recorded still or moving images that tell a tale. The film is created by capturing photographic images with cameras or by producing visuals with animation techniques or visual effects (Sari, 2018). The film is a type of audiovisual mass communication that sends messages to viewers in order to enhance interaction (Sihombing & Lestari, 2022). According to Reeper (2016), a film "speaks" to its viewers through its cinematic language. The individuals who create films (the massive collaboration of directors, producers, editors, etc.) wish to tell a specific tale or convey a specific concept. Even if they seek to entertain, their film will likely have significance, as the audience can generate significance even while they are absent. According to Manon de Reeper (2016), every part of a motion picture or television program is planned to fit on the screen.

"Si Doel Anak Sekolahan" is one of Indonesian TV series that makes the researchers interested in analyzing it. Si Doel Anak Sekolahan, also known as SDAS, is an Indonesian television soap opera directed by Rano Karno for Si Doel. This series initially aired on RCTI from early 1994 to 2002 and then again on Indosiar between 2002 to June 30, 2006. The program was then broadcast again on RCTI in April 2013. The plot is a modern adaptation of the novel Si Doel Anak Betawi by Bebas sama sekali dari bahaya Datuk Majoindo and the 1972 film of the same name, both of which were directed by Sjumandjaja. Rano Karno also plays for Si Doel and Benjamin in the film version. Sabeni is performed by S and produced by Karnos Film. With seven seasons and 162 episodes, Si Doel Anak Sekolahan has been the longest-running Indonesian soap opera telecast on television (until Season 7). When it was the first broadcast, SDAS surged to become one of the most popular series, surpassing the foreign productions that dominated Indonesian television then (Si Doel Anak Sekolahan).

Doel, the eldest child of the Sabeni family, is enrolled in college. Doel chose mechanical engineering as his major because he was inspired by Si Doel's life, which was supported by the pull of his bus driver father. Mpok Lela, Mrs. Si Doel, contributed to the family's economic well-being by operating a modest shop. Atun, Doel's sister, has only completed elementary school (SI DOEL ANAK SEKOLAHAN). Babeh Doel (Doel's father) wished for one of his children to become a successful person. Hence, Atun would no longer complete his schooling. Even though the school no longer sponsors her (since Babeh Doel cannot afford to send his two children to school simultaneously), she still wishes to assist her mother with the shop. Mpok Lela's brother, Mandra resides with the Doel family. This unemployed teenager lived with Mpok Lela's father at first. Recently, though, a minor disturbance prompted Mandra to decide to move in with the Sabeni family. Mandra was permitted to reside with Sabeni and his family because she was the sister of Sabeni's wife (SI DOEL ANAK SEKOLAHAN).

To analyze how Betawinese culture represented in this TV series, the researchers applied Manon de Reeper's *Mise en Scene* to see the components of the film and Cultural Identity theory from Stuart Hall.

Mise en scène can convey meaning to the viewer nearly as efficiently as dialogue and narration. It is vital to media and film studies analysis because it teaches how to recognize significant visual codes and how some may have employed them to produce meaning (The Media Insider, 2020). In addition, Reeper (2016) emphasized analysis and comprehension of the scene. We must assess who and what is present and their relative positions, cosmetics,

expressions, clothes, settings, appearance, props, sounds, and lighting. A study of the cinema might incorporate numerous components. They consist of editing, camera, and lighting.

Another theory to support this observation is taken from Stuart Hall, Cultural Identity. Identity is established through the 'interaction' of the individual with society. The subject preserves an inner core or essence, "a true me," but this is continually changed and modified by the 'outside' cultural contexts and their identities (Hall et al., 1996). As Hall (1991:21) puts it: 'Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to travel through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself.' Identity is always a transitory and unstable outcome of relations that define identities by highlighting distinctions.

Hall (1990) also advocated for two distinctive approaches to cultural Identity. Cultural Identity, on the surface, is defined as a shared culture shared by a group of people with a common history and past. In this setting, cultural Identity is defined by historical experience and adherence to a relatively stable and unchanging cultural code. While the second notion implies that identity culture is not permanent (irreversible), it can change how positioning and being the subject of a continuing history, culture, and power have played out. In other words, the first argument claims that cultural Identity exists, whereas the second argument asserts that cultural Identity is emerging. Cultural Identity is a constant identification process within a historical context and culture (Hall, 1990).

Method

This study examined the depiction of Betawinese culture in Indonesian TV series "*Si Doel Anak Sekolahan*". *Mise En Scene* method by Manon de Reeper and the theory of Cultural Identity were applied for this analysis. To assist with the analysis, the researchers utilized a qualitative technique by picking the pertinent scene from "*Si Doel Anak Sekolahan*" and gathering data from any relevant articles. In order to determine how this film depicts Betawi culture, the researchers took numerous stages. First, the researchers analyzed the film elements using the film technique *Mise En Scene*. We observed the film's scenes, camera angles, and editing. The researchers chose scenes that represent the cultural identity of Betawi people. Second, the authors linked the film's aspects to the interpretation supported by Stuart Hall's Cultural Identity. The last, researchers took the conclusion.

Result and Discussion

To analyze the portrayal of Betawi Culture in *Si Doel Anak Sekolahan*, the researchers took the object of the study from RCTI YouTube Channel, *Layar Drama Indonesia* entitled *SIDOEL ANAK SEKOLAHAN - Atun Pengen Kagetin Babe Pake Tanjidor* episode 9. There were two theories applied in this study. They are *Mise en Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper and the Cultural Identity from Stuart Hall.

The first analysis was taken from the scene on minutes 2:48, Figure 1.



Figure 1. Atun and *tanjidor*

In this scene, we can see Atun, Doel's sister, who was stuck on the *tanjidor*, an Indonesian musical instrument. She was helped by her father, Babeh Sabeni. However, from that scene, we can see that Babeh Sabeni had difficulties in taking off the *tanjidor* from Atun's. In this scene, we can also see Atun struggling to help herself.

In a closer observation, we can see Atun who got stuck on the *tanjidor*, an Indonesian musical instrument. When we relate to Cultural Identity theory from Stuart Hall, we can see a cultural symbol in the scene above. On the surface, cultural identity is described as the shared culture of a group with a shared history and past (Hall, 1990). In our overview, we see that *tanjidor* symbolizes Betawi culture.

Tanjidor is a type of orchestra comprised of Western musical instruments, particularly wind instruments. *Tanjidor* is a Betawi art tradition that takes the shape of an orchestra or a collection of musical instruments played simultaneously by a group of people to create beautiful music (Maulana, 2021). *Tanjidor* initially appeared in Indonesia in the nineteenth century, specifically in 1820. Augustijn Michiels, better known at the time as Mayor Jantje, initially used it in the Citrap region, which is now known as Citeureup, according to Wikipedia. It is stated that he had a significant impact on the formation of the *Tanjidor* ensemble. Indeed, the family of Major Jantje was extremely affluent. Because he possessed a large amount of property with luxury villas, he also owned many native enslaved people. The major then established Het Muziek Corps der Papangers to find someone to play the instrument he had brought. The musicians were, surprisingly, their slaves. So that his slaves could play music, he contacted a music instructor from the Netherlands to instruct them (Maulana, 2021). These slaves played European musical instruments, including the Turkish tambourine, French trumpet, bass drum, and clarinet. When hosting parties or banquets, Major Jantje frequently requested his band to perform. When slavery was abolished in 1860, these free slaves established *Tanjidor*, a musical association with a consistent musical style. From there, *Tanjidor* spread to the outskirts of Jakarta, including Depok, Cibinong, Citeureup, Jonggol, Parung, Bogor, Bekasi, and Tangerang, where it became well-known and established (Maulana, 2021). The *Tanjidor* band then performed Dutch songs while speaking with a Betawi accent. The *Tanjidor* ensemble then began singing Jakartan songs such as *Jali-jali*, *Surilang*, *Kicir-kicir*, *Cente Manis*, and Sundanese songs such as *Kang Haji*, *Daun Pulus*, and *Sulanjana* (Maulana, 2021).

The following analysis is taken from the scene on minutes 2:58, Figure 2.



Figure 2. Betawi's house

In this scene, we can see Babeh Sabeni was shouting and asking for help as Atun was stuck on Tanjidor. Aside from it, this scene also shows the design of Betawinese culture with yellow and green color. In our understanding, Betawi house in this film represents the identity of Betawi culture.

In a closer analysis, the word "Betawi" derives from "Batavia," which was the Dutch name for Jakarta in the past, when the majority of the population was Sundanese prior to the 16th century and before the kingdoms of Tarumanagara and Pakuan Pajajaran. In addition to Sundanese, there are foreign merchants and sailors from the north coast of Java, several Indonesian islands, the Malayan peninsula east of Malacca, China, and Gujarat, India. The original people of Jakarta are the Betawi, a mixed heritage community of various ethnicities and ethnic groups who have lived in Jakarta for millennia. The Betawi has incorporated several cultures into their everyday life, arts, music, and traditions. They are very outspoken and democratic. The Betawi language combines Malay with Sundanese, Javanese, Chinese, Indian, Arabic, and Dutch terms (Chaer, 2012).

In the scene above (Figure 2), the researchers view that Betawi house depicted on the scene symbolizes the identity of Betawi people. The Betawi have two traditional dwellings: *rumah panggung* (stilt houses) and *rumah darat* (houses built on the ground). These two architectural styles have different characteristics based on their locations. The stilt house connects the Betawi people who inhabit coastal or marshy regions. The *rumah darat* is the preferred option for individuals who reside inland. The *amben* is a public area or living room, the *pangkeng* is a private space consisting of the family room and the bedrooms, and the *sronduyan* is a service space or kitchen. The socioeconomic position of the homeowner determines this arrangement. The roof of a traditional Betawi home comes in several forms, such as a pyramid or equilateral triangle. These forms have earned Betawi dwellings the moniker "kebaya house" since they resemble a kebaya's pleats (traditional blouse) (Post, T. J., 2018).

Furthermore, traditional Betawi homes include a concrete floor, interior stairs, and a covered porch. These various characteristics contain philosophical and religious connotations. Stairs, for instance, represent the sanctity of entering a home and are regarded as *balaksuji*, or a protective aspect. In ancient times, the Betawi people constructed wells in front of their homes since washing one's feet with water was usual before ascending the stairs and entering the home. As times change, however, *balaksuji* are no longer present in current Betawi homes (Post, T. J., 2018). Thus, we see that the scene above attempted to introduce the identity of Betawi culture in form of a traditional house.

The last observation is taken from the scene on minutes 3:10, Figure 3.



Figure 3. Doel, Mandra, and oplet

In this scene, Figure 3, we can see Doel was fixing his car (*oplet*) with Mandra. However, they looked surprised as they saw Babeh Sabeni shouted asking for help. In our understanding, we see that the scene above is the portrayal of Betawinese cultural identity in which they introduced the old car, *oplet*.

In a closer context, Oplet, a four-wheeled motorized vehicle that served as public transportation during its era, was utilized. Since the 1950s, the Oplet has been a popular little passenger vehicle in Indonesia. The origins of Oplet can be traced back to the transportation demands of colonial civilization in large towns such as Batavia. Batavia's automobile population has grown since the 1920s. Similarly, the demand for public transit among city dwellers is growing. Some claim that the origin of the word Oplet is the name Chevrolet or Opel. Some assert that Oplet is derived from "auto let" (Maulana, 2021).

The transition from animal-powered to machine-powered public transportation then occurred gradually. Then, in 1935, autolettes, also known as Oplet by the Betawi, emerged. This Oplet vehicle began running in Batavia, Malang, and Surabaya, among other major cities. In the 1960s and 1970s, Oplet became Jakarta's most popular public transportation. The routes include Jatinegara Station, Matraman Raya, Salemba Raya, Senen, Pasar Baru, and Harmoni. The Oplet is a form of public transportation derived from the British Morris Traveler car. Oplet consists of two sections; the front area is intended for the driver or the driver and one passenger, while the rear room is for passengers. This automobile features a single rear door through which passengers enter and exit. Then, there are two doors on the front, one on each side. Oplet could only carry four to five passengers when it originally left the factory. However, thanks to a body made of zinc and wood, Oplet is able to carry ten passengers. Almost all of Oplet's body, including the windows, are constructed of wood, which is rare. In contrast, the roof is comprised of zinc and a wooden frame (Maulana, 2021). Large buses were uncommon in the city from the 1960s to the 1970s, contributing to Oplet's appeal. Oplet's operating license was officially revoked in 1980 by the then-Governor of DKI Jakarta, Tjipropranolo, because it was deemed antiquated. It was replaced by more modern modes of transportation, including Mikrolet, Metromini, and Koperasi Wana Kalpika, or KWK. Currently, only a few museums and private collectors possess Oplet (Maulana, 2021). Thus, the researchers view that Oplet could be interpreted as an identity of Betawi culture.

Conclusion

To conclude, some scenes in the above discussion portray the identity of Betawi culture. It can be seen through the scene that shows Betawi traditional house, traditional musical instrument, and vehicle (Oplet). The researchers view that those symbolize how Betawi culture is. Aside from it, we also view that the filmmakers do not only intend to introduce Betawinese cultural identity but also aim to persuade all audiences to preserve the local culture of Indonesia which is Betawi traditional house, vehicle, and instrument. Hence, we see that learning Indonesian culture especially the Betawi culture is highly important to build students understanding, awareness, and nationalism of Indonesia.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the English Education Department of Indraprasta University and the Communication Department of President University for the support of this article publication.

References

- 10 *Betawi Uniqueness That You Can Find in Setu Babakan* - Indonesia Travel. (n.d.). www.indonesia.travel. <https://www.indonesia.travel/gb/en/trip-ideas/10-betawi-uniqueness-that-you-can-find-in-setu-babakan>.
- Chaer, Abdul. (2012). *Folklor Betawi: Kebudayaan dan Kehidupan Orang Betawi*, Jakarta: Masup Jakarta, Depok.
- Hall, S. (1990). *Cultural Identity and Diaspora: Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Lawrence and Wishart.
- Hall, S., & Paul Du Gay. (1996). *Questions of cultural identity*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Maulana, D. (2021, September 28). *Getting to know Tanjidor and its History, an Orchestral Music Group from Betawi*. Dinaskebudayaan.jakarta.go.id. <https://dinaskebudayaan.jakarta.go.id/disbuddki/news/2021/09/Getting-to-know-Tanjidor-and-its-History-an-Orchestral-Music-Group-from-Betawi>.
- Maulana, D. (2021, October 26). *Nostalgic with Oplet, the Legendary Public Transportation in Jakarta*. Dinaskebudayaan.jakarta.go.id. <https://dinaskebudayaan.jakarta.go.id/disbuddki/news/2021/10/Nostalgic-with-Oplet-the-Legendary-Public-Transportation-in-Jakarta>.
- Post, T. J. (2018). *Meanings behind architecture of traditional Betawi houses*. The Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2018/07/22/meanings-behind-architecture-of-traditional-betawi-houses.html>
- Reeper, Manon De. (2016). *Film Analysis For Beginners: How To Analyse Movies*. Kindle Edition.
- Sari, T.P. (2018). Moral Values as Material for Teaching Character Education in Up and Doctor Strange Films. *JELTS*.

Sihombing, L.H & Lestari, P. (2022). THE PORTRAIT OF INDONESIAN CULTURE THROUGH AN ANIMATED FILM “SI ENTONG”. *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)*, ISSN 2598-8530.

Si Doel Anak Sekolah. (n.d.). P2k.utn.ac.id. Retrieved October 11, 2022, from https://p2k.utn.ac.id/ind/3077-2966/Si-Doel-Anak-Sekolahan_123784_utn_p2k-utn.html.

SI DOEL ANAK SEKOLAHAN - p2kp.stiki.ac.id - Buku Ensiklopedi. (n.d.). P2kp.stiki.ac.id. Retrieved October 12, 2022, from http://p2kp.stiki.ac.id/id1/2-3068-2956/Si-Doel-Anak-Sekolahan_123784_p2kp-stiki.html