

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The State of Timor Leste, an independent nation in the 21st century with the official name *Republica Democratica de Timor Leste* (RDTL) is a small country located on the northern continents of Australia and the South of the Republic of Indonesia. The State of Timor Leste has a long history of being able to stand as an independent nation like now because the State of Timor Leste was once occupied by 3 (three) nations, namely, Portuguese for 450 years, Japan for 3 years and Indonesia for 24 years (Soares 2009). The idea of releasing Timor Leste started from the search for two options for solving the Timor Leste problem through a referendum by President BJ Habibie on January 27, 1999. The first option is to present special autonomy and the second option is the separation of East Timor (the name of Timor Leste as the 27th province under the auspices of the Republic of Indonesia) from Indonesia (Raharjo 2018).

On August 30, 1999, the result was 78.5% The people of Timor Leste chose to reject the Broad Autonomy offered by the Government of Indonesia and 21.5% who accepted the Broad autonomy offered by the Government of Indonesia. As a result of the referendum, Timor Leste was separated by Indonesia as the 27th Province Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Timor Leste has a wide variety of ethnic and linguistic cultures (the Bunak, the Kemak, Tetun, Mambae, Fataluku, Makasae, Galole, Nauweti, Baikenu, Tokodede, etc.) which deserve appreciation, development, as well as preservation. Every community lives in a particular area with a set of values, norms, customs, and behaviors that are learned from generation to generation. These values, norms, and customs are believed to be legacy of their ancestors.

The Law issued by the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste article 59, paragraph 5 states that every citizen has the right to develop and preserve culture and must maintain the cultural heritage of high value and strengthen the unity and integrity of the nation (Margarida Ramos 2016).

Timor Leste is one of the countries that has tourism potentials in terms of traditional dance and culture which need to be developed. One of the dances, named Bidu, is the beauty expression of the human soul that is expressed in the form of body movements. Bidu dance has meanings both in real life and in other natural life.

Dances in East Timor not only connect to nature and humans in a harmonious relationship but also bring people closer to love and maintain the life of the existing natural culture. One of the existing dances that needs to be developed in Timor Leste is the Bidu dance (Collins et al. 2006).

Bidu dance is a traditional dance from Viqueque which is performed to welcome guests. The dance is claimed to represent the original identity of the Viqueque people. Bidu dance is performed by female dancers, usually 8 dancers, wrapped in their traditional costume and they dance with distinctive movement. Bidu dance is one of

the most famous traditional dances in Viqueque district. It is often played by female dancers to welcome guests, and celebrate cultural events (Hohe and Nixon 2003).

Etymology district Viqueque comes from Tetun terik Wekeke. *We (Be)* mean water and *Keke (kelu)* mean bracelet that is usually used by women in hand. The arrival of Portuguese in Timor entered the Viqueque area, the Portuguese changed Wekeke to Viqueque and this name is known to this day. Viqueque geography district with an area of 1,880.39 km and has 5 administrative posts namely, Uatucarbao, Uatulari, Viqueque Villa, Lacluta, and Ossu. The majority of Viqueque people are Catholic, and the languages that are often spoken are Tetun Terik, Nau eti, and Kairui. And according to the census 2015, there are 76.033 of the population in Viqueque. Viqueque District is an area of Timor-Leste which is located in the north part close to the land border with district Lautem (Raharjo 2018).

Viqueque people have a strong belief in tradition from the past based on the legend or history of their ancestors. They still maintain their original culture such as using the original language of each sub-ethnic, celebrate some traditional events, and do such traditional rituals. Up to the present, people still keep their culture and tradition. There are some traditional dances that are still maintained and played in some events. Music and dance are important elements that should exist in each event or celebration in the Viqueque district. Viqueque dance is a kind of dance that is shown in important or cultural events and also as a welcome dance to a big event or important guest in the district (Margarida Ramos 2016).

However, according to the observations made by the writer is that the process of developing dances in Timor Leste has not been fully modernized by the government of East Timor, in particular the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Timor Leste which take over to develop all tourism potential, both nature tourism, traditional dance and local culture (Paulino 2017).

Therefore, the Writer is interested to do the research on Bidu dance, and the research is entitled *A Study on Gestures and Meanings in Bidu dance of Viqueque Community in East Timor*. With this research, it is hoped that it can provide benefits for the development and preservation of cultural dance in Timor Leste. So, hope for the future can have a good impact on progress and development dances in Timor Leste. In particular, the surrounding community which is in the Bidu dance environment. In addition, it can introduce traditional dances in Timor Leste, to the younger generations by participating in development of traditional dances especially in East Timor.

The writer thinks that the research about the dance, especially in the Viqueque district is important because by knowing more about it, people will feel more interested to see the dance, to maintain the dance, to feel more love with the dance, and to get some knowledge about their own culture. From this research, the writer hopes that people can understand more about the culture of traditional dance, not just about the dance but also about the story behind the dance, like the meaning of gestures in dance.

This idea is a type of customary folklore and this is a good way to promote or to show East Timor which is related to cultural things especially of Viqueque District and could be better known not only in East Timor but also can go to another city and country.

1.2 Field of the Study

This research is related to folklore, especially on customary folklore. This research focuses on finding out the gestures and their meanings in the Bidu dance of the Viqueque people.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research is specific to gestures and meanings analyses in the *Bidu dance of Viqueque people in East Timor*. In the first part, the writer is going to discuss the hand, leg, and body gestures in the dance, and the second part, the meanings of the gestures become the topic of discussion.

1.4 Research Questions

The writer formulates some problems related to Bidu dance which are:

1. What are the gestures in Bidu dance?
2. What are the meanings of each gesture in the Bidu dance of the Viqueque People?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems mentioned above, this research is conducted to achieve some objectives:

1. To describe the gestures in Bidu dance.
2. To explain the meanings of each gesture in Bidu dance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to know more about the dance and also the meaning of the gestures in the dances. The writer hopes that the result of this research could give some information or knowledge about East Timor especially to society and people around the world. In addition, the writer also expects that the results of this study will provide valuable input about traditional dance.

1.7 Definition of Term

1.7.1 Gesture

A gesture is a specific bodily movement that reinforces a verbal message or conveys a particular thought or emotion.

1.7.2 Dance as a Customary Folklore

Dance is a sequence of movements, someone moving their body. It transmits culture, emotions, tells stories and can be a testimony of a historical moment or a place of origin (Woolhouse and Lai 2014).

As mentioned before, dance is a form of customary folklore. Customary Folklore is the expression body of culture shared by a particular group of people; it encompasses

the traditions common to that culture, subculture or group. This includes oral traditions such as tales' proverbs and jokes. They include material culture, ranging from traditional building styles to handmade toys common to the group (Foulidi, Katsadoros, and Papakitsos 2020).

