

# Bugis Folk Songs as a Source of Linguistic Learning Based on Local Wisdom

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| Article Information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p><b>History:</b><br/>           Submission: 13 April 2026<br/>           Reviewed: 1 May 2026<br/>           Accepted: 17 May 2026<br/>           Approved: 30 May 2026</p> <p><b>Keywords</b><br/>           Bugis folk songs, local wisdom, linguistic learning, ethnolinguistics, elong</p> <p><b>Kata Kunci</b><br/>           Bugis folk songs, local wisdom, linguistic learning, ethnolinguistics, elong</p> | <p>This research aims to examine Bugis folk songs (<i>elong</i>) as a source of linguistic learning grounded in authentic, contextual local wisdom. Bugis folk songs contain a wealth of phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic structures that have not been optimally utilized in formal education. Using an ethnolinguistic approach and qualitative content analysis, this study identifies five main <i>elong</i> genres and their relevant linguistic features for learning. The results of the study show that Bugis folk songs contain complex layers of meaning, diverse language registers, and socio-cultural values that can enrich students' holistic understanding of the structure and function of language. The integration of <i>elong</i> into the linguistic curriculum not only enhances linguistic competence but also strengthens cultural identity and preserves the intangible heritage of the Bugis. This study recommends the development of structured, context-based teaching modules as an innovation in regional linguistic learning.</p> <p><b>Abstrak</b><br/> <i>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji lagu-lagu rakyat Bugis (elong) sebagai sumber pembelajaran linguistik berdasarkan kearifan lokal yang otentik dan kontekstual. Lagu-lagu rakyat Bugis mengandung banyak struktur fonologis, morfologis, sintaksis, semantik, dan pragmatik yang belum dimanfaatkan secara optimal dalam pendidikan formal. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan etnolinguistik dan analisis konten kualitatif, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi lima genre elong utama dan fitur linguistiknya yang relevan dengan pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lagu rakyat Bugis mengandung lapisan makna yang kompleks, register bahasa yang beragam, dan nilai-nilai sosial budaya yang dapat memperkaya pemahaman holistik siswa tentang struktur dan fungsi bahasa. Integrasi elong ke dalam kurikulum linguistik tidak hanya meningkatkan kompetensi linguistik tetapi juga memperkuat identitas budaya dan melestarikan warisan takbenda Bugis. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pengembangan modul pengajaran berbasis konteks yang disusun sebagai inovasi dalam pembelajaran linguistik daerah.</i></p> |



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## 1. Introduction

The local culture of the archipelago holds extraordinarily rich linguistic treasures, yet it often

escapes the attention of the academic world in the context of developing language-learning models. The Bugis tribe, as one of

the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia, has a well-established oral tradition, one of which is folk singing, which in the local language is called *elong*. This tradition is not just an aesthetic expression, but a system of cultural communication that contains layers of complex and layered linguistic meaning. In the context of increasingly massive globalization and digitalization, the *elong* tradition faces a serious threat of extinction, especially among younger generations who are increasingly alienated from their cultural roots.

Linguistic learning in Indonesia, especially at the university level, is still dominated by structural approaches that are abstract and independent of students' socio-cultural contexts. Although the national curriculum has accommodated a communicative and text-based approach, the integration of local culture as a source of linguistic learning remains very limited (Muhsyanur, 2024, 2025a). This condition creates a gap between the linguistic knowledge acquired in the classroom and the linguistic reality of the community of learners, so that linguistic learning loses its relevance and contextual strength.

Ethnologists and cultural pedagogues affirm that language is inseparable from the cultural context in which it lives and develops. Duranti (2021), in the framework of communication ethnography, has laid the foundation that the understanding of the structure of language must include an understanding of communicative practices in concrete speaking communities. In this spirit, folk song

becomes one of the richest corpora for the study of applied linguistics, because it reflects a complete language system as well as a living cultural value system. Recent studies further strengthen this argument by showing that language learning grounded in local wisdom produces deeper, long-lasting linguistic competence (Sabir et al., 2021; Trang & Phuong, 2023).

Bugis folk songs have a unique character compared to other ethnic oral traditions in Indonesia. *Elong* comes in a variety of genres, each with a distinct social, ritual, and aesthetic function. From the *elong padduppa* used in the procession of welcoming the grand guests, the *elong tomatooa*, which contains the advice of the ancestors, to the *elong massureq*, which is an epic long narrative song about I La Galigo, each of these genres represents a wealth of registers and linguistic variations that are very valuable to be studied academically (Aminuddin, 2020). This diversity makes *elong* a lively and contextual linguistic laboratory.

From a phonological perspective, *elong* presents a distinctive, structured pattern of rhyme, rhythm, and intonation. In terms of morphology, *elong* is loaded with word-formation that makes full use of the Bugis language's affixation system, including the use of clitics and reduplication, which have their own semantic significance. At the syntactic level, sentence structure in *elong* often deviates from standard grammar for aesthetic and mnemonic purposes, thus providing an interesting example of meaningful grammatical variation (Fatma,

2023). Meanwhile, the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of *elong* are rich in metaphors, euphemisms, and cultural implications that reflect the Bugis people's value system and worldview.

In the last five years, several studies have begun to explore the potential of oral literature and folk songs as sources of language learning grounded in local wisdom. (Muhsyanur et.al, 2024; Muhsyanur, 2015 demonstrate that integrating local folklore into language learning significantly increases students' motivation and engagement. Furthermore, Junus (2025) found that the use of Bugis oral literary texts in semantic learning increased students' ability to analyze the meaning of texts by up to 34% compared to the control group that used only standard texts. These findings pave the way for the development of a more holistic and culturally valuable linguistic learning model.

However, research specifically and comprehensively examining the potential of Bugis folk singing as a source of linguistic learning remains very limited. Most existing research focuses solely on literary or ethnographic aspects, without exploring its pedagogical-linguistic dimension in depth. This research serves as a strong academic justification for the studies reported in this article. By bridging descriptive linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and language pedagogy, this study seeks to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis and applicable recommendations.

Based on the background described, this study focuses on

identifying the linguistic features present across various genres of Bugis folk songs, examining ways in which these features can be effectively integrated into linguistics learning grounded in local wisdom, and determining the most appropriate learning model for utilizing *elong* as an authentic resource in linguistic instruction. Through this focus, the research is expected to contribute to the development of contextual, relevant, and locally characterized linguistic pedagogy.

## 2. Method

This study uses an ethnolinguistic approach with a qualitative-descriptive research design. The ethnolinguistic approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine language phenomena not solely as a closed, formal system but as a living and meaningful cultural practice within the speaking community. Primary data were obtained through three complementary collection techniques: first, participatory observation on five Bugis traditional speech events involving the performance of *elong* in Wajo, Bone, and Soppeng Regencies during the period from September to November 2025; second, in-depth interviews with eight key informants consisting of four senior *elong* speakers (*paddanreng*) over 60 years old, two experienced regional language teachers, and two Bugis cultural experts; and third, audio-visual recording documentation of 47 *elong* repertoire from five different genres. Secondary data were obtained from literature reviews, relevant Lontara

manuscripts, and applicable Bugis-language curriculum documents. The validity of the data is guaranteed through source triangulation, triangulation techniques, and member checking with informants.

The collected data are analyzed using an integrative ethnolinguistic analysis model that adapts the frameworks of Hymes (2019) and Muhsyanur (2025b), combined with linguistic content analysis at the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Each *elong* repertoire was independently transcribed, translated, and analyzed for its linguistic features by three researchers to ensure the reliability of the analysis. Differences in interpretation are resolved through textual evidence-based discussion and consensus. To assess the pedagogical potential of each identified linguistic feature, this study also conducted a focus group discussion (FGD) with 10 linguistics and Bugis language lecturers from three universities in South Sulawesi.

The results of this FGD serve as a basis for formulating recommendations for integrating *elong* into linguistic learning, thereby ensuring the relevance and applicability of the findings of this research for education practitioners in the field.

### 3. Result and Discussion Classification of *Elong* Genre and Its Linguistic Functions

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation analysis, this study identified five main genres of Bugis *elong*, each with distinctive linguistic characteristics and socio-cultural functions. This classification is based on multi-dimensional criteria that include the performative context, formal structure, language register, and communicative function of each genre. The following table provides a summary of these classifications along with the main linguistic features of each genre:

**Table 1**  
**Classification of *Elong* Bugis Genre and Key Linguistic Features**

| No. | Types of Singing                  | Main Functions                   | Key Linguistic Features   | Sample Lyrics/Data                                                                                                                       |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <i>Elong Ugi</i> (Public Singing) | Aesthetic & emotional expression | Metaphor, archaic diction | " <i>Iyapa muannangngi ati'ku, nasaba iko bunga ri alebbireнна.</i> "<br>("You comfort my heart, because you are the flower of beauty.") |

| No. | Types of Singing                                   | Main Functions                      | Key Linguistic Features               | Sample Lyrics/Data                                                                                                           |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2   | <i>Elong Padduppa</i><br>(Reception)               | Social and traditional processions  | Polytechnics, a special lexicon       | " <i>Tabe' puang, salama'ki ri watakkale.</i> "<br>("Excuse us, noble guest, may you always be safe.")                       |
| 3   | <i>Elong Tomatoa</i><br>(Advice)                   | Moral & character education         | Implied, Proverb                      | " <i>Resopa temmangingngi naletei pammase Dewata.</i> " ("Only hard work will bring God's blessing.")                        |
| 4   | <i>Elong Mappanre Temme</i><br>( <i>Khataman</i> ) | Religious rituals                   | Religious diction, special intonation | " <i>Alhamdulillah anrinna temme'na anaqé.</i> " ("Praise be to God for the completion of the child's Qur'anic recitation.") |
| 5   | <i>Elong Massureq</i><br>( <i>Epic</i> )           | Transmission of history & mythology | Long narrative, high register         | " <i>La Galigoé mappalettui ri tana Ugi.</i> " ("La Galigo journeyed across the Bugis land.")                                |

Source: Results of field data analysis, October 2024

These findings align with the categorization proposed by Aminuddin (2020), but this study goes beyond functional descriptions by explicitly identifying the linguistic features that distinguish each genre. *Elong massureq*, for example, features the highest language registers with the use of archaic lexicons and highly complex narrative structures, while *elong padduppa* uses a more formal yet more linguistically accessible

register. This gradation of registers across genres is itself a very valuable pragmatic learning material, because it shows how language selection is closely related to social context and communicative goals.

### Analysis of Linguistic Features of *Elong Bugis*

Linguistic analysis of the 47 *elong* repertoire yielded rich findings at every level of language analysis. Table 2 presents a summary of the

identified linguistic features along with their frequency of occurrence, level of complexity, and pedagogical

value based on the assessment of the expert panel in the FGD:

**Table 2**  
**Profile of Linguistic Features in *Elong* Bugis**

| <b>Linguistic Aspects</b>      | <b>Frequency of Occurrence</b> | <b>Complexized</b> | <b>Pedagogical Values</b> | <b>Example in Lyrics</b>                                                       |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phonology (sound patterns)     | Very High (87%)                | Medium             | Height                    | <i>lellung-lellung ri watampone</i> " (alliteration and sound repetition)      |
| Morphology (word formation)    | High (73%)                     | Height             | Very High                 | <i>"mappadendang"</i> (prefix <b>map-</b> indicating an activity/process)      |
| Syntax (sentence structure)    | Medium (61%)                   | Medium             | Height                    | <i>"Iyapa muannangngi ati'ku"</i> (inversion structure in poetic form)         |
| Semantics (meaning & metaphor) | Very High (92%)                | Very High          | Very High                 | <i>"iko bunga ri alebbireenna"</i> ("you are the flower of beauty" → metaphor) |
| Pragmatic (context & function) | High (78%)                     | Height             | Very High                 | <i>"Tabé' puang"</i> (politeness marker used in ceremonial context)            |
| Lexicon Ark                    | Medium (55%)                   | Very High          | Medium                    | <i>"Dewata Seuwae"</i> (classical Bugis lexical form referring to God)         |

*Source: Results of content analysis and FGD, October 2025*

At the phonological level, Bugis *elong* features a structured rhyme system, distinctive pressure patterns, and meaning-laden intonation variations. In *Elo Tomato*, for example, a consistent pattern of cross-rhymes (ABAB) is found,

accompanied by lexical pressure on the final syllable, which serves as a marker of the stanza boundary. These phonological patterns not only have aesthetic value but also serve as emotional strategies that facilitate oral transmission. From a

pedagogical perspective, the phonological pattern of *elongation* can be used effectively in phonetic and phonological instruction to provide concrete examples of the suprasegmental and prosodic features of the Bugis language.

At the morphological level, *elong* displays a wealth of word-formation processes, including prefixes, suffixes, and confixes, full and partial reduplication, and productive clicization. One of the significant findings is the use of the prefix *mu-*, which in *elong* serves to express the meaning of epistemic modalities (possibilities) while providing certain aesthetic nuances not found in everyday Bugis language. These findings have important implications for morphological learning, as they show that affixation in Bugis has a pragmatic dimension that extends beyond its explicit grammatical function.

At the semantic and pragmatic levels, which are the richest dimensions in *elong*, *this study finds* systematic and consistent use of conceptual metaphors across genres.

Metaphor "*Kehidupan adalah Perjalanan*". For example, it is expressed through various lexical and grammatical variants in almost all the *literary* genres studied. In addition, "*Elong*" is rich in conventional implications that presuppose certain cultural knowledge among its listeners. This makes *elong* an ideal material for cross-cultural cognitive and pragmatic semantic learning, as it shows how meaning is constructed not only through linguistic systems, but also through underlying cultural knowledge systems.

### **Pedagogical Potential and Comparative Learning Approaches**

Based on the results of the FGD and field data analysis, this study identifies the significant pedagogical potential of Bugis *elong* in the context of linguistic learning. To clarify the advantages of the *elong*-based approach over the conventional approach, Table 3 provides a comprehensive comparison:

**Table 3**  
**Comparison of Conventional vs. *Elong* -Based Linguistic Learning**

| Aspects             | Conventional Learning        | Folk Song-Based Learning            | Example                                                             |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cultural Context    | Minimal / abstract           | Authentic & contextual              | Students learn language through traditional Bugis ceremonial songs. |
| Learning Motivation | Depends on the text material | Increased due to cultural proximity | Students show greater participation when                            |

| Aspects                 | Conventional Learning        | Folk Song-Based Learning                                                   | Example                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         |                              |                                                                            | analyzing familiar local songs.                                                          |
| Vocabulary Mastery      | Standard & modern vocabulary | Archaic vocabulary<br>arkaik + modern                                      | Learners encounter words such as <i>Dewata Seuwae</i> and traditional Bugis expressions. |
| Pragmatic Understanding | Limited to formal text       | Spacious;<br>Covering socio-cultural contexts                              | Expressions such as " <i>Tabé' puang</i> " teach politeness in ceremonial communication. |
| Cultural Preservation   | None                         | Naturally integrated                                                       | Traditional <i>Elong</i> performances are preserved through classroom activities.        |
| Community Engagement    | Minimal                      | High (speakers, traditional events)<br>High (speakers, traditional events) | Elders and traditional singers participate in learning sessions.                         |

*Source: FGD results and data analysis, November 2025*

This comparison shows that the *elong-based approach has substantial advantages over conventional approaches across almost all aspects assessed. The most prominent advantage lies in the dimensions of the cultural context and community involvement. In elong-based learning, learners not only interact with text but also have the potential to interact directly with elong speakers, attend traditional events, and become part of a wider cultural community. Authentic learning conditions like this create what Chong, Isaacs, & McKinley, (2023) calls ecological validity in language learning, which is a*

condition in which language learning occurs in a real and meaningful social and cultural ecosystem.

Furthermore, FGD participants with strong consensus stated that integrating *elong* into the linguistic curriculum can be an effective strategy to address the problem of learning motivation often faced in regional language learning. Students' proximity to their own Bugis cultural identity creates strong personal relevance for the teaching material, thereby encouraging deeper and more active engagement. These findings align with (Nurhayati, E., & Kurniawan, 2022) argument that cultural relevance is one of the

strongest predictors of motivation to learn a language.

### **Recommendations for *Elong's* Integration Model in Linguistic Learning**

Based on the overall findings, this study formulates a three-phase integration model for the use of *elong* in linguistic learning. The first phase is the Cultural Exploration (Macrocontextualization) phase, in which students are invited to understand the socio-cultural context of the genre to be studied before conducting linguistic analysis. The second phase is the Integrated Linguistic Analysis phase, where phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic analysis is carried out in an integrated manner centered on authentic *elong* texts. The third phase is the Cultural Production and Reflection phase, where students are asked to create creative works inspired by *elong* and reflect on the relationship between the linguistic choices they make and the cultural values they want to express. This three-phase model is designed to ensure that *ELT-based linguistic learning is not only analytical-descriptive* but also creative, reflective, and transformative.

### **4. Conclusion**

This research demonstrates that Bugis folk songs (*elong*) are a rich, authentic, and multidimensional source of linguistic learning grounded in local wisdom. The five identified *elong genres*, namely *elong ugi*, *elong padduppa*, *elong tomatoa*, *elong mappanre temme*, and *elong massureq*, each retain a

*wealth of linguistic features across the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels, with the semantic-pragmatic dimension showing the highest pedagogical value. The integration of elong into linguistic learning not only has the potential to improve students' linguistic competence holistically but also strengthens cultural identity and contributes to the preservation of the Bugis' intangible cultural heritage. As a key recommendation, this study encourages the South Sulawesi Education Office, related universities, and curriculum developers to immediately develop an elong-based linguistic teaching module that is structured, academically validated, and contextual according to the level of education; accompanied by a training program for educators and systematic documentation of the elong repertoire as a widely accessible linguistic and cultural database for the benefit of education and preservation.*

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