



## Cilokaq song lyrics of Sasak ethnic: Do they still express the same contents like the previous ones nowadays?

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### Abstract

There seems to be a shift in today's contents of Cilokaq song lyrics which previously addressed, *advice*, *satires*, and *protests* to reality. To prove this hypothesis, this article analyzed five current Cilokaq song lyrics (i.e., “Penganten Burung”, “Bangkol”, “Zubaedah”, “Beragak Elen”, and “Putri Mandalika”) which have been very popular from around 2019 to 2020. A descriptive qualitative analysis through Gadamer's hermeneutics theory explores the works' socio-cultural and historical context in understanding (*verstehen*) the contents. Four main themes of expressions of sadness, women's helplessness, expression of admiration, and lessons of life are found to describe the conditions of the Sasak people, particularly, the Sasak women in today's society. The findings indicate a shift of the previous common contents of Cilokaq lyrics following cultural alterations in time, space, and needs.

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### Introduction

Cilokaq is one type of folk music that has been developed in the Sasak ethnic group, Lombok, Indonesia. The term originated from the Sanskrit word *Seloka* or *Sloka* (Yudarta & Pasek, 2017) because the two share similar characteristics. *Seloka* is known in Malay ethnic in addition to *Pantun*. *Cilokaq* follows the forms of *Seloka* and *Pantun* using a-b-a-b rhyme and consisting of four lines with the first two lines as *sampiran* (illustration)

and the second ones as *isi* (content) (Sumaryanto, 2010). As an intangible culture of Sasak ethnic (Nuryati, 2011), this song was first introduced as a local song in 1948 by Mamiq Srinatih (late), from Sakra, East Lombok (Yaningsih, 1991; Yudarta & Pasek, 2017).

Similar to *Seloka*, *Cilokaq's* lyrics express *advice*, *morality*, *satire*, and *protests* towards real-life situation (Habib & Soemarno, 2012; Rahmaini et al., 2020). Even though *Cilokaq* has been known for a while, it was not until the 1990s that it started to gain popularity in Sasak culture. The advent development of information and technology throughout the nation in the 1990s introduced Sasak people to various works of art from outside Lombok. Additionally, the role of electronic technology in rural areas brought music programs through radio and

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television broadcasts, and later the internet, providing more accessible music to society. Thus, Cilokaq became more and more popular on YouTube channels and is recognized as the most phenomenal traditional Sasak music (Putra & Gria, 2019). It soon received acceptance in the community relating to its similarity to folklore (Baur, 1987; Danandjaja, 1997), and its melody that frequently adopts rhythms of Javanese Koplo dangdut, Arabic, Mandarin songs, and Indian songs (Harnish, 1995).

Regarding the lyrics, Cilokaq adheres to literary work that is the pattern of Malay classic poetry, *Pantun*, and *Seloka*. Specifically, the song lyrics can be categorized as lyric poetry (Barnet et al., 1992; Nuriadi, 2016). Lyric poetry is a poem with emotional and reflective soliloquy (Castle, 2007). Cilokaq song lyrics are commonly performed in poetic words in the company of rhymic sounds.

If a work of art is “mental evidence” of social and cultural settings, Cilokaq songs should then carry out the thoughts of the Sasak ethnic peoples, which is mostly rooted in its consciousness. Consciousness is a culture expressed in almost everything (Mahyuni, 2006; Moore, 2009). Consciousness, according to Liliweri (2009), is presented in the systems of knowledge, which is then transmitted through vocal expressions, attitudes, and habits. Thus, Cilokaq songs serve as the expressions of a Sasak culture, where the spirit of age or view of the world (Faruk, 1994) are vividly depicted.

However, studies looking at the representation of Sasak culture and social practices through traditional artworks produced in the community are still limited. This article discusses the variety of contents or themes expressed in the Sasak Cilokaq song lyrics around this contemporary era, in their connection with the community’s socio-cultural circumstances. Further analysis examines if the recent Cilokaq lyrics still express the same themes as the ones published previously.

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## Literature Review

Cilokaq is a popular trend of music for Sasak ethnic group in Lombok (Hartati, 2016; Yaningsih, 1991). It uses modern musical instruments such as electric guitar, drum, and electone, as opposed to other types of Sasak music, which were mostly composed of

traditional musical instruments such as *gendang*, *penting gambus*, and *rerincik* (Yaningsih, 1991). Harnish (1995) stated that Cilokaq, in the form of modern *Kecimol*, is very rhythmic and is often performed in many cultural events, rites, holidays, or recreations. For Sasak people, literary works such as *Lelakak*, *Cilokaq*, or *Seloka*, and Folklore are not merely entertainment, but they are also used to advise, insinuate, or criticize real-life situations.

Studies have looked at the representation of Sasak society in song lyrics (Renda, 2018; Renda et al., 2021; Satrya & Muttaqin, 2020). In an analysis of the Cilokaq lyrics “Penyalean” (Sejomank Group, n.d.), Renda (2018) applied document (song lyrics) analysis and notetaking to find some forms of social criticisms in the lyrics. Renda (2018) argued, based on Max Weber’s perspective of people’s actions, that the lyrics present several social criticisms on economic, familial, religious, and moral issues in Sasak communities. Nowadays, Sasak literary works show more varieties of functions. In an article describing the sociocultural system of the Sasak community, Hartati (2016) stated that *Lakak* or *Lelakak* and Cilokaq are commonly used to express one’s feelings and admiration (Hartati, 2016). Since it is considered taboo for a woman to make the first move (Hartati, 2016), the use of this literature for such a function is more common among men.

Next, Renda et al. (2021) described the Sasak’s marriage procession in Lombok, Indonesia, as depicted in the Cilokaq lyrics “Ngiring Penganten” (The Bridal Parade). This descriptive qualitative study employed Dilthey’s Hermeneutics theory to analyze the wedding procession reflected in the song’s lyrics. You Tube video by L. Syukri and Teguh K. An analysis of the video and lyrics shows some kinds of marriage processions, such as ‘Memaling’ (symbolic bride kidnapping tradition), ‘Ngawinang’ (the marriage), and ‘Nyongkolan’ (the wedding party), as parts of the traditional rites, *Sejati* or *Besejati*, *Selabar*, *Bait wali* (asking approval from the bride’s guardian to witness the wedding), and *Sorong Serah* (handing over the bride to the groom’s family). This suggests the use of the Cilokaq lyrics to portray Sasak cultural tradition and practices.

Through the exploration of the Cilokaq text, “Gugur Mayang”, Satrya and Muttaqin (2020) found that the song serves as a medium for teaching Sasak values and as a lullaby for children. The further analysis discusses

sadness, tragedy, grief, and pain reflected in Sasak society. Although the text is not solely used as a way of teaching or advising values, the study was able to get “a transcendental (rather than empirical)” (p. 88) knowledge of the Sasak civilization by reading the text within a sociological, spiritual, and literary context (Satrya & Muttaqin, 2020). Moreover, semiotic perspective uncovers the past and the present life exposed in the song. *Gugur* refers to the past and old age, and *Mayang* refers to the present and youth. The two elements altogether are believed to connect people with their culture, which builds into their respect for values and inheritance (Satrya & Muttaqin, 2020).

Besides advice and critics represented in the Sasak song lyrics, studies found other contents reflected in the lyrics. To extend research in this area, this article focused on the contents of popular Cilokaq songs from around 2019 until early 2021, to discover more facts about the present Sasak works of art.

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## Methodology

This study is descriptive qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Deacon, 2008) in the form of a case study. It examines the content of purposively selected five Sasak Cilokaq lyrics from the perspective of Gadamer’s Hermeneutics (Regan, 2012). Hermeneutics approach was also employed in a similar study analyzing the wedding processions described in Cilokaq song lyrics (Renda et al., 2021). The songs were selected for their popularity among Sasak people (based on interviews of 50 Sasak people, frequently performed on many occasions and most viewed on You Tube), and for their unique

topics which are different from the issues commonly represented in such type of song lyrics.

A literary work, according to Gadamer, is a work of art produced in line with the creator’s historical and socio-cultural setting. Following Gadamer’s theory of hermeneutics, understanding (*verstehen*) the works requires a search on how they are expressed through interpretation of content based on their socio-cultural and historical contexts (Regan, 2012). This idea is utilized to interpret Cilokaq lyrics based on the reality of the Sasak community. Thus, in this study, information from document analysis of the Cilokaq texts was collected and analyzed, interviews with two Sasak figures were undertaken, and the community’s current life situation was observed to obtain a complete and comprehensive understanding (*verstehen*). This study used Cilokaq lyrics as a *statement (ausdruck)*, through which the people are believed to express their historical and social existences. This is accepted as an *appreciation (erlebnis)* of human historicity, in this case, the life of the Sasak people. These two components were tied together in explaining the life of the present Sasak society through Cilokaq lyrics.

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## Results and Discussion

The content analysis of the five samples of Cilokaq song, “Penganten Burung”, “Bangkol”, “Zubaedah”, “Beragak Elen”, and “Putri Mandalika”, found four main themes in today’s Cilokaq song lyrics. These themes are expressions of sadness, women’s helplessness, expressions of admiration for someone, and life lessons (see Table 1). The following section discusses these themes in further detail.

**Table 1** Variety of contents/themes in Cilokaq songs nowadays

No	Contents	Song titles	Song lines/Stanzas
1	Sadness	a. Penganten Burung, b. Bangkol	a. Stanza 1, 3, & 4 b. All lines
2	Women’s Helplessness	a. Penganten Burung b. Bangkol	a. Stanza 2, 4 lines b. Stanza 3
3	Expressions of Admiration to Someone	a. Zubaedah b. Beragak Elen	a. Stanza 1 b. Stanza 1, 2, & 3
4	Life Lessons	a. Putri Mandalika	a. All lines

### *The Expression of Sadness*

The expressions of sadness are seen in the content of “Penganten Burung”. This song is written in the form of *Pantun* or *Lelakaq*, old literature that Sasak people are accustomed to (Fathurrahman, 2019; Hartati, 2016). In the song, the sadness is experienced by a Sasak woman who was not married. Social observations and interviews of some Sasak figures inform that marriage plays a very important role in the existence of Sasak ethnic, and thus, unmarried women are considered as *mosot* meaning a woman who is unlucky in life. This expression of sadness can be seen in Stanza 1, as follows:

“*Mun keritak gamak kakak tengak madak* (If an octopus, oh dear, is in middle of the sea), *Udang irup gamak kakak dalem kokoq* (A shrimp lives, oh dear, in a river), *Kuceritak langan layang* (I will tell you through a letter), *Tentang irup gamak kakak sak meni laloq* (About my sad life, oh dear, as it happens)”.

The stanza talks about a woman’s sadness as it says “*irup sak meni laloq*”, and how the story is to be shared to the public through “*layang*”, which is interpreted as ‘writings’.

The expression of sadness is clearer in the following lyrics, as quoted:

“*Lamun tenang gamak kakak leq Peraye* (If it is clear, oh dear, in Peraye town), *Tengak lendang gamak kakak balen simbut* (In the middle of a field, oh dear, is a house of a bird), *Embe entan yak ndeq pineng* (Whatever I do is making me dizzy), *Sengak tiangk gamak kakak penganten burung* (Because I, oh dear, cannot be a bridegroom)”.

These lines tell that a Sasak woman was eager to get married but later left unmarried because her future husband went somewhere. The lyrics describe how the unfortunate situation brought sadness to the woman. For women, such heartbreaking conditions may cause deep sorrow, which in the end may result in long sadness and misery. Observation towards the Sasak society confirmed that failure to marry is viewed as a disgrace and creates a great shame.

Sadness also appears in another song lyrics entitled “Bangkol”, as follows:

“*Sie gantung kakak teperaik* (The cub of salt is sunk), *Aik darek sik tekalak komak* (Salty water is used to cook beans), *Pire taunth uah merarik idik kakak jak uah merarik* (How many years, oh dear, I have been married), *Mun kelaek kakak* (It’s been very long, dear), *Munke laek ndarak anak* (It’s been very long, but I don’t have kids), *Mun kelaek kakak mun kelaek ndarak anak* (It’s been very long it’s been very long I don’t have kids), *Ndekku semel kakak bale balang* (I am very ashamed, oh dear, the grasshopper house), *Bau kembang lampak lek Narmade* (Picking a flower walking to Narmade), *Mun kemelet jak bedue anak idik kakak jak bedue anak* (I really want to have kids, oh dear, having kids), *Jari Kembang kakak jari kembang keluarga* (To be a flower, oh dear, to be a flower of the family)”.

The condition of a woman’s sadness is more apparent in these lines, in which married women cannot give birth or are barren (*bangkol*). In the view of Sasak people, a suitable Sasak woman is the one who can provide offspring to her husband. Women with such conditions may try to reverse people’s opinions, by taking certain medications or applying some curing methods. Similar to being unmarried, being barren or *bangkol* is also a disgrace. The song further expresses that Sasak women with barrenness may give up their husbands to remarry other women for the sake of having descendants. Having a descendent is a culturally social demand and pride in Sasak communities. On top of the sadness, people often stigmatize the woman as *nine lengeq* (a bad and useless woman).

The content of “Penganten Burung” and “Bangkol” shows that Cilokaq song lyrics do not touch the original function of the Seloka, as the initial form of the work, to advise and criticize (Renda, 2018; Satrya & Muttaqin, 2020). Instead, both songs exploit and describe the sad situations that Sasak women have to experience, suggesting that the content in Cilokaq has shifted. In this sense, Cilokaq is influenced by the condition and the trends in the society or depends on the spirit of the age (Faruk, 1994). The role and conditions of Sasak women have become interesting topics to explore in Cilokaq music (Fathurrahman, 2019).

### Women's Helplessness

Women's helplessness here refers to women's inability to break away from an inconvenient situation but to accept it as it is. It has been a common situation in Sasak ethnic, especially in rural areas where the patriarchal system is still very apparent. This issue is also presented in "Penganten Burung" and "Bangkol". In addition to the expressions of sadness experienced by women, these two songs reflect the helplessness of Sasak women in facing their life problems socially and culturally. Here are the lyrics of the song:

"*Piyak layang-layang gamak kakak tereng garut* (Making a kite, dear, from dirty bamboos), *Garut geruh gamak kakak sak tejai* (The dirty, dry bamboos, oh dear, are now broken), *Embe entan yak ndeq bareng* (What should I do if we're not together), *Selung ite gamak kakak sikku dait* (Suddenly that is what I am suffering), *Lamun tenang gamak kakak leq Peraye* (If it is clear, oh dear, in Peraye town), *Tengak lendang gamak kakak balen simbut* (The middle of the field, oh dear, is a house of a bird), *Embe entan yak endeq pineng* (Whatever I do is making me dizzy), *Sengak tiangk gamak kakak penganten burung* (Because I, my dear, failed to be a bridegroom)".

The lyrics of "Penganten Burung" show the psychological and social helplessness that unmarried women have to face. Psychologically, a women's insecurity and lack of power in society may lead her to accept set-up marriage without love, to escape from her poor circumstance. Socially, unmarried women are seen as a disgrace and are judged as being unlucky and inferior.

In the lyrics of "Bangkol", a women's helplessness is portrayed in her incapability to provide offspring to the family. In her grief of failure to become an ideal woman for her husband, the end of the lyrics tells that the woman surrendered and gave her husband the freedom to remarry, as can be read from the following excerpt:

"*Itak dile kakak Kebalit balit* (Stepping a lamp, dear, in dry seasons), *Segare laut kakak balin umbak* (Southern sea, dear, a place of waves), *Muredak merarik malik idik kakak jak merarik malik* (I let you marry again, dear, marry), *Adit mauk kakak adit mauk bedue anak* (So that you can have kids)".

Overall, the lyrics describe how a woman in such a position is defeated by the situation to provide happiness for her husband and family. The song highlights how women are powerless and do not have an equal "bargaining position" as men in the patriarchal system that has developed in the community. A Sasak culturalist, Lalu Agus Fathurrahman, confirmed in a personal interview with the authors that Sasak women are successful as wives when having children in their marriage. He said: "*Masyarakat Sasak berbentuk sistem patriarki. Terkait ini, perempuan harus mengikuti laki-laki, suaminya. Salah satu bentuk pelayanannya sebagai perempuan yang baik dan sukses adalah memiliki anak*" (Sasak is in the form of patriarchal system. Therefore, a woman must follow what a man, husband, wants and orders).

This finding adds to the presentation of Sasak women's conditions in society as an object in the composition of Cilokaq lyrics. Other issues frequently brought up in Sasak song lyrics are associated with women's marriage (i.e., divorced or widowed, breakups), and working situations (i.e., working abroad as domestic workers) (Aini et al., 2021). While describing the 'poor' situation of women in Sasak society, these data indicate that the topic has gained acknowledgment in Sasak society.

### The Expression of Admiration to Someone

In the Oxford dictionary of English, admiration refers to a "feeling of pleasure, satisfaction, and respect" (Hornby, 1974). It is one's mental reaction to someone, something, or a phenomenon expressed in social situations (Barbu, 1971). An expression of admiration is reflected in the lyrics of "Zubaedah" (i.e., lines of stanza 1) and "Berugak Elen" (i.e., lines of stanza 1, 2, and 3). In "Zubaedah":

*Oh Zubaedah.. Zubaedah dedare Dese* (Oh Zubaedah, Zubaedah, an innocent village girl), *Lueq gamak bajang mele leq iye* (There are many boys who are interested in her), *Salam leq aku tipak kamu oh Zubaedah* (My special and sincere greeting goes to you oh Zubaedah), *Salam berangen melem bi jari berayengku*. (My sincere greeting I express as I want you to be my darling).

The singer expressed admiration by first using the apostrophe apparatus, by calling the female name “*Oh Zubaedah*”. The lyrics describe the woman as a ‘village’ girl, implying that the woman has genuine beauty and an innocent characteristic. The sense of admiration is shown in the second line that, albeit being a village girl, Zubaedah has become the center of attention for many young men (“*bajang*”) who admire and are attracted to her. From the third and fourth lines, the attraction leads to an initial expression of interest to have Zubaedah as a girlfriend. In this context, the expression of admiration refers to admiring someone of the opposite sex.

A similar expression of admiration is described in the lyrics of “*Berugaq Elen*”. It says “*Berugak elen bekayu’ jati* (The cozy hut made of jati wood), *Beratep ere belante tereng* (Its roof from forest grasses its floor of bamboo), *Keingesan sak mule jati* (What a handsome creature you are)”. Unlike lyrics in “*Zubaedah*”, the admiration expressed in these lyrics is a woman’s admiration of a man. In the context of “*Berugaq Elen*”, the girl greatly admired the man whom she called “*kakak*” (brother) and how ideal his behavior was.

As previously mentioned by Hartati (2016), *Lakaq* and *Cilokaq* are often used to express admiration. An interesting fact in Sasak society is to know that it is not common or taboo for a girl to come and act more aggressively to the opposite sex, regardless of her feeling toward a man (Hartati, 2016). This brings a slight difference of admiration expressed by a man and by a woman. Thus, men are freer and more enthusiastic in expressing their admirations, whilst women are more reluctant and less direct in their expressions.

### *Life Lessons*

One of the *Cilokaq* lyrics that are close to Sasak people’s character, in general, is “*Putri Mandalika*”. In a personal interview with the Chairman of the Sasak traditional assembly, Lalu Bayu Windia, this song is recognized to speak about the figure of an everlastingly inspiring princess, ‘*Putri [Princess] Mandalika*’. This story of Princess Mandalika is a legend in Lombok and is believed to be true by the local community, especially those in the southern part of Lombok. Princess Mandalika is a beautiful princess who was forced to kill herself for the sake of peace among kingdoms who asked for

her hand. There would be war between kingdoms whether she made her selection or not. To resolve the problem, she decided to commit suicide by plunging into the sea. People later believed that her body changed to ‘*nyale*’, a sort of colorful sea worm. Until today, this folktale is celebrated by the Sasak people through an annual festival.

The lyrics of ‘*Putri Mandalika*’ talk explicitly about the figure and the life story of the princess, as described in the following excerpt of the song:

“*Araq sopoq cerite* (There is a folk story), *Saq uah jari legende* (Which has become a legend), *Leman laeq batur jangke mangkin* (The tale is heard from old time until the present time), *Putri Mandalika leq julun arane* (Princess Mandalika is the name of the figure), *Dende putri solah kembang lombok* (Who was very beautiful in Lombok island), *Putri Mandalika* (Princess Mandalika), *Dedare solah* (She was a very good looking girl), *Lueq dengan mame saq berangen* (There were many boys interested in her), *Putri Mandalika* (Princess Mandalika), *Hidupne sengsare* (Her life was always in grief), *Endeqn saq bande angene* (She was finally unable to hold on)”.

In addition to the princess’ figure and life story, the lyrics denote her courageous character in sacrificing herself to avoid war. A lesson learned here is for Sasak people in general, and Sasak women in particular, to model the fortitude and determination of Princess Mandalika. The lyrics advise Sasak women not to be spoiled and be able to bear the burden of their feelings (“*angene bande*”). It is expected that people follow the figure of Mandalika in finding a reconciling solution to avoid conflict in societies, even though the solution can often mean sacrificing the benefit. In a wider perspective, the lyrics encourage Sasak women to be stronger and more educated for the benefit of their household and social wellbeing.

The use of *Cilokaq* text to deliver life lessons, or specifically “moral messages” in this song, is in line with its early function as a medium to advise. Quite similar to the functional content of “*Gugur Mayang*” (Satrya & Muttaqin, 2020), the lyrics of “*Putri Mandalika*” try to connect lessons of the past and present life, as a way to respect cultural inheritance. In light of all the themes depicted in the five *Cilokaq* lyrics, none of these Sasak lyrics can be interpreted without understanding the social,

cultural, and historical backgrounds of the tribe. As other Cilokaq lyrics previously examined in different studies, this article asserts that the Cilokaq lyrics typically contain information of the Sasak way of life about its social, cultural, and historical affairs, while the variation of themes in the contents is also evident.

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## Conclusion

To review the hypothetical changes in the contents of five today's (popular around January 2019 to December 2020) Cilokaq song lyrics, this study found several trends of contents that mainly reflect *sadness*, *women's helplessness*, *expressions of admiration*, and *life lessons*. One theme can be represented in more than one song, or a song can contain some themes. The findings suggest that Cilokaq songs, which have commonly dealt with morality, advice, protest, and satire as having been shown in previous literature (Renda, 2018; Satrya & Muttaqin, 2020), are used in the selection of today's Cilokaq lyrics to talk about different contents. Analysis of the five Cilokaq song lyrics has shown a shift of its previous contents to focus more on life lessons and the conditions of Sasak society (i.e., Sasak women) and the social situations or stigmatization that this social group typically has to endure due to their position and circumstances in the Sasak community.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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