



Maccera tasi' tradition of Palopo City fishermen (an anthropological study of communication)

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Local traditions play a crucial role in maintaining the cultural identity of coastal communities. One such tradition is maccera tasi', a maritime ritual practiced by fishermen in Carede, Palopo City. Although rich in symbolic and spiritual meaning, this tradition has not been conducted since 2017, raising concerns over cultural sustainability.

Aims: This study aims to explore the cultural meaning embedded in the maccera tasi' tradition and to investigate the socio-cultural reasons behind its cessation.

Methods: Employing a descriptive qualitative design, this research utilized communication anthropology and ethnological approaches. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving 15 informants from diverse stakeholder groups, including fishermen, traditional leaders, and cultural officials.

Results: Findings revealed that maccera tasi' is perceived as an expression of gratitude, spiritual devotion, and social solidarity. Its discontinuation is attributed to shifting religious perspectives, lack of government support, and the impact of modernization. The tradition still resonates with the community's collective memory, though younger generations increasingly question its relevance.

Conclusion: The study highlights that maccera tasi' embodies more than ritual—it is a medium for symbolic communication, identity negotiation, and community cohesion. Its demise reflects broader societal transformations, particularly the friction between ancestral customs and evolving Islamic values. However, the potential for revitalization remains, provided there is collaborative effort from local stakeholders to repackage the tradition into a culturally appropriate and religiously acceptable format. Theoretically, the study contributes to communication anthropology by demonstrating how traditional symbols are not only preserved but reinterpreted in response to changing contexts. Practically, it urges inclusive cultural policy interventions to safeguard intangible heritage through adaptive, participatory, and context-sensitive strategies.

Keywords: Maccera Tasi, Communication Anthropology, Fishing Tradition, Local Culture, Palopo.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as an archipelago that is rich in cultural diversity, including customs that have been passed down from generation to generation by the ancestors. One form of cultural heritage that has high urgency to be researched is the *maccera tasi'* tradition, which is still believed and carried out by coastal communities, especially fishermen in Palopo City (Fariha & Pane, 2023; Haeran, 2019; Yunus, 2025). This tradition is not just a symbolic ritual, but has a deep meaning as a form of gratitude for marine products and respect for ancestors. In the context of a modern society that has begun to move away from traditional values, cultural preservation such as *maccera tasi'* is becoming increasingly important as a collective identity and spiritual communication practice (Ismanto et al., 2025; Noviati, 2018; Prayogi & Danial, 2016).

However, in practice, the implementation of the *maccera tasi'* tradition in Palopo City is no longer running as it should. Ideally, this ceremony should be held annually by the fishing community in Carede and supported by the local government as a form of cultural preservation. In fact, since 2017, this tradition is no longer held. This condition indicates a gap between the ideal value of cultural preservation and the current social reality, which is affected by modernisation, changing beliefs, and limited funding (Mukhtar et al., 2021; Sofii & Salik, 2022; Yuwono, 2019).

In the midst of these social changes, there is a significant research opportunity to dig deeper into how the meaning of *maccera tasi'* is still alive in the consciousness of the fishing community and the factors that caused the tradition to stop. This research becomes relevant not only for cultural documentation, but also to identify the social and communication dynamics of coastal communities in the face of changing times.

Various previous studies have indeed raised the theme of the *maccera tasi'* tradition, but most of them focus on economic aspects, such as the relationship between customary beliefs and fishermen's income (Bayu, 2021; Hadi & Bayu, 2021; Ramli et al., 2024). It is still rare to find studies that explore the symbolic meaning and cultural communication values contained in this tradition in depth, especially using an anthropological approach to communication. In addition, no study has specifically highlighted the social and cultural reasons behind the discontinuation of the tradition since 2017 in Palopo City. This indicates a research gap that can be used as a foothold to present a new perspective in understanding changes in cultural meanings and the sustainability of local traditions in coastal communities.

The researcher chose the main variable in the form of "communication anthropology" as a perspective to understand the *maccera tasi'* tradition because this approach emphasises symbolic interaction and cultural meaning in community communication. Through this approach, it is expected to be able to explore the views of the fishing community regarding the essence of the tradition, the symbolic meaning it contains, and how social change affects its existence. This approach is considered the most appropriate because it is able to explain how symbolic meanings in cultural practices are communicated, maintained or changed in daily social interactions. By focusing on community symbols, rites and narratives, communication anthropology allows researchers to uncover invisible layers of meaning and explore cultural dynamics.

The purpose of this study is to reveal how the fishing community interprets the *maccera tasi'* tradition and identify the reasons why this tradition is no longer carried out. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of cultural communication science, especially in the local context, as well as providing practical benefits for the preservation of coastal community

culture and cultural policy making by local governments. The novelty of this research lies in the use of communication anthropology approach to deeply explore the symbolic meaning of the tradition and the socio-cultural reasons behind its discontinuation, which have not been widely explained in previous studies.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive study type that aims to deeply understand the meaning of the *maccera tasi'* tradition in the perspective of the fishing community in Carede, Palopo City. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to explore the cultural values contained in the social practices of the community contextually and thoroughly. With the communication anthropology study framework and ethnological approach (Nadhiroh, 2021; Widodo, 2020; Widyaningsih, 2019) this research emphasises the observation of communication patterns and cultural symbols inherent in the tradition.

The research participants consisted of fishing communities in the Carede area who had direct experience in the implementation of the *maccera tasi'* tradition. In addition to active fishermen, participants also included community leaders, traditional leaders, and representatives of the Palopo City Cultural Office who were considered to have in-depth knowledge of the continuity and meaning of the tradition. The presence of various backgrounds of participants is important to ensure that the data obtained is rich and representative of the social dynamics that take place. The total number of participants in this study was 15 people, consisting of 7 active fishermen, 3 traditional leaders, 2 community leaders, and 3 representatives from the Culture Office.

The population in this study includes all fishing communities who live on the Carede coast and have direct or indirect involvement in the *maccera tasi'* tradition. The sampling technique was purposive sampling, considering the relevance of the informants' experience and understanding of the topic under study. The instrument used was a semi-structured interview guideline containing open-ended questions related to the cultural meaning and factors that have caused this tradition to stop since 2017. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation techniques, while reliability was strengthened by member checking with key informants.

In the data collection process, the main instrument used was the researcher himself as a *human instrument*, assisted by additional tools in the form of interview guidelines, observation sheets, and visual documentation. Interview guidelines allowed the researcher to explore participants' narratives flexibly, while observation was used to record behaviours, cultural symbols, and the context of social interactions. Documentation was used as a complement in the form of photos of activities, archives of traditional events, and relevant government documents.

This research was conducted over three months, from June to August 2022. The process began with initial field observations, followed by in-depth interviews and documentation collection. Each stage was carried out systematically so that researchers obtained comprehensive data and reflected the social and cultural dynamics that occur in the community. All data collected was then organised and classified based on the main themes that emerged from the field. The period of June to August was selected because it coincides with the harvest season for marine products and is the time traditionally used by the community to carry out traditional activities on the coast.

Furthermore, the data were analysed using qualitative thematic analysis techniques using the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as proposed by Miles and

Huberman (Annisa & Mailani, 2023; Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019; Putri et al., 2020). The analysis process was conducted inductively and interpretively, focusing on the meanings constructed by participants in their experience of the *maccera tasi'* tradition. The results of the analysis are examined within the framework of anthropological communication theory to interpret the changing cultural meanings and social relations that influence the preservation or abandonment of traditions in the context of modernisation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this study show that the *maccera tasi'* tradition still has a very strong meaning in the collective consciousness of the Carede fishing community, Palopo City. Although it has no longer been held since 2017, the fishermen still consider it as a form of gratitude to God for the sustenance they get from the sea. This tradition is not only seen as an ordinary traditional event, but as a symbol of spiritual communication between humans, nature, and the Creator. As expressed by one of the fishermen, "*We do maccera tasi' as a thank you, because the sea has given us life every day.*"

This meaning is reflected in the informants' narratives, which state that this tradition is an important moment in strengthening social relations between residents and fostering the spirit of gotong royong. In its implementation, the community is actively involved from preparation to the peak day, including in the collection of funds independently. This indicates that *maccera tasi'* also functions as a medium for social solidarity.

However, some informants regretted that the implementation of this tradition has stopped over the past five years. The main factor cited was the decline in community belief in certain customary practices that are considered less in line with Islamic teachings, such as the slaughter of animals as offerings. In addition, the absence of funding allocations from the government and the lack of institutional support are additional causes for the cessation of this activity.

The findings also show that modernisation has had a major influence on the changing attitudes of fishing communities. The influx of technology and information has shifted the younger generation's perspective on local cultural heritage. Some of them consider that traditions such as *maccera tasi'* are no longer relevant and need to be replaced with new forms of activities that are more modern and rational.

No.	Key Finding Themes	Sub-Findings	Source of Information
1.	The Meaning of Maccera Tasi' Tradition	Gratitude for marine products, honouring ancestors, warding off bad luck	Interviews with fishermen and traditional leaders
2.	Social Role of Tradition	Strengthen social solidarity, mutual aid, collective communication	Field observation
3.	Causes of Tradition Breakdown	Lack of funding, conflicting values with Islamic teachings, lack of OPD support	Informants from the Culture Office
4.	Influence of Modernisation	Younger generation less interested, changing values towards adat	Young resident interview
5.	Proposed Revitalisation of Traditions	Repackaged as a cultural-religious festival, collaboration with the government	Community and RT/RW leaders

The relationship between themes shows that the symbolic meaning and social function of the maccera tasi' tradition are mutually reinforcing. The spiritual meaning encourages collective practices that strengthen solidarity, but the influence of modernisation and new values has resulted in a mismatch that has led to the cessation of these cultural practices. However, some community leaders and the older generation are still working to revive the tradition in a format that is more in line with Islamic values. They propose that this traditional event be repackaged into a religious cultural festival and made an annual agenda for regional cultural tourism. This shows that there is still room for cultural negotiation between tradition preservation and value renewal.

Overall, the results of this study reveal that *maccera tasi'* has complex social, spiritual and symbolic dimensions. It functions as a mechanism for social integration as well as an expression of local values. However, its sustainability is highly dependent on the support of the community, the government, and successful adaptation to the context of religious values and the times.

Discussion

The results showed that the *maccera tasi'* tradition has a strong symbolic meaning for the fishing community in Carede, Palopo City. This tradition is understood as a form of gratitude for the abundance of sea products, as well as respect for ancestors who have passed on knowledge and life values (Junida, 2019; Mustamin, 2016). In addition, the implementation of this tradition is also a form of hope for safety and prosperity in living life as a fisherman. Through this activity, the community not only carries out traditional rituals, but also strengthens their spiritual relationship with God and maintains harmony with the surrounding nature and fellow humans.

Furthermore, the implementation of this tradition also shows its social function in strengthening relationships between residents through gotong royong, solidarity, and social interaction. As asserted by Koentjaraningrat, culture is not only the result of copyright, taste, and karsa, but also the value system that maintains the social structure of society (Arif Musthofa & Ali, 2021; Sumarto, 2019; Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022). The *maccera tasi'* tradition reflects these values because it involves the collective participation of the community in all stages of implementation, from the collection of funds to the implementation of traditional events at the harbour.

However, modernisation and the development of religious understanding have brought significant changes to the sustainability of this tradition. The introduction of new, more rational values and religious teachings that reject the practice of symbolic offerings such as animal sacrifices to the sea have influenced people's perspectives, especially the younger generation. This finding is consistent with Van Reusen's view that tradition is a dynamic entity and can change according to social and cultural conditions (Afriansyah et al., 2024; Erynnayati et al., 2021; Kuriandini & Artono, 2021).

In this context, there is a process of *acculturation* between customary values and religious values that dominate community life. Some people try to combine the two value systems by proposing a transformation of the *maccera tasi'* tradition into a more Sharia-compliant activity, such as praying together at sea without the element of offerings. This illustrates the important process of *cultural negotiation* in maintaining ancestral heritage without ignoring the Islamic values adopted by the majority of the community.

On the other hand, the lack of local government attention and the absence of a special budget for cultural preservation are structural obstacles in reviving this tradition. This confirms the important role of formal institutions in supporting the revitalisation of local culture. The concept of

cultural sustainability emphasises that cultural preservation requires collaboration between the community and the government so that traditions are not only maintained as romanticism of the past (Pattiwael, 2018; Resky Annisa Damayanti et al., 2024; Romadhona et al., 2022), but also as potential for identity development and cultural tourism.

Thus, the maccera tasi' tradition is at a critical point between preservation and transformation. This research confirms that cultural preservation cannot be done statically, but must be adjusted to the dynamics of the times and the prevailing values. In the context of communication anthropology, the sustainability of traditions is determined by the ability of communities to reinterpret cultural symbols and practices in accordance with the social and religious developments they face. The communication anthropology approach enriches the analysis because it not only sees tradition as a symbolic practice, but also as a cross-generational communication process full of meaning. By understanding local narratives, ritual symbolism and community interactions during the implementation of traditions, this approach reveals the dynamics of adaptation and negotiation of meaning that occur in social and religious changes in coastal communities.

CONCLUSION

This research reflects that the maccera tasi' tradition has symbolic depth and social values that reflect the attachment of coastal communities to nature, spirituality and their social relations. This tradition is not only about rites, but also about how people build cultural communication and negotiate identity amidst changing values and times. The absence of this tradition since 2017 indicates the friction between local values, modernisation and religious reinterpretation. However, the potential for revitalisation remains open if there is an inclusive integration between local wisdom and contextual religious approaches. Theoretically, this study enriches the field of communication anthropology by showing how cultural symbols are not only inherited, but also negotiated and recontextualised by the communities that experience them. In addition, the results provide a practical contribution to local culture preservation strategies based on community participation and intersectoral collaboration.

This research shows the existence of cultural dynamics in coastal communities that continue to adapt to changing times. Although this tradition is starting to be abandoned, some people still have the desire to revitalise *maccera tasi'* in a form that is more in line with Islamic values and the current context. Thus, the results of this study not only illustrate the meaning of tradition from an anthropological and communicative perspective, but also open space for the development of cultural policies based on local wisdom and religious values. Local traditions such as *maccera tasi'* have the potential to live on if they can be repackaged in a contextualised, inclusive and sustainable format.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

RR was responsible for the conceptualisation, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the study. RR also wrote and revised the manuscript, approved the final version, and was responsible for all aspects of the study.

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