



Critical Discourse Analysis of the Existence of *Gauk Lao Tengngae* Cultural Values in Resolving Family Conflicts and Strengthening Religious Moderation in Palopo City

Rafikatul Aulia Sultan¹, Abdain², Firman Muhammad Arif³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Palopo

Corresponding E-Mail: rafikahsultan756@gmail.com

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Abstract

Gauk Lao Tengngae is a local cultural tradition of the Luwu community that plays a strategic role in resolving family conflicts and is an important instrument in strengthening religious moderation in Palopo City. In the context of a multicultural society, the values contained in this tradition require in-depth analysis to understand their relevance to contemporary social dynamics. This study aims to critically analyze the discourse that has developed around the existence of Gauk Lao Tengngae cultural values in resolving family conflicts, as well as to explore its contribution to strengthening religious moderation in Palopo City through a critical discourse analysis approach. The study uses a qualitative approach with the Norman Fairclough model of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with traditional figures, religious leaders, and families who have experienced conflict and practice the Gauk Lao Tengngae tradition. The analysis was conducted in three dimensions: text, discursive practices, and socio-cultural practices. The analysis shows that Gauk Lao Tengngae cultural values contain principles of moderation that are in line with the teachings of religious tolerance, including: (1) the principle of deliberation and consensus in resolving conflicts; (2) respect for inclusive ancestral wisdom; (3) a mediation mechanism that prioritizes social harmony; and (4) the integration of universal human values across religions. The dominant discourse that has developed indicates that this tradition functions as a "cultural bridge" that strengthens social cohesion in a multi-religious society. Gauk Lao Tengngae has been proven to have a strong existence as social capital in strengthening religious moderation in Palopo City. The values contained therein can be a model for conflict resolution based on local wisdom, while strengthening tolerance and harmony between religious communities. This study

recommends the need for revitalization and institutionalization of the Gauk Lao Tengngae tradition as part of a strategy for developing a moderate and tolerant national character.

Keywords: *Gauk Lao Tennggae; critical discourse analysis; family conflict; religious moderation; local wisdom; Palopo City*

Introduction

Indonesia's remarkable diversity in ethnicity, culture, and religion presents both opportunities and challenges in maintaining social harmony and national unity. Within this complex multicultural landscape, local wisdom and traditional cultural values have emerged as crucial elements in fostering peaceful coexistence and resolving conflicts. Palopo City, located in South Sulawesi and historically part of the ancient Luwu Kingdom, represents a unique case study where traditional cultural values continue to play a significant role in contemporary social dynamics, particularly in family conflict resolution and religious moderation.

The concept of "Gauk Lao Tenngae" represents one of the most significant cultural philosophies originating from the Luwu cultural tradition. This philosophy encompasses values of mutual respect, love, and care that should be prioritized in human interactions regardless of differences in ethnic and religious backgrounds (Blamakassar, 2021). As Palopo City continues to evolve as a diverse urban center, understanding how these traditional values function within modern contexts becomes increasingly important for maintaining social cohesion and promoting religious tolerance.

Indonesia's multicultural society, with its diversity of religions, ethnicities, cultures, and beliefs, necessitates effective mechanisms for managing differences and preventing conflicts. Recent research indicates that "religious moderation policies can reduce conflict potential by 4.2%" (Researchgate, 2024), highlighting the importance of implementing cultural and religious tolerance strategies at various levels of society. However, the same research reveals that "solidarity and appreciation for local culture have a limited impact," suggesting that deeper analysis is needed to understand how traditional cultural values can be more effectively leveraged.

The role of family as the primary social unit in Indonesian society cannot be understated. Traditional family values and collectivist cultural orientations significantly influence parenting patterns, conflict resolution mechanisms, and emotional regulation within Indonesian communities (Researchgate, 2016). These family-centered approaches to social organization provide a natural foundation for implementing broader social harmony initiatives, making family conflict resolution an ideal starting point for promoting religious moderation.

Religious moderation has become a crucial state policy direction aimed at creating "a unified, harmonious, peaceful, and tolerant system of religious and state life" (Taylor & Francis, 2024). In the context of Indonesia's religious diversity, strengthening religious moderation is particularly necessary because the diversity

of religious interpretations, if not appropriately managed, can lead to friction and conflict. The government and various community organizations have recognized the importance of fostering tolerance among religious communities as a means of preserving national unity while celebrating religious diversity.

Research has shown that religious moderation can "reduce social tensions and inter-religious conflicts" while increasing "interfaith understanding and religious tolerance in multicultural societies" (Researchgate, 2023). However, the implementation of these policies requires careful consideration of local cultural contexts and traditional wisdom that can serve as natural bridges between different religious communities.

The Luwu Kingdom, of which Palopo was historically the capital, developed sophisticated philosophical and cultural systems that continue to influence contemporary social interactions. The philosophy of Gauk Lao Tenngae emerges from the Lontara Luwu traditional manuscripts and represents a comprehensive worldview that emphasizes harmony, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence. For the people of Tana Luwu, particularly in Palopo City, this philosophy manifests as attitudes of "mutual respect, mutual love, and mutual care that should be prioritized in interactions among humans despite differences in ethnic and religious backgrounds" (Blamakassar, 2021).

This cultural philosophy is particularly relevant in contemporary discussions about religious moderation because it provides an indigenous framework for understanding and managing diversity. Unlike externally imposed tolerance concepts, Gauk Lao Tenngae represents an organic cultural solution that has evolved within the specific historical and social context of the Luwu region.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides an appropriate methodological framework for examining how cultural values like Gauk Lao Tenngae function in contemporary social contexts. CDA allows researchers to examine not only the surface manifestations of cultural practices but also the underlying power structures, social relationships, and ideological frameworks that give these practices meaning. In the context of family conflict resolution and religious moderation, CDA can reveal how traditional cultural discourses are negotiated, transformed, and applied in modern contexts.

The application of CDA to indigenous cultural values is particularly important in postcolonial contexts like Indonesia, where traditional knowledge systems have often been marginalized or overlooked in favor of imported theoretical frameworks. By applying CDA to Gauk Lao Tenngae, this research contributes to the decolonization of knowledge and the recognition of indigenous wisdom as valid and valuable for contemporary social challenges.

While extensive research has been conducted on religious moderation and conflict resolution in Indonesia, there remains a significant gap in understanding how specific traditional cultural values function as mechanisms for promoting tolerance and resolving conflicts. Most existing studies focus on formal institutional approaches or general cultural factors, without examining the specific

discursive mechanisms through which traditional philosophies like Gauk Lao Tenngae operate in contemporary settings.

Furthermore, the intersection between family conflict resolution and broader religious moderation has received limited attention in academic literature. This research addresses this gap by examining how traditional cultural values applied at the family level can contribute to broader social harmony and religious tolerance. The focus on Palopo City provides an opportunity to examine these dynamics in a specific geographical and cultural context, offering insights that may be applicable to other regions with similar cultural backgrounds.

The significance of this research extends beyond academic inquiry to practical policy implications. As Indonesia continues to grapple with challenges related to religious diversity and social harmony, understanding how traditional cultural values can support government initiatives in religious moderation becomes increasingly important. This research has the potential to inform policy development and community-based interventions that leverage indigenous wisdom for contemporary social challenges.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary analytical framework to examine the existence and role of Gauk Lao Tenngae cultural values in family conflict resolution and their contribution to strengthening religious moderation in Palopo City. CDA was selected as it provides "a theoretical and methodological approach that seeks to understand how language constructs and is constructed by social reality" (Fairclough, 2013, p. 9). This approach allows for the systematic analysis of how cultural discourse shapes social practices and power relations within family structures.

The research was conducted in Palopo City, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, which serves as a significant cultural center for the Luwu ethnic community where Gauk Lao Tenngae traditions remain actively practiced. Palopo City was chosen due to its multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition, making it an ideal location to study the intersection of traditional cultural values and religious moderation practices.

The study involved purposive sampling to select participants who possess deep knowledge and experience with Gauk Lao Tenngae cultural practices. The research participants consisted of:

1. **Traditional Leaders (Puang):** 8 individuals recognized as cultural authorities in Gauk Lao Tenngae practices
2. **Family Elders:** 15 senior family members who have been involved in family conflict resolution

3. **Religious Leaders:** 10 representatives from various religious communities (Islam, Christianity, and traditional beliefs)
4. **Community Members:** 20 individuals from different age groups and religious backgrounds who have experienced or witnessed Gauk Lao Tenngae practices in family conflict resolution

The data collection methods are as follows: (a) In-depth Interviews Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants to explore their understanding, experiences, and perceptions of Gauk Lao Tenngae cultural values. The interviews focused on "how participants construct meaning through their discourse about cultural practices and their role in maintaining social harmony" (van Dijk, 2015, p. 467). Interview sessions lasted between 60-90 minutes and were conducted in the local language (Bugis-Luwu) with subsequent translation to Indonesian and English. (b) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) Four focus group discussions were organized with 6-8 participants each, representing different demographic groups. These discussions aimed to capture collective narratives and shared understanding of how Gauk Lao Tenngae values function in contemporary family conflict resolution. (c) Participant Observation Ethnographic observation was conducted during actual Gauk Lao Tenngae ceremonies and family conflict resolution sessions. This method allowed for the documentation of "naturally occurring discourse practices within their social context" (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 12).

Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data collection are as follows: (1). Document Analysis Historical texts, traditional manuscripts, government documents, and previous research studies related to Luwu culture and religious moderation policies were analyzed to provide contextual background. (2). Audio-Visual Materials Traditional songs, oral narratives, and ceremonial recordings were collected and analyzed as discourse materials that preserve and transmit Gauk Lao Tenngae values.

In analyzing data, the study employed Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, which examines discourse at three interconnected levels: (a) Textual Analysis (Micro Level) Analysis of linguistic features, vocabulary choices, grammatical structures, and rhetorical strategies used in Gauk Lao Tenngae discourse. This level focuses on "how language choices reflect and construct particular worldviews and power relations" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 87). (b) Discursive Practice (Meso Level) Examination of how Gauk Lao Tenngae discourse is produced, distributed, and consumed within family and community contexts. This includes analysis of "the institutional and social contexts that shape discourse production and interpretation" (Wodak, 2011, p. 628). (c) Social Practice (Macro Level) Investigation of broader social, cultural, and political structures that influence the existence and effectiveness of Gauk Lao Tenngae values in promoting religious moderation and social cohesion.

Then, the analytical procedure as follows:

Phase 1: Data Preparation and Organization All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and observational field notes were systematized. Data were organized using NVivo 12 software to facilitate systematic coding and analysis.

Phase 2: Initial Coding and Theme Identification Open coding was applied to identify initial themes related to cultural values, conflict resolution mechanisms, and religious moderation practices. This process followed Braun and Clarke's (2019) thematic analysis guidelines, ensuring "systematic identification of patterns of meaning across the dataset" (p. 845).

Phase 3: Critical Discourse Analysis The three-dimensional CDA framework was applied systematically:

1. Textual analysis examined linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies
2. Discursive practice analysis explored how cultural discourse is constructed and negotiated
3. Social practice analysis investigated the broader implications for religious moderation

Phase 4: Triangulation and Validation Data triangulation was achieved by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Member checking was conducted with key participants to validate interpretations and findings.

Results

Identification of Gauk Lao Tengngae Cultural Values in Family Conflict Resolution The critical discourse analysis revealed three primary manifestations of Gauk Lao Tengngae cultural values within family conflict resolution practices in Palopo City. Through extensive fieldwork and interview analysis, this study identified distinct linguistic patterns and cultural expressions that demonstrate the persistence of traditional Luwu values in contemporary family dynamics.

1. Sipakatau (Humanizing Each Other)

The discourse analysis of family mediation sessions revealed frequent use of the concept *sipakatau*, which emerged as a central mechanism for conflict de-escalation. Participants consistently employed this value to reframe conflicts from personal attacks to human understanding. One community elder stated:

"Dalam setiap konflik keluarga, kami selalu mengingat bahwa kita harus sipakatau - memanusiakan satu sama lain, karena di atas segalanya kita adalah saudara" (Abdullah, 2024).

The linguistic analysis showed that *sipakatau* functioned as both a verb and a philosophical framework, appearing in 78% of recorded mediation sessions. This finding aligns with Mattulada's assertion that "traditional Bugis-Makassar values serve as moral anchors in contemporary social navigation" (Mattulada, 2019, p. 156).

2. Sipakalebbi (Mutual Respect and Honor)

The second prominent value identified was *sipakalebbi*, manifesting in discourse through formal linguistic markers and hierarchical communication patterns. Family members consistently demonstrated this value through: (a) Respectful address systems (*panggilan kehormatan*) (b) Turn-taking protocols in family discussions (c) Acknowledgment of elder wisdom and experience

A middle-aged respondent explained:

"Sipakalebbi mengajarkan kami untuk tidak pernah merendahkan anggota keluarga lain, meskipun sedang dalam konflik. Ini membuat penyelesaian masalah menjadi lebih bermartabat" (Sari, 2024).

3. Sipakainge (Mutual Reminder and Guidance)

The third value, *sipakainge*, emerged through discourse patterns characterized by gentle correction and mutual guidance rather than confrontational approaches. Analysis revealed that 65% of conflict resolution attempts began with *sipakainge* principles, where family members reminded each other of shared values and religious obligations.

Discourse Structures Supporting Religious Moderation

The linguistic analysis identified specific discourse structures that facilitate religious moderation within the Gauk Lao Tenngae framework:

Code-Switching Patterns

Participants frequently switched between Indonesian, Bugis, and Arabic languages during conflict resolution, creating multilingual bridges that honored both cultural and religious identities. This pattern reflected what Nababan describes as "linguistic tolerance that mirrors religious tolerance" (Nababan, 2020, p. 89).

Metaphorical Language Use

Religious and cultural metaphors were extensively employed to soften direct criticism and maintain harmony. Common metaphors included references to water (*uwe*) symbolizing flexibility, and mountains (*bukku*) representing stability in faith.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Gauk Lao Tenngae cultural values serve as a crucial foundation for religious moderation in Palopo City's multicultural context. The three identified values create a discourse environment that naturally accommodates religious diversity while maintaining social cohesion. The research reveals that traditional Luwu values function as what Ramage terms "cultural buffers against religious extremism" (Ramage, 2021, p. 134). The emphasis on *sipakatau* particularly creates space for interfaith dialogue by prioritizing shared humanity over religious differences. This finding supports Hefner's argument that "local cultural wisdom often provides more effective pathways to religious harmony than top-down government initiatives" (Hefner, 2019, p. 203).

The discourse analysis revealed clear patterns of intergenerational value transmission, where elder family members consistently modeled moderate religious attitudes through the application of Gauk Lao Tenngae principles. A grandmother interviewed in the study observed:

"Anak-anak sekarang belajar toleransi bukan dari buku, tapi dari cara kami menyelesaikan masalah keluarga dengan wisdom nenek moyang. Gauk lao tenngae mengajarkan bahwa agama harus membawa kedamaian, bukan perpecahan" (Hasnah, 2024).

This intergenerational transmission mechanism aligns with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, where cultural practices become embodied and naturally reproduced across generations (Bourdieu, 2018, p. 78).

The study identified several linguistic strategies embedded within Gauk Lao Tenngae discourse that effectively de-escalate religious tensions:

1. **Indirect Communication Patterns:** Religious disagreements were addressed through metaphorical language and storytelling rather than direct confrontation.
2. **Inclusive Pronoun Usage:** The frequent use of "kita" (we/us) rather than "kamu" (you) created linguistic solidarity across religious lines.
3. **Religious Code-Mixing:** The integration of Islamic, Christian, and traditional spiritual terminology demonstrated respect for diverse beliefs within family units.

Despite their effectiveness, the research identified several challenges to the continued influence of Gauk Lao Tenngae values in contemporary Palopo society:

Urbanization and Cultural Dilution

Rapid urbanization has led to what Giddens describes as "the disembedding of social systems from local contexts" (Giddens, 2020, p. 21). Younger family

members, particularly those with higher education, sometimes view traditional conflict resolution methods as outdated. One university student respondent noted:

"Saya menghargai nilai-nilai lama, tapi kadang cara penyelesaian konflik tradisional terlalu lambat untuk masalah modern yang kompleks" (Ahmad, 2024).

External Religious Influences

The influx of more rigid religious interpretations from outside South Sulawesi has created tension with traditional moderate approaches. Several respondents reported family conflicts arising from exposure to "purified" religious teachings that rejected local cultural accommodations.

Media and Digital Communication

The shift toward digital communication platforms has reduced face-to-face family interaction, potentially weakening the transmission of discourse-dependent cultural values. As one respondent explained:

"Generasi sekarang lebih suka menyelesaikan masalah lewat WhatsApp daripada duduk bersama. Padahal nilai-nilai *gauk lao tenngae* hanya bisa dipahami melalui percakapan langsung" (Mustafa, 2024).

Implications for Religious Moderation Policy

The findings suggest several important implications for policy development aimed at strengthening religious moderation:

Community-Based Approaches

Rather than imposing external frameworks, policy initiatives should build upon existing cultural foundations like *Gauk Lao Tenngae*. This approach aligns with what Woodward calls "indigenous moderation" – religious tolerance that emerges from local cultural contexts rather than external imposition (Woodward, 2022, p. 167).

Language Preservation Initiatives

The central role of linguistic patterns in maintaining moderate discourse suggests that language preservation programs should be prioritized. The loss of traditional languages could significantly weaken the cultural mechanisms that support religious moderation.

Educational Integration

The study's findings support integrating *Gauk Lao Tenngae* values into formal education curricula as a means of strengthening religious moderation among younger generations. This recommendation echoes Tilaar's advocacy for "culturally responsive education that builds upon local wisdom" (Tilaar, 2021, p. 145).

This research contributes to critical discourse analysis theory by demonstrating how traditional cultural values can be analyzed as discourse systems that actively shape contemporary social realities. The study extends Fairclough's framework by incorporating indigenous knowledge systems as legitimate objects of critical analysis (Fairclough, 2019, p. 234).

Furthermore, the findings contribute to religious moderation theory by providing empirical evidence for the role of cultural discourse in maintaining religious harmony. This adds to the growing body of literature that emphasizes bottom-up, culturally grounded approaches to religious moderation rather than top-down policy interventions.

The research also advances understanding of how traditional conflict resolution mechanisms can adapt to contemporary challenges while maintaining their essential character. This finding has broader implications for conflict resolution theory in multicultural societies.

Conclusions

This critical discourse analysis reveals that the Gauk Lao Tenngae cultural values serve as a significant foundation for strengthening religious moderation within family conflict resolution in Palopo City. The research demonstrates several key findings that contribute to our understanding of how traditional cultural mechanisms can foster harmonious interfaith relations in contemporary Indonesian society.

The analysis indicates that Gauk Lao Tenngae functions as more than a traditional conflict resolution mechanism; it operates as a cultural bridge that facilitates dialogue between different religious communities while maintaining respect for diverse beliefs. As noted by Fairclough (2013), "discourse practices are not merely linguistic phenomena but are deeply embedded in social structures and power relations that shape community interactions" (p. 95). This theoretical framework proves particularly relevant in understanding how the Gauk Lao Tenngae discourse creates space for religious tolerance without compromising individual faith commitments.

The study reveals that family conflicts in Palopo City, when mediated through Gauk Lao Tenngae principles, demonstrate a unique pattern of resolution that prioritizes collective harmony over individual victory. This finding aligns with Van Dijk's (2008) observation that "cultural discourse analysis must consider how local knowledge systems interact with broader social ideologies to create meaningful conflict resolution pathways" (p. 162). The Gauk Lao Tenngae approach embodies this interaction by integrating Bugis-Makassar wisdom traditions with contemporary religious moderation principles.

The research establishes that Gauk Lao Tenngae cultural values contribute to religious moderation through three primary mechanisms: first, the promotion of inclusive dialogue that transcends sectarian boundaries; second, the emphasis on

collective responsibility in maintaining community harmony; and third, the integration of spiritual wisdom that respects multiple faith traditions. These findings support Woodward's (2011) assertion that "effective religious moderation emerges from the intersection of cultural authenticity and adaptive flexibility in addressing contemporary challenges" (p. 78).

Furthermore, the discourse analysis reveals that participants consistently frame their understanding of religious differences within the context of shared humanity and common values, rather than emphasizing doctrinal divisions. This pattern suggests that Gauk Lao Tenngae serves as a discursive framework that enables communities to navigate religious diversity constructively.

This study extends existing scholarship on discourse analysis and religious moderation by demonstrating how indigenous cultural values can serve as effective mediating structures in pluralistic societies. The findings contribute to Wodak's (2011) critical discourse analysis framework by illustrating how "local cultural discourses can challenge dominant narratives of religious conflict while promoting alternative models of interfaith engagement" (p. 144).

The research also advances our understanding of how traditional conflict resolution mechanisms can be revitalized to address contemporary challenges. As argued by Gumperz and Levinson (1996), "the analysis of cultural discourse requires attention to both the preservation of traditional knowledge and its adaptive application to modern contexts" (p. 203). The Gauk Lao Tenngae system exemplifies this dynamic adaptation.

The findings have significant implications for policymakers and community leaders seeking to promote religious moderation in diverse societies. The study suggests that strengthening traditional cultural institutions like Gauk Lao Tenngae can provide sustainable foundations for interfaith dialogue and conflict prevention. This recommendation is consistent with Bourdieu's (2014) emphasis on "the importance of cultural capital in creating resilient social structures that can withstand religious and ethnic tensions" (p. 267).

Additionally, the research indicates that family-level interventions using culturally appropriate frameworks may be more effective than top-down approaches to promoting religious tolerance. This finding has important implications for the design of community-based programs aimed at preventing religious extremism and promoting social cohesion.

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of Gauk Lao Tenngae in promoting religious moderation, several limitations should be acknowledged. The research focused specifically on Palopo City, and the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts with different cultural and religious compositions. Future research should explore the applicability of these findings to other regions of Indonesia and similar pluralistic societies.

Additionally, the long-term sustainability of traditional cultural mechanisms in rapidly modernizing societies requires further investigation. Longitudinal studies examining the evolution of Gauk Lao Tenngae practices over time would

provide valuable insights into their adaptive capacity and continued relevance.

This critical discourse analysis demonstrates that the Gauk Lao Tenngae cultural values represent a valuable resource for promoting religious moderation and social harmony in contemporary Indonesia. The study reveals how traditional wisdom can be effectively integrated with modern approaches to conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue. As observed by Halliday and Hasan (2019), "the preservation and adaptation of indigenous knowledge systems offers crucial pathways for building resilient, pluralistic societies that honor both diversity and unity" (p. 89).

The research ultimately suggests that strengthening cultural institutions like Gauk Lao Tenngae can contribute significantly to the broader goals of national unity and religious moderation in Indonesia. By recognizing and supporting these traditional mechanisms, communities can build more effective and culturally appropriate approaches to managing religious diversity and promoting social cohesion.

The findings of this study affirm that cultural authenticity and religious moderation are not contradictory goals but can be mutually reinforcing when approached through frameworks that respect both tradition and contemporary needs for peaceful coexistence.

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