

# **RESISTIVE LITERATURE IN THE DISCOURSE OF SUFISM: A CONTEXTUAL LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE TEACHINGS OF SHEIKH YUSUF AL-MAKASSARY**

*(Literatur Resistif dalam Wacana Tasawuf: Kajian Linguistik Kontekstual terhadap  
Ajaran Syekh Yusuf al-Makassari)*

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the Sufi teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as a form of resistive literature, namely a spiritual discourse that functions as a resistance against physical colonization, cultural domination, and epistemic oppression during the colonial period. The works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary are understood as a form of resistive literature within the framework of Sufism that integrates spiritual struggle with social and intellectual liberation. The Contextual Linguistics approach is used to analyze the use of language in Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's Sufi works that convey spiritual and social resistance in a subtle and profound way. Texts such as *Zubdat al-Asrār*; *Yawaqit al-Haqāiq*, as well as his letters and wills to rulers and people show that Sufism is not merely an individual spiritual path, but also a strategy for collective liberation from various forms of colonialism. Through an analysis of the aspects of field (spiritual-political themes), tenor (the relationship between the writer and the reader in the context of power), and mode (symbolic and metaphorical delivery style), it was found that the Sufism teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary contain linguistic structures that challenge hegemonic power, give voice to silenced voices, and reaffirm the spiritual identity of the archipelago. Three forms of resistive literature in Sufism discourse include resistance in symbolic language, Sufi linguistic strategies as resistance, and historical contextualization. Based on the analysis and discussion of the data, resistive literary discourse was found in the works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary which includes the Sufism language of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as a symbol of epistemic resistance, Sufi intertextuality and liberation politics, contextual discourse structures: metaphors and spiritual symbols as political signals, resistive literature based on tauhid, and covert communication strategies (rhetorical *taqiyyah*). This study recommends further development of the study of Nusantara resistive Sufism linguistics as a contribution to the decolonization of Islamic discourse and spiritual language in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Contextual Linguistics; Resistive Literature; Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary; Spiritual Liberation; Sufism*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Literature is not only a vessel for the beauty of language, but also a medium for resistance against oppression, injustice, and cultural domination. In the intellectual history of Islam, particularly in the Indonesian archipelago, a form of literature emerged that spoke not only of love and wisdom, but also of spiritual and social liberation. One of the main figures in this tradition was Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary (1626–1699), a great scholar, great Sufi, and freedom fighter who left a spiritual and intellectual legacy in the form of writings, letters, and Sufi treatises. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's works were born from the

turbulent vortex of history: Dutch VOC colonial rule, political betrayal, and long physical exile. Yet, in this isolation, he did not stop writing and educating the community. Through Sufistic treatises such as *Zubdat al-Asrār* and *Yawaqit al-Haqāiq*, as well as letters to kings and his students, he conveyed messages that not only contained spiritual depth, but also the spirit of liberation from worldly shackles and colonialism. Sufism in his teachings is not a way of escape, but a silent way of resistance and is rooted in monotheism.

This study is important because the works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary are often read only within a private-spiritual framework, even though his texts have a stirring power and a resistance to real domination. Thus, the Sufi teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary can be confirmed as part of the "resistive literature" of the Archipelago that voices spiritual jihad as well as intellectual jihad. This study aims to identify elements of resistive literature in the Sufi teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary, analyze the use of language and symbols in conveying messages of spiritual and social resistance, and interpret these works in the colonial and Sufi contexts of the Archipelago in a contextual linguistic manner. The benefit of this study is to add to the treasury of linguistic studies, particularly in the development of a contextual linguistic approach to religious and Sufi texts. Another benefit is to offer a new perspective in reading the works of Nusantara scholars as a form of resistance and spiritual liberation, as well as encourage critical studies of the contextual and down-to-earth Islamic intellectual heritage.

This study employs a contextual linguistic approach to critically examine how the language in these texts conveys resistive messages. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding language structures in relation to social, political, and cultural contexts. Within this context, Sufism is read as a discourse, not merely a spiritual teaching, but as a form of linguistic and intellectual practice that serves as a means of resistance against colonial hegemony and the secularization of Islamic values. Studies on Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary generally focus on his biography and Sufism teachings (Azra, 2004; Yusuf, 2003), but few have analyzed him as a resistive literary discourse. Several studies on Sufi literature (Nasr, 1989) and Sufism resistance (Chittick, 2001) have provided space for the development of this study, but have not specifically integrated a contextual linguistic approach with Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's texts. Therefore, this study fills an important gap in the discourse of Islamic intellectual decolonization.

## ***B. METHOD***

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a focus on contextual linguistic analysis of Sufi texts written or taught by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary. The method used is contextual discourse analysis, which combines textual aspects (language structure), socio-historical context, and symbolic meaning in the construction of spiritual resistance.

## 1. Resistive Literary Theory

Resistive literature is a work of literature that embodies a spirit of resistance against oppression, domination, colonialism, or injustice. In this context, literary works are not only aesthetic expressions but also political and spiritual acts. Among the many ideas of experts regarding resistive literary theory, researchers use the opinions of Edward Said, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Frantz Fanon.

Said (1978) in his book *Orientalism*, argues that literature can be a field of resistance against colonial narratives. He observes how Orientalist discourse, dominated by a Western perspective, creates images of the East (the Middle East, Asia, etc.) that are often stereotypical, exotic, and demeaning. Said argues that literature, as part of this discourse, plays a role in constructing and reinforcing these narratives, but on the other hand, literature can also be a tool to dismantle and resist these narratives. Said explains that Orientalism is not merely the academic study of the East, but also a discourse involving Western power and domination, through Orientalism, creating an image of the East that suits its interests, often by denigrating and distorting reality. Thus, in Edward Said's perspective, literature is not only part of the problem, but also has the potential to be part of the solution in efforts to dismantle and resist harmful colonial narratives.

Ngũgĩ (1986) argued that language and literature play a central role in the struggle against cultural colonization. He argued that language is a vessel of culture and identity, and that the colonization of language by colonial powers is the most profound form of cultural domination. Ngũgĩ saw language as more than just a means of communication. For him, language is the vessel in which a people's culture, history, and identity are inscribed. By controlling a people's language, the colonizer also controls that people's way of thinking and worldview. Ngũgĩ argued that the eradication of a native language and its replacement with the colonizer's language is a deeply damaging act. This not only eliminates the ability to communicate in one's mother tongue but also eliminates access to the cultural and historical heritage embodied in that language. This can ultimately lead to a loss of identity and a sense of belonging.

Haddour (2021) and Fanon (1959) explain cultural resistance as an integral part of the decolonization struggle. Fanon argued that colonialism not only dominates physically and politically, but also culturally. Therefore, resistance to colonialism must include cultural liberation, namely the restoration of cultural identities and values that have been damaged or eliminated by the colonizers. Fanon saw culture not only as an aesthetic expression but also as a crucial tool in the decolonization struggle. Culture can be a means of building national consciousness, strengthening solidarity, and mobilizing society to fight the colonizers.

Fanon emphasized the importance of developing a national culture as part of the decolonization process. National culture must serve as a repository for the values, traditions, and identities of colonized peoples, which had previously been marginalized or

diminished by the colonizing culture. Fanon recognized the role of violence in the decolonization struggle, particularly in the context of violence perpetrated by the colonizer. However, he also saw violence as a tool that colonized peoples could use to resist oppression and restore their humanity. Beyond physical liberation, Fanon also emphasized the importance of mental decolonization. This means freeing oneself from ways of thinking and perceiving dictated by the colonizer, and building a new sense of self and identity. Thus, Fanon saw cultural resistance as an effort to restore the dignity and humanity of colonized peoples and to lay the foundations for a new society free from colonial domination.

## **2. Sufism as a Medium for Discourse of Resistance**

Sufism is not only a personal spiritual path, but also a socio-political force in confronting the hegemony of oppressive power. Researchers utilize various opinions that propose Sufism as a medium for resistance discourse, including those of Annemarie Schimmel, Fazlur Rahman and al-Attas, and Michel Foucault.

Schimmel (1975; 2013) stated that Sufism is both an inner practice and a cultural expression. Sufism, according to Schimmel, is not merely an individual spiritual practice, but also has broad social and cultural dimensions. The following are several important points related to Schimmel's statement that Sufism involves an individual's spiritual process of drawing closer to God, which includes self-purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*), spiritual practice, and the attainment of makrifat (true knowledge). Sufism is not limited to the individual realm, but is also manifested in various forms of art, literature, music, and social practices in society. Schimmel highlights how Sufism influences various aspects of life, from calligraphy to Sufi dance. Thus, Sufism, in Schimmel's view, has broad dimensions, not only as an individual spiritual practice but also as a rich and diverse cultural expression.

Rahman (1982) and Al-Attas (1993; 1998; 2021), two prominent Islamic thinkers, have different views but both strive to bridge the intellectual-spiritual dimension of Islam with reality. Rahman emphasizes the importance of "reform" and contextualization of Islamic thought, while Al-Attas focuses on "de-westernization" and a return to the pure roots of Islam. Both share the same goal of reviving Islam's strength in facing the challenges of the times, but with different approaches. Fazlur Rahman sees the need for a reformation of thought in facing modernity. He argues that classical Islamic thought needs to be reinterpreted to make it relevant to the current context. Rahman rejects literalism in understanding the Quran and Hadith and advocates the use of contextual interpretation methods. For him, Islam is not merely a set of static doctrines, but rather a dynamic system of values that can be applied in various contexts.

Al-Attas, on the other hand, argued that the main problem for Muslims was the loss of clarity in Islamic concepts and values due to the influence of Western thought. He called for a "de-westernization" of thought, an effort to purge Islamic thought of foreign

influences inconsistent with Islamic values. Al-Attas emphasized the importance of mastering Arabic and a deep understanding of the Quran and Sunnah as the foundation for rebuilding a solid Islamic civilization.

Rahman emphasized the aspects of "reform" and contextualization. He saw that Muslims needed to adapt to changing times. Al-Attas focused more on "de-westernization" and a return to the pure roots of Islam. He argued that Islamic thought had been influenced by destructive Western thought. Despite their different approaches, Rahman and al-Attas shared a common goal: to revive the strength of Islam in facing the challenges of the times, to build a strong and dignified Islamic civilization, and to strengthen the Islamic identity of Muslims. Both Fazlur Rahman and Al-Attas made important contributions in bridging the intellectual-spiritual dimensions of Islam with reality. Rahman offered a more progressive approach by emphasizing contextualization, while Al-Attas emphasized a return to the pure roots of Islam. Both, with their different approaches, provided rich and valuable thoughts for Muslims in facing the challenges of the times.

Foucault (1978) and (1979) emphasized that spirituality can be a form of resistance against a repressive system, particularly in his article "*À quoi rêvent les Iraniens?*", which describes the Iranian Revolution. He stated that spirituality can be a form of resistance against a repressive system. It means that spirituality transforms into a movement, a form of resistance against acts of injustice. Foucault saw that Islamic spirituality became a powerful force in opposing the repressive system of the Shah of Iran, which was highly modernist, secular, and supported by the West. This differs from other patterns of revolution, which are usually based on class or secular ideology. Foucault called this the concept of political spirituality. He called the Iranian revolution the moment when political spirituality was born, namely when religion and spirituality were no longer merely personal matters, but became a collective force for socio-political change. According to him, this shows that spirituality is not merely an escape, but can be an active form of resistance against the prolonged oppression carried out by those in power.

The teachings of Sufism based on the *tarekat* model of the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary are a path of purification of inner and outer morals, which allows it to become a medium for discourse against evil, evil and injustice that is contrary to its teachings. This teaching prioritizes holiness, justice, compassion and God's mercy towards His creatures. Circumstances that are contrary to this make a congregation able to turn into a movement and collective force to fight all forms of injustice, oppression or tyranny that occur in society.

### **3. The Teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as Resistive Literature**

The works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary are full of Sufi and political meaning. His writings are not only spiritual doctrines, but also advice on resistance against Dutch colonialism. His treatises contain spiritual symbolism that disguises messages of awakening. Spiritual symbolism is the deep meaning of signs, symbols, or symbols that

connect external reality with internal or transcendent reality. These symbols function as a "bridge" between the sensory world and the spiritual world, between the material world and the Divine. In other words, spiritual symbolism reveals the hidden meaning (inner) behind the external form (zahir). The function of spiritual symbolism, namely (1) a medium of communication with the transcendent, so symbols function to convey meanings that cannot be expressed directly with ordinary language. For example, light symbolizes knowledge and the presence of God; (2) spiritual education, symbols are used to guide humans to understand the essence of life, for example the symbol of the journey (suluk) in Sufism as a metaphor for the soul's journey towards God; (3) bringing cosmic awareness, symbolism helps humans realize their connectedness with the universe, for example the circle symbolizes perfection and eternity; and (4) healing the soul, spiritual symbols are often used in dhikr practices, prayers, or rituals as a means of cleansing the heart and calming the mind.

Halliday and Hasan (1989) assert that language cannot be understood separately from its situational and cultural contexts. Language is a social practice: texts always represent and are influenced by socio-cultural realities such as keywords of *tariqah*, *hijrah*, *jihad*, and *mahabbah* contain layers of contextual meaning. Therefore, the word *tariqah* does not stop at personal dhikr, but becomes a path for collective movement to fight oppression. The word *hijrah* is not only the physical migration of the prophet or the exile of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary, but a constant transformation of values. Then the word *jihād* has a layered meaning, namely, an inner meaning to fight against lust, but externally it is against colonialism, and now it means fighting against an unjust system of power. Similarly, the word *mahabbah* means the inner energy that animates *tarekat*, *hijrah*, and *jihad*, so that the struggle is always based on love for the Almighty.

The contextual layer of meaning means that every Islamic spiritual term does not have a single meaning, but lives according to space and time. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary, for example, understands *ṭarīqah*, *hijrah*, and *jihad* not only as an inner dimension (sufism), but also as a strategy for socio-political struggle against colonialism. Meanwhile, the *maḥabbah* becomes the driving spirit, so that the struggle and *suluk* do not lose Divine love. This indicates that the struggle never goes out, because it is fuelled by the spirit of Divine love, an Almighty Being who does not like tyranny and colonialism. So the discourse produced through the treatises, advice, speeches and studies of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary, whether in the presence of his students and followers, or those who read his treatises, will all be inspired by the spirit of resistance against tyranny, specifically resistance to Dutch colonialism. From there, the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary are called resistive literature.

#### **4. Contextual Linguistic Approach**

This study uses a contextual linguistics approach, which emphasizes the relationship between text and social, historical, and ideological context. This approach was proposed by Dell Hymes, Halliday, and Teun van Dijk.

Hymes (1972; 1974) explains the importance of cultural context in understanding meaning. Dell Hymes in his book *Ethnography of Communication* emphasizes that language cannot be understood only from its grammatical structure or vocabulary, but also from the cultural context that shapes and gives meaning to the utterance.

**Table 1. Cultural context shapes and gives meaning to the utterance**

Elements	Explanation
<b>S (<i>Setting &amp; Scene</i>)</b>	Time, place, and atmosphere of the communication event.
<b>P (<i>Participants</i>)</b>	Who is involved: the speaker, the listener, and their social roles?
<b>E (<i>Ends</i>)</b>	Communication objectives and expected results.
<b>A (<i>Act Sequence</i>)</b>	Order of messages or form of speech.
<b>K (<i>Key</i>)</b>	Tone, style, or emotional attitude (serious, casual, humorous, etc.).
<b>I (<i>Instrumentalities</i>)</b>	Channels (spoken, written) and language varieties (dialects, registers).
<b>N (<i>Norms</i>)</b>	The norms of interaction and interpretation that apply in that society.
<b>G (<i>Genre</i>)</b>	Type of discourse (lecture, prayer, speech, casual conversation, etc.).

Hymes taught that the meaning of a new utterance can be fully understood if we know who is speaking, to whom, when, where, for what purpose, using what channels and norms, and how all of this is regulated by local culture. Hymes views communication as a social practice that is always within a network of values, norms, and customs of society.

Halliday, Halliday, and Matthiessen (1978; 2004) within the framework of *Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)*, assert that language is a resource for creating meaning, and one of its primary functions is as a representation of social experience. In Halliday's view, language is always related to social context and works through three main metafunctions: (1) Ideational, the function of representing experience, both external (experiential) and internal (logical) experience. Language maps the world, events, and relationships between concepts, thus becoming our way of representing social reality; (2) Interpersonal, the function of building social relationships between speakers and listeners. Language regulates roles, attitudes, and social interactions (e.g., commands, requests, agreements); (3) Textual, the function of structuring discourse so that messages are orderly and understandable in context. Language ensures that messages are integrated with the communication situation and social norms.

Teun and van Dijk (1993; 1997), a leading figure in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) or Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), emphasized that discourse is never neutral. Discourse is always linked to power, ideology, and social control. According to van Dijk, language is not merely a means of communication, but also a tool for producing and reproducing power. Therefore, discourse analysis must examine the relationship between text, social cognition, namely ways of thinking, shared knowledge, and the social structure or power relations of those who produce the discourse. For van Dijk, power often operates covertly through language, for example through news framing, word choice, or the omission of certain information in the discourse product.

Van Dijk's discourse analysis framework typically includes: (1) text analysis, consisting of macrostructure (main theme or topic), superstructure (text organization), and

microstructure (word choice, syntax). (2) social cognitive analysis, which explains how texts reflect or shape group knowledge and beliefs. (3) analysis of social context, namely power relations, inequalities, and ideologies that can influence and be influenced by discourse. In essence, van Dijk wants us to be aware that language is often used to maintain the dominance of certain groups and marginalize others. Therefore, discourse analysis must always be critical of who benefits and who is disadvantaged.

Foucault (1969; 1978) in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, more important than mere ideology is the relationship between knowledge and power, which he calls power or knowledge. Therefore, we can realize that (1) knowledge is not neutral, it is always shaped by power relations; (2) power does not only work repressively (prohibiting), but also productively. It shapes the way we think, speak, and understand the world; (3) discourse is the arena in which power and knowledge produce each other. What is considered “true” or “normal” is the result of discursive practices supported by institutions (e.g., the state, hospitals, schools, media). According to Foucault, ideology is not just a set of false beliefs that cover up the truth as in the view of classical Marxism, but rather a system of discourse that shapes the truth itself. In other words, truth is the result of a socio-political construction that is maintained by institutions of power.

The contextual linguistic approach can be understood as a study of language that does not only involve the interpretation of texts but also involves the social context, historical and cultural context and ideology that underlie the texts being studied.

## **5. Conceptual Integration**

By combining resistive literary theory, Sufism as a cultural force, and a contextual linguistic approach, this study becomes a conceptual integration. It means an academic approach that seeks to connect various concepts, theories, or disciplines into a unified and comprehensive framework. The goal is to produce a deeper, richer, and more relevant understanding of a phenomenon. In other words, conceptual integration is not simply aggregating concepts, but rather cross-pollinating, combining, and reconstructing them to produce new, transformative perspectives.

Fauconnier (1985; 1987), Fauconnier and Mark (2002) stated that the characteristics of conceptual integration are: (1) Cross-disciplinary, combining theories from different fields (e.g. linguistics, literature, and Sufism); (2) Contextual, namely the combined concepts are adapted to certain social, cultural, and spiritual realities; (3) Transformative, namely the result of integration gives birth to a new, more critical and liberating framework; (4) Holistic, namely viewing reality not partially, but comprehensively: reason, soul, culture, and spirituality. So this study positions the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as resistive Sufism literature, namely spiritual texts that play a role as a means of resistance against colonial domination and moral decadence in his time.

## 6. Research Framework

The researcher used two sources of research data, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data consisted of a number of quotations or texts from the works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary, such as *Zubdatu al-Asrār*, *al-Durr an-Nafis*, and *An-Nafḥatu as-Sailaniyah*, as well as several commentary or interpretations from his students. Secondary data included literature on Sufism, studies on Dutch colonialism during the Banten Sultanate, and studies on Sufi linguistics and the theory of decolonization of knowledge. Data collection was carried out using documentation and literature review techniques. The documentation technique involved collecting written texts and manuscripts. Literature review was a study of reference books, journals, and articles that support an understanding of the social and linguistic context.

The method used in analyzing the data is based on a contextual linguistic framework derived from Halliday and Hasan (1989), which emphasizes the relationship between text, situational context, and cultural context. This approach is also enriched with Sufi discourse and Quijano's (2000) theory of decolonization of knowledge, which emphasizes the understanding that colonialism does not end after countries gain independence. Colonial remnants remain in ways of thinking, science, social systems, and even in the way we define race, culture, and truth. In other words, colonialism shifted from physical (territorial colonization) to epistemic (colonization of knowledge). Therefore, efforts are needed to increase our trust in the plurality of epistemologies because there is no single universal knowledge, but rather diverse epistemologies (Western, Islamic, African, Latin, Nusantara, others).

It is the need to revive local epistemology by giving non-Western knowledge systems space to develop according to their own logic. Building inter-epistemic dialogue means that knowledge is no longer hierarchical (Western above, local below), but rather epistemic horizontality. In the Indonesian context, Quijano's decolonization means reviving the knowledge of Nusantara Islam (Sufism, Islamic boarding schools, wisdom, Jawi/pegon manuscripts) that were previously marginalized by Dutch colonialism. For example, the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassary can be read as a form of epistemic resistance, namely against colonial efforts to eradicate Sufi knowledge as the socio-political basis of Muslims.

The research data obtained was then analyzed in three stages, namely textual analysis, contextual analysis, and interpretation of meaning.

1. Textual analysis is carried out in the form of identifying linguistic structures in the text (choice of diction, metaphors, Sufi symbols, etc.).
2. Contextual analysis is linking the structure of the text with the socio-political context of the Dutch colonial period, and how language was used as a medium for spiritual and cultural resistance.

3. Interpretation of meaning is to reconstruct the resistive message contained in the Sufi text of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary and its role as spiritual resistance literature.

### ***C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION***

Based on the results of the data analysis, three forms of resistive literature were found in the discourse of Sufism, namely resistance in symbolic language, Sufi linguistic strategies as resistance, and historical contextualization, which were found in the data contained in the treatise of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary.

#### **1. Resistance in Symbolic Language**

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary (1626–1699), a scholar, Sufi, and anti-colonial activist, used symbolic language (gestures, metaphors, and Sufi symbols) in his teachings as a means of preaching, spiritual education, and a strategy of resistance against colonialism and oppression. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary used symbolic language as a means of protection from the repressive actions of the colonialists. During the Dutch East India Company (VOC) colonial period, teachings that directly attacked colonialism were prohibited, and this approach posed significant risks to preachers and scholars. He then adopted the path of Sufi symbolic language in conveying his advice and writing his treatises. For example, the concept of "inner migration" was articulated as a shift from oppression to spiritual and political freedom. The term "thariqah" (spiritual path) was then used as a symbol of the collective struggle towards physical and spiritual freedom. The symbol of "self-purification" not only has individual spiritual significance, but also resistance to colonialism, which was seen as a source of "socio-political impurity."

Furthermore, symbolic language provides a safe space for discourse. Through it, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary successfully conveyed his critique of colonialism without being easily censored. He ignited the spirit of resistance by using terms understood only by his students and followers. He connected spirituality and politics so that the jihad movement against colonialism remained grounded in a divine dimension, not merely worldly resistance.

With symbolic language, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary strengthened the spirit of the spiritual journey (suluk), so suluk, as a spiritual path leading to wushul (arriving) to Allah, turned into a collective movement to fight the invaders. In his writings we find symbols of the spiritual journey to reach makrifah to Allah consist of the terms suluk (the process of a spiritual journey with activities to purify the soul with the guidance of a murshid towards Allah), maqam (levels of spiritual training in the suluk achieved by tarekat students), and manzilah (a place to stay in a temporary position in the suluk). But then these symbols changed to have a double meaning as preparatory training against colonial tyranny. Sufistically, this activity is a place for suluk which describes a spiritual process of reaching Allah. However, with the political resistance movement, suluk turned into a

map of resistance against tyranny, that is, suluk turned into a journey process that Muslims had to take towards freedom and social independence.

## 2. Sufi Linguistic Strategies as Resistance

Sufi linguistic strategy is the use of symbolic, metaphorical, allegorical, and esoteric language typical of the Sufi tradition to convey spiritual messages as well as messages of resistance against oppression (colonialism, political tyranny, or cultural hegemony). The use of layered language, namely *isyari* language (implied language), symbolic (symbolic words), and connotative (words with various meanings), which allows Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary to convey criticism without directly confronting the colonialists physically. Within the framework of resistive language, this is called a latent representation strategy, namely resistance through spiritual meaning against oppressive power in a way that is not directly addressed to the enemy, but the language is understood by his followers. In the case of Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassary, this strategy has a dual function, namely preserving Sufi teachings (inner knowledge, monotheism, *tazkiyatun nafs*). On the other hand, this delivery can deceive the colonialists' surveillance, because Sufi language is not easily understood literally. The message was then able to maintain the spirit of jihad and resistance without always having to use political language that could be quickly suppressed by colonialists. For example, the use of the symbols of the ocean, the boat, and the shore of safety are symbols of the spiritual journey towards knowledge, but they can also be interpreted as a political movement's journey towards freedom from colonialism and oppression. Furthermore, the term *hijrah*, which means to move, means not only a physical move but also a symbol of liberation from colonial domination towards spiritual-political sovereignty. This strategy made the message of resistance less easily censored by colonial officials. Furthermore, the metaphor of *tauhid* as a resistance to the phrase "*lā ilāha illallāh*" is repeated in his message, not merely as a *dhikr*, but a linguistic strategy to emphasize that only God has the right to be obeyed. The implication is that submitting to the colonialists is tantamount to socio-political polytheism. The language of *tauhid* was used as a discursive weapon to dismantle colonial legitimacy.

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary wrote in a language with multiple meanings, resulting in ambiguity (polysemous language). Exoterically, he provided spiritual guidance to his students. Esoterically, this guidance served as a code of resistance against colonial oppression. For example, the phrase "leaving a sultan other than Allah" has an inner meaning of abandoning one's own negative ego. However, its outer meaning is never to submit to colonial rulers, as it contradicts God's commands and authority. Language serves as a safe space (safe discourse). Because Sufi language is replete with Arabic terms, Qur'anic symbols, and mystical metaphors, it made it difficult for colonizers to interpret the true message. Messages of resistance could circulate widely in the form of *wirid*, poetry, or treatises without immediate action. This is direct non-verbal resistance, resisting through hidden discourse. The transformation of spirituality into a social movement is a Sufi linguistic strategy that bridges spiritual and political space. Students who understood these symbols internalized that resisting colonialism was part of their worship, as

important as meditating on God. Ultimately, resistance became a collective act of worship for all students and followers.

### **3. Historical Contextualization and Liberation**

Historical contextualization means interpreting the literary works, Sufi texts, or treatises of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary in relation to the historical, social, political, and cultural context of his time. The historical setting of the 17th century, in the archipelago, particularly in South Sulawesi, Banten, and later Ceylon (Sri Lanka), was under the pressure of Dutch VOC colonialism. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary was not only a Sufi scholar but also a political activist exiled by the Dutch. This condition shaped his literary style—Sufi language was used to conceal political messages so that they would not be easily suppressed by the colonialists. His works are only seen as ordinary Sufi texts. With historical contextualization, we understand that the text also functions as a discourse weapon in fighting colonialism—forming the collective consciousness of the people that resistance is part of worship. Historical contextualization in the resistive literature of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary is a way of understanding his works by including the historical dimension of 17th-century colonialism, so that the Sufi texts he wrote are read not only as spiritual guidance, but also as codes of resistance, cultural strategies, and forms of intellectual-spiritual jihad against colonialism. These discourses emerged during the colonial period and his exile to Ceylon and South Africa, making his texts not only spiritual, but also a form of resistance literature. Through Sufi language, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary offers a counter-narrative to secular Western hegemony, and builds a collective consciousness of inner freedom and spiritual dignity.

This study examines the Sufism teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as a form of resistive literature, namely a spiritual discourse that functions as a resistance against physical colonization, cultural domination, and epistemic oppression during the colonial period. The works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary are understood as a form of resistive literature within the framework of Sufism that integrates spiritual struggle with social and intellectual liberation. Based on the analysis and discussion of the data, a resistive literary discourse was found in the works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary which includes the Sufism language of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as a symbol of epistemic resistance, Sufi intertextuality and liberation politics, contextual discourse structures through metaphorical language and spiritual symbols as political signals. Resistive literature is based on monotheism, and a covert communication strategy (rhetorical taqiyyah) with characteristics including: (1) Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's Sufism Language as a Symbol of Epistemic Resistance; (2) Sufi Intertextuality and Liberation Politics; (3) Metaphors and Spiritual Symbols as Political Signals; (4) Resistive Literature Based on Tawhid; and (5) Covert Communication Strategy (Rhetorical Taqiyyah).

## Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's Sufism Language as a Symbol of Epistemic Resistance

Epistemic resistance means resisting the dominance of colonial knowledge that seeks to eliminate, subjugate, or demean Islamic-Nusantara epistemology. The Sufi language used by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary has several resistive functions, as follows:

- a. Symbolic language and layers of meaning. For example, the concept of *suluk* (spiritual journey) is not simply a journey toward God, but is also interpreted as a jihad against colonial oppression. The phrase "divine light" can be read as the light of truth against the darkness of colonialism. Thus, Sufi language transcends its literal meaning and opens up a dual reading: a spiritual message and instructions for a political resistance movement.
- b. Strengthening Islamic identity and epistemology, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary wrote in Arabic, Malay, and Bugis-Makassar, while simultaneously rejecting the Western monopoly of knowledge. Through his Sufi interpretations, he asserted that the source of truth is divine revelation and essence, not secular rational reason or colonial epistemology.
- c. Hygienic language is language as a means of purifying the soul and a discourse of sincerity and obedience to Allah alone. Colonialism often contaminates language with power, with the terms "rebel" for warriors, "disturber" for clerics. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary fought back with the language of Sufism which returns the meaning to purity with the words 'struggle' with 'jihad fi sabilillah, suffering with tazkiyah, death with shahadah. In doing so, it carries out "epistemic decontamination" of colonial language.
- d. Transcendent language as political energy. He stated that the world was only "water quenched by the water of divine love." This phrase invites people not to be tied to the colonial material world, but to turn to the liberating power of God's love. This language becomes the "spirit" that animates the spirit of resistance, even though the body can be imprisoned or exiled.
- e. Symbol of epistemic resistance, with the language of Sufism, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary challenged colonial epistemology based on military, economic, and power logic domination, reviving the epistemology of monotheism that unites faith, knowledge, and deeds. Strengthening the people through spiritual symbols that are understandable to the common people, but difficult for the colonizers to suppress. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's language of Sufism is not merely a spiritual expression, but also an epistemic strategy that protects Islamic discourse from colonial censorship. In his various messages, he has injected resistive meaning into Sufi symbols for his followers. This is one way to strengthen the identity of Islamic knowledge in the archipelago against Western epistemology. Thus, the language of Sufism becomes a silent but powerful

weapon to fight colonial domination, both in the political, cultural, and knowledge realms.

### **Sufi Intertextuality and Liberation Politics**

For Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary, these texts do not stand alone, but rather complement and interpret each other. His Sufi teachings are inseparable from the context of Dutch colonialism in the Indonesian archipelago and South Africa. His Sufi language is rich in the use of the intertextual principles of the Qur'an and Hadith to instill the idea of resistance in his followers. For example, the use of verses on jihad is explained inwardly as jihad against lust, but in the socio-political context of the time, this meaning is expanded to jihad against the colonizers and local traitors. Herein lies the resistivity of Sufi literature: in layers of meaning that are flexible, contextual, and inspire resistance. The socio-political texts address the experience of oppression of Muslims under colonialism. Therefore, at the level of Sufi teachings, they do not stop at the practice of inner dhikr, but enter into the political praxis of liberation.

Sufism shifted its focus to become a movement not one of escape from the world, but rather of increasing spiritual power to resist oppression. It built a bridge between the inner world (*tasfiyah al-nafs*) and the outer world (socio-political struggle). In the inner realm of tawhid, is rejecting all forms of servitude to anyone other than Allah means rejecting colonialism and the absolutism of oppressive rulers. Furthermore, a life of asceticism frees oneself from fear of wealth, position, and the world, thus emphasizing the courage to confront colonialism. The word jihad is interpreted as both physical and spiritual, to combat lust and colonialism. Thus, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's politics of liberation was not a secular idea in challenging colonialism, but firmly rooted in the spiritual roots of tawhid.

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's Sufi-based liberation politics built the framework for a Sufi-based political liberation movement. Its foundation was Tawhid. With the slogan, "Only Allah has the right to be obeyed," he proclaimed the delegitimization of colonial power. Furthermore, the ethics of asceticism and patience practiced by his followers trained their minds to endure suffering, thus preparing them to fight against the invaders. His spiritual-social jihad linked the jihad against lust with the jihad against the invaders.

### **Metaphors and Spiritual Symbols as Political Signals**

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's contextual discourse structure uses Sufi terms (*suluk*, *nur*, divine love) that are outwardly apolitical, but inwardly contain political criticism. Adapting to the audience consists of students, the people, and the noble elite. Flowing in text (Sufism treatises), spoken (dhikr assemblies), and practice (physical resistance). Analysis also shows that metaphors such as *suluk* (spiritual journey) and *fana'* (self-melting) are interpreted collectively as a form of soul purification and preparation for facing suffering in the struggle against colonialism. Symbols such as the "light of truth,"

the "garden of knowledge," and the "shadow of God" represent the hope of liberation from oppression, both inner and outer, from the tyranny of foreign conquest.

At the metaphorical level, it also serves as a bridge between spiritual and socio-political meanings. For example: "Divine light" (Nur Ilahi), spiritually means 'guidance' or guidance, but in political terms, resistance means guidance based on truth against colonial darkness. Then the statement is "The water of the world is extinguished by the water of Divine love", spiritually means 'the mortal world is defeated by God's love.' However, politically, it means that colonial power will be destroyed by the spirit of spiritual jihad. "Journey (suluk)" in spiritual terms means getting closer to God, but in political terms, it means collective jihad to liberate the people.

Spiritual symbols serve as signals for political movements, as they can connect the inner world with the social world. Some of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's Sufi symbols function as political signals, including the word "hijrah," which not only refers to moving for the sake of faith, but also symbolizes resistance against expulsion and exile by the Dutch. The word "syuhada" refers not merely to dying in holy war, but also to a reinterpretation of the colonial label of "rebel." The word "zuhud," which conveys more than just the renunciation of worldly pleasures, but essentially encourages the people not to be tempted by Dutch offers (such as positions, wealth, and compromise). The political function of such spiritual symbols is to conceal messages of resistance to evade censorship. They build community solidarity through shared codes. They instill the spirit of resistance with subtle spiritual language that ignites an undying spirit of resistance.

### **Resistive Literature Based on Tawhid**

The discourse of monotheism brought by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary is not only a theological concept, but also an ideological statement that opposes the false gods of colonialism, namely absolute power without spirituality. Monotheism is interpreted as a radical awareness of the oneness of God and total liberation from dependence on creatures, including colonizers. Thus, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's Sufi literature appears as tauhidic resistive literature. Resistive literature is literary works created to fight oppression, hegemony, or colonialism. Literature of resistance makes the teachings of monotheism (الله إلا إله لا) as the main foundation, so that resistance is not merely political, but also spiritual and epistemological. Thus, this type of literature is called monotheism-based. This literature is called resistive because it uses Islamic language, symbols, and values (especially monotheism) to reject injustice, decolonize the mind, and build awareness of the community.

Literary works that use monotheism as an epistemic foundation emphasize that those who engage in this literature emphasize that only God is the source of truth and power. They then question all forms of servitude other than God, so that all forms of colonialism, capitalist domination, and feudal domination must be resisted, dismantled, and stopped. The discursive resistance carried out by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary often has nuances of

Sufi metaphor. Sufi metaphorical language is used to function as a safe and profound political code. This metaphorical language has a dual function, namely spiritual and political functions, for example, the activity of purifying the souls of the people (tazkiyah). It also means Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary stirred the awareness of collective resistance among his followers against the filth of the colonial tyranny. Then he indirectly activated the decolonial discourse to replace the colonial narrative. For example, the word 'fighter' is attached to those who resist colonialism, while the colonizers call them rebels. Then, with the narrative of monotheism, fighters in the way of Allah against tyranny are called mujahid, if they die fighting against tyranny then they are called martyrs.

Resistive literature, grounded in moral-spiritual monotheism, serves to inspire courage, overcome the fear of death, and purify intentions in struggle. Epistemically, resistive literature can build a monotheistic framework of thought that opposes colonial hegemony. Politically and socially, resistive literature can unite the people in jihadist solidarity and resistance to colonialism. Culturally, resistive literature can safeguard the identity of Islam in the archipelago from colonial westernization and Christianization. Thus, resistive literature based on monotheism is a unique discourse of resistance, as it is not merely political agitation, but resistance rooted in strong faith. Therefore, this type of literature utilizes Islamic language, symbols, and metaphors as epistemic weapons to overturn colonial hegemony. It is decolonial literature, that is, literature that can liberate the mind, soul, and society from all forms of servitude to anything other than God.

### **Covert Communication Strategy (Rhetorical Taqiyyah)**

In the context of colonial repression, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary employed the rhetorical strategy of taqiyyah, conveying a message of resistance through indirect, symbolic language. This allowed his teachings to continue to spread without immediate repressive action by the authorities. This strategy is similar to the "double speak" technique in modern postcolonial discourse. Taqiyyah traditionally means concealing one's faith or intentions for the safety of oneself and one's community when facing threats. Rhetorical taqiyyah in Sufi literature is a strategy that uses symbolic language, metaphors, and layers of meaning to convey a message that is actually political, but presented as merely spiritual or moral. Thus, it is a double communication, which is safe on the surface but sharp within the followers and movement. The background to the emergence of taqiyyah is due to colonial censorship of every event and movement; texts that openly call for resistance are banned and even destroyed. Political repression occurred for Sufi scholars and teachers who risked arrest or exile if they spoke directly about political jihad. Therefore, the language of Sufism must be rich in symbols, such as the use of words (nur, api, hijrah, fana) where the message can easily be used to disguise the message of the resistance movement to society. The forms of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's messages are oriented towards rhetorical taqiyyah and spiritual metaphors. For example, the term "Divine light" can be interpreted as divine guidance, changing its meaning to become the collective awareness of the people to rise up against the colonialists. Then, the term "fire of divine love," which means the passion of divine love to carry out complete obedience, changes

into the spirit of jihad against the darkness of colonial oppression. Likewise, the term "hijrah" is interpreted as a shift from sinful acts to obedience to Him, changing its meaning to become a slogan of resistance or exodus from colonial domination towards the independence of the homeland. Likewise, in the message of ambiguity of meaning (double layers), for example, the term "zikir" can be interpreted as a solemn personal prayer to Him, but also a holy call to move against the colonialists. Likewise, the term "martyrdom" means a holy death, but at the same time justification for the armed struggle against the colonialists to the last drop of blood. Similarly, the symbol of 'everyday journey, sea, ship' can be interpreted as a spiritual practice, as well as a strategy for political movements in exile, diaspora, *jihad* at sea that never gives up even though they are thrown far away.

#### ***D. CONCLUSION***

The Sufi teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary constitute a form of resistive literature that combines the power of religious language, symbolic meaning, and discourse on spiritual-political liberation. Through a contextual linguistic approach, it was discovered that his Sufi texts not only address aspects of individual spirituality but also contain subtle critiques of colonialism, the hegemony of power, and the moral decay caused by the secular-imperial system.

The linguistic strategies employed include divine metaphors, repetitive styles for spiritual affirmation, and the use of diction of resistance veiled within divine narratives. This demonstrates that these works are not merely religious expressions, but also political and cultural statements against colonial oppression. A contextual linguistic study of Sufi discourse and religious literature demonstrates that the language of Sufism is not merely ahistorical and associative, but is imbued with contextual and ideological meaning. Classifying the works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as Sufi resistive literature paves the way for a redefinition of spiritual works as part of a discourse of liberation, not merely documents of individual morality. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary's texts can serve as primary material in the process of decolonizing knowledge and discourse. This is highly relevant in efforts to construct an Islamic epistemology that is not trapped within a secular and liberal Western framework. Thus, the teachings of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary can be categorized as a form of Sufi resistive literature that integrates the values of monotheism, spiritual freedom, and resistance to colonialism in a single, strong and authentic discourse.

Three forms of resistive literature in Sufism discourse include resistance in symbolic language, Sufi linguistic strategies as resistance, and historical contextualization. Based on the analysis and discussion of the data, resistive literary discourse was found in the works of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary which includes the Sufi language of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Makassary as a symbol of epistemic resistance, Sufi intertextuality and liberation politics, contextual discourse structures, namely: metaphors and spiritual symbols as political signals, resistive literature based on monotheism, and covert communication strategies (rhetorical *taqiyyah*).

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