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The Cultural Meanings of the Geleten Pelumut Traditional Ritual Speech in the Adonara Community at Sukutokan Village

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out the forms and meanings of the cultural meanings of the geleten pelumut traditional ritual speech in the Adonara Community at Sukutokan village. This type of this research is qualitative. The data collection techniques used were the observation participant and interview. The result of this research shows there are thirteen cultural meanings in geleten pelumut traditional ritual speech, consisting of the opening ritual speech, the body of the speech, and the conclusion of the speech. The first consists of the cultural meaning of honoring ancestors, the second consists of the cultural meaning of spiritual relationships, the third consists of the cultural meaning of asking for permission, the fourth consists of the cultural meaning of togetherness, the fifth consists of the cultural meaning of guidance, the sixth consists of the cultural meaning of well-being, the seventh consists of the cultural meaning of asking for blessings from God, the eighth consists of the cultural meaning of life guidance, the nineth consists of the cultural meaning of spiritual dimensions, the tenth consists of the cultural meaning of bonum commune, the eleventh consists of cultural meaning of gender equality, the twelfth consists of the cultural meaning of social interaction, and the thirteenth consists of the cultural meaning of hope.

1. Introduction

Language, as a cultural element, is crucial rituals. The *Geleten Pelumut* ritual, practiced by the Adonara community in Sukutokan village, is a traditional ceremony to cool machines. This study explores the cultural meanings embedded in the ritual speech, preserving local wisdom and ancestral beliefs.

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Language is also an element of culture. According to Koentjarangingrat (2005) in (Language is also an element of culture. According to Koentjarangingrat (2005) in (Language is also an element of culture. According to Koentjarangingrat (2005) in (Language is also an element of culture. According to Koentjarangingrat (2005) in (Puspitasari, 2019), language is an element of culture where language and culture are two important elements that cannot be separated from each other and ultimately produce cultural meaning. On the other hand, language is a reflection of existing culture the characteristics of the resulting language come from the culture that built it. Bolinger (1975 : 13-30) in (Sabon Ola, 2012) expressed his opinion about several characteristics of language. The important characteristics of language are related to the relationship between language and culture, namely, language is human, language is behavior, and language is related to attitudes.

Ritual is a technique or way of making a custom sacred. According to Leach (1976) as quoted by (Tavárez, 2014), perception of ritual as a communicative phenomena whose meanings are anchored in a highly stable semantic system. Ritual language emphasizes concrete iterative structures that index register, genre, and intent. Speaker's reflexivity and self-awareness regarding ritual language as register or genre often take the salien form of paired utterances, also called couplets. Ritual language is only used by someone who carries out certain rituals by asking for the blessing of ancestors and God. Rituals are usually personal or group in nature, as well as how to form personal ritual behavior to each individual's customs and culture.

The people in Adonara island, ritual language plays a vital role in maintaining the continuity of traditions and beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation. There are many traditional community rituals on Adonara island, where local people believe these traditional rituals have been passed down for centuries by their ancestors. The local community also believes that what was given by 'God Almighty' *Rera Wulan Tanah Ekan* through their ancestors, such as this traditional ritual, can help the local community avoid a major disaster. One of the traditional rituals in Adonara island is the *geleten pelumut* ritual.

The *geleten pelumut* traditional ritual functions to cool machines such as vehicle engines, dynamo engines, and other big machines. The meaning of the word *geleten pelumut* is to cool down a machine because it is believed that all machines are made of fire so to avoid the appearance of fire is to do this ritual. This ceremonial ritual is where the vehicle owner or machine owner asks *Ata Mua* himself to carry out the traditional *geleten pelumut* ritual because if he does not carry out this ritual it is believed that it will hurt driving and especially the equipment he owns. If the person performing this traditional ritual is not from a descendant appointed by their ancestors from generation to generation or what is called *Wungu*, then the person who imitates performing this ritual will experience death.

Each traditional ritual has its meaning for the people of Sukutokan village. Sukutokan is one of the villages on Adonara island, which is in the sub-district of Kelubagolit, East Flores Regency. Sukutokan is an area close to the Ile Boleng mountains. The people in the village cannot leave their area because their ancestors had given them land to settle and have children there so that their culture and customs would not be lost.

The *geleten pelumut* traditional ritual produces cultural meanings in the speech of a ritual. One of them is the people in Sukutokan village who believe in the existence of *Rera Wulan Tanah Ekan* or 'God' who plays a big role as protector of mankind on earth and the local community believes that there are traditional rituals inherited to avoid something undesirable. One of which is the *geleten pelumut* ritual which is considered as a ritual to ward off evil. This ritual is closely related to a person's survival.

The speech in the *geleten pelumut* traditional ritual is believed to contain almost every word that has the same meaning as several other words. The *geleten pelumut* is bellieved to have many meanings in traditional ritual speech, but sometimes it is not realized by the

Adonara people, especially those in the village of Sukutokan. This is caused by the influence of the times and the influence of foreign culture.

This study aims to explore and analyze the forms and cultural meanings of the *geleten pelumut* traditional ritual speech in Adonara community at Sukutokan village, Kelubagolit sub-district, East Flores Regency, Indonesia. Through semantic and cultural linguistic approaches, this study is expected to make significant contribution both theoritically and practically. Theoritically, this study aims enrich the understanding of the relationship between language, meaning and culture in the context of traditional rituals. Practically, the result of this study are expected to be a valuable source of information for local communities, researchers, and other stakeholders in efforts to preserve and understand intangible cultural heritage in the region. This research not only contributes to the development of science, but also plays a role in maintaining the sustainability of the traditions and culture values of the Adonara people.

2. Materials and Methods

This study used a qualitative research design with participant observation and interview methods as data collection tools. This research location was at Sukutokan village, Kelubagolit Subdistrict, East Flores Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The research subjects consisted of two key informants: an *Ata Mua* (organizer of the traditional *geleten pelumut* ritual) and male family member directly involved in the ritual. The research instruments included observation guidelines and interview guides, with the researcher himself acting as the main instrument.

The data collection techniques used were:

1. Participant Observation: the researcher was directly involved in the *geleten pelumut* ritual with *Ata Mua* and other male family members. The observation steps include:
   1.1 Preparation: Understanding the ritual context and the role of *Ata Mua*.
   1.2 Participation: Following the ritual according to local rules and traditions.
   1.3 Observation: Pay attention to important details during the ritual and record them without disturbing the ritual.
   1.4 Documentation: Remembering the sequence, movements.
2. Interview: the research conducted semi-structured interviews with Ata Mua and one of the motorcycle owner's family members. The researcher used note-taking tools to record key points of ritual speeches during the interviews.

The criteria for selecting informants were based on their in-depth knowledge of the *geleten pelumut* ritual and their ability to provide comprehensive information on various aspects of the ritual including the traditional speeches that accompany it.

3. Results and Discussions

Through linguistic analysis, this study will reveal the layers of cultural meaning contained in ritual speech, ranging from language structure to cultural context. The following is the speech of the *geleten pelumut* traditional ritual starting from the opening of the ritual, the content, and the closing.

1.) The Opening Ritual Speech of Bau Lolon.

In traditional rituals, especially in the eastern part of Adonara, the first opening is a traditional ritual namely *bau lolon* ritual. This ritual speech only applies during the *bau lolon* ritual. The following is the cultural meanings of the *bau lolon* ritual speech:

1.1 The Cultural Meaning of Honoring Ancestors.

One of the cultures in Flores society, especially the Lamaholot community contains religious values in the practice of honoring ancestors in the bau lolon ritual(Bernadus, 2024). In Lamaholot community, especially in East Adonara, this is reflected in the *bau lolon* ritual.

Data (1) Gloss:

Ina -k ama -k nenek moyang-nek
Mother-1st poss. father-1st poss. ancestors - 1st poss
My mother my father my ancestors. My parents and ancestors.

The phrase "ina-k ama-k nenek moyang-nek" in Adonara uses the possessive suffix "k" to indicate first-person singular possession. The word order reflects the family hierarchy from closest to furthest. Culturally, the phrase illustrates respect for ancestors as intermediaries of God, with an emphasis on the mother figure in the Adonara people's belief system.

1.2 The Cultural Meaning of Spiritual Relationships.

The cultural meaning of spiritual relationship is generally broader and encompasses humanity's relationship with the supernatural forces as a whole.

Data (2) Gloss:

Prem'a progene
Dark Dark
Darkness.
Deceased ancestors.

The phrase 'prem'a progene' consists of two independent words meaning 'dark'. Syntactically, this simple structure creates a repetition effect that reinforces the meaning. Semantically, the repetition of the word 'dark' translates to 'darkness' which is then interpreted as 'deceased ancestors. This phrase has a deep cultural meaning, describing a world of spirits that is different from the world of the living. These words are very sacred and are only spoken when performing sacred rituals or the opening of the *bau lolon* ritual.

1.3 The Cultural Meaning of Asking for Permissions.

The cultural meaning of asking for permission is a deep and important concept that reflects a society's social values, ethics, and norms, as shown in the following data.

Data (3) Gloss:

Ge' molo, menu molo
Eat first drink first
Eat first, drink first.
To eat banquet first.

The phrases 'ge molo' and 'menu molo' consist of free morphemes that show the isolative nature of the Adonara language. Syntactically, they form verbal phrases with the pattern (verb + Adverb). Its cultural meaning reflects the concept of sharing food as a form of respect and asking permission to the ancestors before the core ritual. In Adonara tradition, offering food and drink to ancestors is the highest form of respect.

'Tuak' is used as a symbol of respect, with 'tuak baun' symbolizing the male role and 'neak liwo' symbolizing the female role in marriage.

1.4 The Cultural Meaning of Togetherness.

In the Lamaholot society as social beings, their togetherness is always framed by a set of values, ethics, norms, and morals (Lusi et al., 2023).

Data (4) Gloss:

Go leta raga keluarga goe
1st pron. request keep family 1st poss.
I request keep my family.
I ask for the safety and health of my entire family.

The phrase 'go leta raga keluarga goe' consists of five free morphemes with two first-person singular pronoun forms. Syntactically, it follows the S + V + O pattern with the possibility of verb serialization. Its cultural meaning reflects collective values in Adonara society, emphasizing the priority of group welfare over the individual. The use of the word 'raga' in a

ritual context indicates the belief that the safety of the family is a shared responsibility, including the ancestors.

Data (5) Gloss:

Terlebih go anak
Mainly 1st pron. Child Especially my child.
Especially keeping my descendants safe.

The phrase 'terlebih go anak' consists of three free morphemes, with 'terlebih' showing the phenomenon of lexical borrowing from Indonesian. Syntactically, it is an adverbial phrase that emphasizes the previous statement. Its cultural meaning reflects the collective values of the Adonara people, especially regarding generational continuity. The emphasis on 'anak' in the context of the ritual indicates that togetherness includes both current and future generations. The use of 'go' emphasizes personal responsibility in a collective context, highlighting the importance of intergenerational solidarity and the role of the individual in nurturing the future of the Adonara community.

2.) *The Ritual Speech of Geleten Pelumut.*

2.1 The Cultural Meaning of Guidance

Reflected in a collective commitment to sharing knowledge, encouraging individual personal and career advancement, and effective coaching between those who are more experienced and those who are still learning.

Data (6) Gloss*:*

Go leta neten mela senare
1st pron. request call good fine
I request to call good and fine.
I beg to invoke the presence of good things.

The phrase *Go leta neten mela senare* consists of five free morphemes, showing the isolative nature of the Adonara language. Syntactically, it follows the S + V + O pattern with a complex verbal construction. Its cultural meaning reflects the concept of spirituality in Adonara society, where 'neten' indicates a belief in a spiritual entity that can be asked for guidance. The use of 'mela' and 'senare' illustrates aspirations for a positive quality of life. The phrase emphasizes the active role of the individual in seeking spiritual guidance, reflecting the close relationship between everyday life and the spiritual dimension in Adonara culture.

2.2. The Cultural Meaning of Well-Being

It involves respect for the basic needs, health, safety and happiness of individuals, as well as collective efforts to ensure equitable access to the resources and opportunities necessary to achieve sustainable well-being, as shown in the following data.

Data (7) Gloss:

Geleten pelumut bewihene weleoke
Cold cool cold cool Cold cool.
That is cold and cool.

Geleten pelumut bewihene weleoke: four free morphemes meaning 'cold/cool'. Nominal phrase without verb. Repetition of the concept creates emphasis. Reflects Adonara's concept of well-being: physical, mental, social, and spiritual balance. The metaphor 'cool' symbolizes calmness, peace, harmony. Repetition four times emphasizes the importance of holistic balance in Adonara's cultural outlook.

2.3 The Cultural Meaning of Asking for Blessings from God

In the context of the *geleten pelumut* ritual of the Adonara community in Sukutokan village, asking for blessings from God is a deep manifestation of spiritual beliefs, cultural identity, and local wisdom that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Data (8) Gloss:

Teti rera wulan di lodo -no
Above sun moon conj. down-s.
Above the sun the moon also descends.

From the seven layers of heaven also descended.

Teti rera wulan di lodono: six morphemes, including the suffix '-no'. Verb-modified adverbial phrase. Indicates vertical dimension: up (teti) to down (lodono). The sun (rera) and moon (wulan) symbolize purity. Reflects the concept of god-human communication in Adonara culture. Symbolizes the descent of blessings from the highest realms to the human world.

Data (9) Gloss:

Lali tanah ekan di gere -ko
Under soil place conj. go up – s.
Underneath where the ground also rises.
And from the seven layers of the earth also rise.

Lali tanah ekan di gereko: six morphemes, including the suffix '-ko'. Verb-modified adverbial phrase. Indicates vertical dimension: down (lali) to up (gereko). *Tanah* and *ekan* focus on the underworld. Complements data (8), describing blessings also rising from the earth. Indicates the recognition of multiple sources of spiritual power in the Adonara worldview.

2.4 The Cultural Meaning of Life Guidance

The cultural meaning of life guidance is a deep concept rooted in beliefs and traditions that reflects how a culture views and gives direction to life, as shown in the following data.

Data (10) Gloss:

Ile di hau -ko
Mountain conj. comes -s.
The mountain also comes.
From the south are also present.

Ile di hauko: four morphemes, including the suffix '-ko'. Simple syntactic structure: subject (ile), conjunction (di), predicate (hauko). The metaphor of the mountain 'coming' represents the south. Mountains are considered sacred by the people of Adonara. Shows the South as an active entity with power in rituals and daily life.

Data (11) Gloss:

Lau woka di dai -ko
From hill conj. comes -s.
From the hill also comes.

From the north are also present. *Lau woka di daiko*: five morphemes, suffix '-ko'. Structure similar to data (10): adverbial phrase (lau woka), conjunction (di), predicate (daiko. The metaphor of the hill representing the north complements the mountain (south) in the data (10). 'Lau' emphasizes direction/source. Emphasizes balance and completeness in the Adonara world view.

2.5 The Cultural Meaning of Spiritual Dimensions

The spiritual or inner dimension of culture is everything that is not visible but is the support and basis of the outward form of culture (Tasrif, 2018).

Data (12) Gloss:

Lali rera gere di haka -no
There sun rise conj. comes -s.
There the rising sun also comes.
From the east are also present.

Lali rera gere di hakana: six morphemes, suffix'-no'. Complex structure: nominal phrase location (lali rera gere), conjuction (di), predicate (hakano). The metaphor of the rising sun represents the east and new life. 'Lali' indicates the east as an important place in the spiritual landscape of Adonara. Sunrise is considered an active manifestation of spiritual power.

Data (13) Gloss:

Weli rera helen di pai -ko There sun sunset
conj. comes -s.

There the sunset also comes.
And from the west are also present.

Weli rera helen di paiko: six morphemes, suffix '-ko'. Parallel structure to data (12): complex nominal phrase (weli rera helen), conjunction (di), predicate (paiko). The sunset metaphor represents the west. Complements the picture of spatial orientation. Each direction has a unique yet complementary role in rituals and daily life.

2.6 The Cultural Meaning of Bonum Commune

The common good (latin: bonum commune) is something that is the common goal of a group of people, as shown in the following data.

Data (14) Gloss:

Go kete gere ka'a pune pi langoni 1st
pron. bring enter for give in prep. house this I
bring enter forgive in at this house.

I bring all the good things into this house to make it nice and peaceful. *Go kete gere ka'a pune pi langoni*: eight free morphemes. Complex structute: subject (go), main predicate (kete gere), goal phrase (ka'a pune), place phrase (pi langoni). 'Kete gere' shows the process of changing the spiritual quality of the house throught rituals. 'Ka'a pune' implies giving to the house and its inhabitants. 'Langoni' signifies the house as a spiritual entity. Speech is considered to have the power to change reality.

2.7 The Cultural Meaning of Gender Equality

The meaning of gender equality culture can be interpreted as a way of life that develops and is shared by a group of people, and is not inherited from generation to generation, which combines elements of culture and gender equality to achieve the desired life goals.

Data (15) Gloss:

Pi lango atane inawae amalake rete pana
Prep. house person women men take go to
At house person women and men take go to.

The phrase *Pi lango atane inawae amalake rete pana* linguistically and culturally reflects gender equality in Adonara society, showing shared responsibilities, equal access to spaces and technology, and collective identity transcending gender differences.

2.8 The Cultural Meaning of Social Interaction.

Reciprocal (social) relationships in the form of mutually influencing actions between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, and groups and groups, as shown in data below.

Data (16) Gloss:

Pana di mela balik di mela
Go to conj. good go home conj. good
Go to also good, go home is also good.
Riding and returning home safely.

The phrase *pana di mela, balik di me*la linguistically and culturally cembodies Adonara's values of balance, safety, and community connection through its repetitive structure. Antonymic verb pair, and emphasis on the cyclical nature of journeys.

Data (17) Gloss:

Lodo di senaren gere di senaren
Down conj. fine go up conj. fine
Going down is also fine going up is also fine.
Outgoing and incoming in good condition.

The phrase *Lodo di senaren gere di senaren* linguistically employs parallel structure and antonym to convey Adonara's cultural philosophy of balance, acceptance, and resilience, emphasizing positivity in all life situations through its repetitive pattern and semantic symmetry.

3.) *Closing Ritual Speech*

3.1 The Cultural Meaning of Hope

In culture, hope can take the form of values applied in the way of life, such as desire, optimistic attitude, life goals, and motivation, as shown in the following data.

Data (18) Gloss:

Pe'liro
Close
Closing
The ritual has been completed

The word *Peliro* linguistically functions as a standalone verb, signifying ritual completion, and culturally embodies hope for safety and protection, specifically spoken by male household heads in Adonara's motorcycle blessing ceremony.

4. Conclusion

This study reveals the richness of cultural meanings in the traditional *geleten pelumut* ritual of the Adonara community, particularly in Sukutokan village. An analysis of the ritual's speech identifies thirteen different cultural meanings, spread over three ritual stages:

1.) Opening (*bau lolon*): Includes the cultural meaning of honoring ancestors, spiritual relationships, asking for permissions and togetherness.
2.) The content of the ritual (*geleten pelumut*): Includes the cultural meaning of guidance, wellbeing, asking for blessings from God, life guidance, spiritual dimensions, bonum commune, gender equality, and social interaction
3.) Closure: Include the cultural meaning of hope

These findings confirm that the geleten pelumut ritual is not just a traditional practice, but a forum for the transmission of complex and profound cultural values. It reflects the worldview, belief system and social structure of the Adonara Community.

This research also highlights the importance of preserving traditional rituals as part of cultural heritage. Active efforts are needed to document, study, and pass on these practices to the younger generation to maintain the cultural identity and local wisdom of the Adonara community.

Furthermore, this study paves the way for further research on ritual speech on Adonara island, particularly in the Eastern part. An interdisciplinary approach combining linguistics, anthropology and cultural studies is highly recommended to enrich the understanding of cultural meanings in ritual speech.

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