

BETWEEN RITUAL AND LOCAL TRADITION: A STUDY ON THE MEANING OF THE REBO WEKASAN ANNUAL EVENT IN DESA TUGU SELATAN

Muhammad Zendi Alfarizi¹, Clarisa Ramadanti Ridho Kusumo², Anissa Febryani³,
Siti Tuti Alawiyah⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Sastra Inggris, Universitas Nasional, Jakarta

muhammadzendifarizi2022@student.unas.ac.id,

clarisaramadanti2022@student.unas.ac.id, anissfebryani2022@student.unas.ac.id,

⁴tuti.alawiyah.sta@gmail.com

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ABSTRAK

Artikel penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi pelaksanaan Rebo Wekasan dan menjelaskan makna tradisi Rebo Wekasan bagi masyarakat Desa Tugu Selatan, Kecamatan Cisarua, Kabupaten Bogor, Provinsi Jawa Barat. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif. Menggunakan teknik wawancara dalam pengumpulan data dan pendekatan semantik kebudayaan Palmer 1996 dengan 4 aspek makna yaitu pengertian (sense), perasaan (feeling), nada (tone) dan tujuan (intention) dalam proses menganalisis data. Narasumber yang dilibatkan antara lain masyarakat, pemuka agama, dan panitia acara Rebo Wekasan Desa Tugu Selatan. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pada aspek sense, Rebo Wekasan dimaknai sebagai inovasi ekonomi untuk mendukung UMKM, sebagai simbol rasa syukur dan gotong royong, dan sebagai wujud kebersamaan. Pada aspek feeling, masyarakat desa merasa gembira karena dapat mempererat silaturahmi. Aspek tone tercermin dari nada yang ramah, akrab, komunikasi dan religius selama kegiatan berlangsung. Aspek intention, kegiatan ini bertujuan untuk melestarikan adat, mempererat silaturahmi dan solidaritas, serta memberikan edukasi budaya bagi generasi penerus. Dengan demikian, Rebo Wekasan tidak hanya sebagai acara ritual tolak bala, namun sebagai wadah tradisi lokal yang dinamis dan adaptif.

Kata kunci: rebo wekasan, Desa Tugu Selatan, tradisi lokal, palmer, makna budaya

ABSTRACT

This research article aims to identify the implementation of Rebo Wekasan and explain the meaning of the Rebo Wekasan tradition for the society of Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province. The method used was qualitative. The data was collected by using interviews and Palmer's (1996) cultural semantic approach with four aspects of meaning, namely sense, feeling, tone, and intention, in the data analysis process. The informants who were involved included the society, religious leaders, and the Rebo Wekasan event committee of Desa Tugu Selatan. The results show that in terms of sense, Rebo Wekasan is interpreted as an economic innovation to support MSMEs, a symbol of gratitude and mutual cooperation, and a form of togetherness. In terms of feeling, the villagers feel happy because they can strengthen their friendship. The tone aspect is reflected in the friendly, intimate, communicative and religious atmosphere during the event. In terms of intention, this activity aims to preserve customs, strengthen relationships and solidarity, and provide cultural education for future generations. Thus, Rebo Wekasan is not only a ritual to ward off evil, but also a dynamic and adaptive local tradition.

Keywords: rebo wekasan, Desa Tugu Selatan, local tradition, palmer, cultural meaning

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has many traditional rituals and local traditions that are fascinating and provide valuable lessons. The diversity among ethnic groups, races, religions, cultures, and languages has long been known as a hallmark of the nation. According to data from the Statistics Central Agency (SCA) (Mubarok et al., 2024), the cultural diversity in Indonesia is very rich, with 1.128 ethnic groups inhabiting the Archipelago. Each region has different traditional rituals and local traditions. Preserving traditional rituals and local traditions is a way for us to appreciate national identity and maintain Indonesia's diversity.

Traditional rituals and local traditions are important and inseparable parts of a society's culture. Their existence reflects the noble values passed down through generations and serves to strengthen identity, solidarity, and social order within the society. According to the society, customary rituals are formal actions carried out for matters unrelated to everyday technical tasks, but rather related to beliefs and powers beyond human reach or the natural world, commonly known as the supernatural.

One region in Indonesia that has various rituals and traditions is the island of Java. The life and worldview of the Javanese people are closely tied to religious, magical, and mystical aspects, as a result of their respect for ancestors, forebears, and forces invisible to human perception. Local ritual events and traditions are part of the human life cycle in Javanese society. One important component of Javanese civilization, deeply rooted in traditions and culture inseparable from the daily life of the Javanese people, is local rituals and traditions (Negoro, 2001:2) cited in (Dzofir, 2017).

One of the local rituals and traditions that has been preserved and maintained to this day is the Rebo Wekasan event in Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province. This ritual is held every year on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar. This local tradition has become an annual event on the island of Java, although not everyone conducts it. It has been passed down as a hereditary event from the ancestors. Rebo Wekasan signifies an event or phenomenon that results from the dynamic fusion of Islamic and Javanese culture. Rebo Wekasan is a tradition to ward off evil regularly carried out by the Javanese people and the Indonesian society.

According to Ahmad Nurozi (Mubarok et al., 2024), Javanese religious rituals and local traditions are an interesting combination of Islamic and local beliefs. One striking example of how this tradition has endured, even though it is often considered a myth by some people, is the Rebo Wekasan ritual. From the perspective of the Arabic language, Rebo Wekasan is essentially Arba'a, which means Wednesday, and Hasanun, which means good. Therefore, Wednesday should be dedicated to constructive efforts. On the other hand, the last Wednesday of the Safar month in the Islamic calendar is known as Rebo Wekasan in Javanese.

Based on the explanation presented earlier, this study will explain the meaning of the Rebo Wekasan tradition for the society of Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua District, Bogor Regency, West Java. The formulation of the problems to be examined includes:

1. How is the implementation of the Rebo Wekasan tradition in Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua, Bogor, West Java?
2. What the meanings are contained in the Rebo Wekasan tradition for the society of Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua, Bogor, West Java?

Meanwhile, the purpose of this study that writers want to get answers are:

1. Identifying the implementation of the Rebo Wekasan tradition in Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua, Bogor, West Java.
2. Explaining the meaning of the Rebo Wekasan tradition for the society of Desa Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua, Bogor, West Java.

Palmer (1996) cited in (Sartini, 2020), stated 4 aspects of meaning, namely:

1. Sense

When speakers or writers employ the same language as their interlocutors, meaning can be achieved. The intended idea or message is part of meaning, which is sometimes referred to as idea.

2. Feeling

The speaker's attitude toward the discussion setting is intimately linked to this aspect. We deal with emotions like sadness, heat, cold, joy, annoyance, and itching on a regular basis. Words that are appropriate for the scenario are used in statements that describe circumstances connected to these feelings.

3. Tone

The tone aspect entails the speaker selecting words that are suitable for both the listener's and their own situation. Are the speaker and the audience acquainted? What are the speaker's and listener's social and economic backgrounds? The attitude that is represented in the words chosen depends on the relationship between the speaker and the listener.

4. Intention

There is an intention to the message we convey (whether intentional or not, as a result of efforts to improve). Declarative, persuasive, urgent, narrative, political, and pedagogical statements are all categorized in this manner. The nature of these inquiries concerns the role that language plays in communication.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative method to examine in depth and comprehensively the depiction of the Rebo Wekasan ritual and local traditions in Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province. Sugiyono cited in (Zuraidah & Sudrajat, 2022), the qualitative research method is defined as a scientific way to obtain data that aligns with the objectives and relevance according to needs through the collection of narrative and contextual data. This traditional event carries cultural and religious significance that requires in-depth study through the meanings contained in society practices and expressions.

In the data collection conducted, the technique used was interviewing. According to (Adi, 2005, p. 72) cited in (Khoeroh, 2019), an interview is one of the question-and-answer techniques with someone who is asked for information or their opinion on a matter reported in newspapers for research reports and broadcast on the radio or aired on television. It is also stated that an interview is one of the data collection techniques through communication. In this study, the interview technique was conducted with the society, religious leaders, and the organizing committee of the Rebo Wekasan event in Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province, who hold this traditional event every year.

During conducting this research, the writers used a semantic approach at the

level of meaning. (Yule, 2010) states that semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences. This indicates that semantics is the study of meaning in communication and information. This approach is used to reveal the meaning of Rebo Wekasan tradition in the Tugu Selatan Village's society using Palmer's (1996) theory of aspects of meaning, cited in (Sartini, 2020), which includes sense, feeling, tone, and intention.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Implementation of the Rebo Wekasan Tradition in Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua, Bogor, West Java

The Rebo Wekasan traditional event is held simultaneously in several locations, such as Desa Tugu Selatan Village. The combination of these traditional events strengthens society ties and creates a sense of unity among residents. Although there are no clear records of when this tradition first appeared, historically, in the Desa Tugu Selatan Village, the grand celebration of Rebo Wekasan only began in 2020. On the other hand, some components, such as Kupatan and communal prayers, have long been an integral part of society activities. Subsequently, residents actively participate and are fully supported by local religious leaders and the Indonesian Ulema Council (IUC).

The Rebo Wekasan tradition, which is carried out in the Tugu Selatan Village area, particularly at Kampung Baru Karamat, includes various religious and social events that hold both religious and cultural significance. In 2025, there will be several innovations in the event series, starting with a low-cost market activity as an initiative to support fellow MSME actors. This activity is organized to allow the buying and selling of essential goods at affordable prices.



Figure 1: Pasar murah is an innovation from the village government to help local MSMEs that sell staple foods such as rice, oil, eggs, and fresh vegetables. This market is held on the first day, starting in the morning until all goods are sold out.

The next morning, the event began with an attraction and a ketupat-making competition, serving as a symbolic opening of the second day, attended by representatives from several of sub-villages in Desa Tugu Selatan Village, within the allotted time. After that, it continued with Bedah Kulah, a communal fish-catching event conducted in an open tank. The program resumed in the evening with a tabligh akbar, attended by a Cleric, examining the Ward Off Evil Tradition.



Figure 2: The opening of the Rebo Wekasan event on the third day, which was the last day of the series of events, as well as taking photos with local figures and committee members.



Figure 3: Bedah Kulah was opened on the second day of the event. At midday, the local community began to gather around the fish pond that would be used for the competition.



Figure 4: Tabligh Akbar was held on the second night, filled with prayers, Quran recitations, and sermons, lasting from 7 to 11 p.m.

After that, the event continued the next day in the morning with the Istighosah prayer, a voluntary prayer performed by the male residents at the mosque as a form of protection from calamities. Then, it continued with the Dongdang festival, where all the residents of Tugu Selatan Village paraded towards the open field area. The event proceeded with the opening ceremony, including speeches, and ended with the blessing hunt, an activity carried out by the society to grab all the food in the Dongdang.



Figure 5: Istighosah prayer started on the last day (day three). At the morning, all males either children, teenagers, adults, and elders were praying and reciting to ward off evil.



Figure 6: The Dondang parade began on the third day (last day) in the morning from the meeting point to the field where the Rebo Wekasan event was held.

One of the distinctive features of this event is the presence of dongdang, a decorated basket (similar to a funeral carriage) that is made collectively by the society, usually as a main element in ceremonies such as Ruwat Bumi and carried to an open field. There, all the dishes are gathered and eaten together. This activity is not only a way to share food but also a symbol of unity and cooperation within the society. The basket is used to hold ketupat and several accompanying food elements.

Currently, Kampung Baru Karamat has become the main location for the traditional Rebo Wekasan event, with a very festive atmosphere. The cultural and religious values of the event are reinforced by various supporting activities, such as Bedah Kulah, distribution of ketupat, competitions, and processions, as well as the

presence of society leaders. The values of togetherness, religiosity, and preservation of tradition shape the cultural characteristics of the local society. After that, the Rebo Wekasan activities continued to develop into an annual traditional event that is widely attended by various communities.

2. The Meaning of The Rebo Wekasan Tradition for the Society of Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua, Bogor, West Java

Based on the issues to be studied, this study used the theory of cultural linguistics as proposed by Palmer (1996) in his book *Toward a Theory of Cultural*

Linguistics, which is a broader term covering language and culture, focusing on society knowledge and beliefs through an ethnolinguistic method with fundamental cognitive aspects. This theory is used to analyze the language used within a society group in a social and cultural context. This aims to uncover the meanings behind language use (Kolin et al., 2023). Palmer divides meaning into 4 aspects, namely sense, which is the theme or a message idea intended. Feeling, closely related to the speaker's emotional attitude towards the context of the conversation such as sadness, heat, cold, joy, and others, and is used according to the situation. Tone, the speaker's attitude towards the listener, involving the speaker in choosing words appropriate to the condition of the listener and speaker. And intention, as a certain purpose, whether conscious or not, resulting from an effort to improve.

1. Dongdang Festival

According to the society of Tugu Selatan Village, the Dongdang Festival is the central event of the Rebo Wekasan celebration. Palmer divides the meaning of this festival into four aspects: sense, feeling, tones, and intention. In terms of the senses, according to the society, this event is a traditional parade carrying palanquins filled with food and decorations, as an expression of gratitude and togetherness, symbolizing mutual cooperation and local cultural identity. In terms of feeling, the people of Tugu Selatan Village feel very happy participating in this event; for them, it is a moment to strengthen social bonds since the entire Tugu Selatan Village's society can gather at the same time and place. In terms of tone, the atmosphere is friendly, familiar, and joyful because the speaker wants to emphasize the values of social harmony and togetherness during the parade. And the purpose (intention), for the society of Tugu Selatan Village, of this main event is to educate the younger generation not to abandon traditional customs, because this event is attended by people from various backgrounds, from children to elders, and although from the same regency, not everyone can participate in the celebration.



Figure 7: The dongdang containing food is placed in front of the crowd before they finally scramble for the food in what is known as "berebut berkah" by surrounding the dongdang together.



Figure 8 : Conducting an interview session with one of the residents who participates in and attends the Rebo Wekasan event every year.

2. Bedah Kulah

According to the society of Tugu Selatan Village, the Bedah Kulah activity is a traditional event that is always held during Rebo Wekasan. Palmer explains four aspects of meaning, namely sense, feeling, tone, and intention. In terms of sense, according to the residents, this activity is a tradition of collectively catching fish in a large pond, involving both adults and children as participants in this activity as a symbol of togetherness and happiness. In terms of feeling, residents participate joyfully in enlivening the Bedah Kulah event because many people, ranging from preschool children to high school students, and residents throughout Desa Tugu Selatan village, enthusiastically participate in the event. In terms of tone, the tone that emerges is one of familiarity, cheerfulness, and openness to all groups, meaning that the speaker welcomes everyone with warmth and a sense of togetherness, as this activity serves as a space for intergenerational and society bonding. And the intention of the residents of Tugu Selatan Village in holding this traditional event is to foster unity among Kampung Baru Karamat, the village government, and also to serve as an opportunity for socializing, so that connections among religious leaders, government officials, and the society can be maintained.



Figure 9: Residents began scrambling for fish placed in artificial ponds.



Figure 10: Conducting interviews with the sub-village head of Kampung Baru Karamat who participated in and attended the annual Rebo Wekasan event.

3. Pasar Murah

The society believes that the Pasar Murah activity is a complementary and innovative event of this year's Rebo Wekasan activities. According to Palmer, he divides meaning into 4 aspects, namely sense. Based on the residents of Desa Tugu Selatan Village, the Pasar Murah event is a place for buying and selling basic needs, which greatly helps local residents purchase household necessities at much more affordable prices and can help MSMEs gain higher profits. In terms of feeling, the society is very happy and enthusiastic about the Pasar Murah event, because it can improve the reputation of Tugu Selatan and bring all the residents of Tugu Selatan to attend the event. Tone, the tone that emerges is positive, friendly, and communicative because of the way the sellers serve the buyers in a friendly, simple, and polite manner. In addition, the tone also reflects a spirit of togetherness because this activity is a new innovation that benefits the society in terms of meeting basic needs at affordable prices and strengthening the role of local MSMEs. As for the intention, the Pasar Murah activity is being held for the first time this year. According to the society, it aims to help people according to their needs, provide education to the next generation regarding affordable market activities, and deepen moral values such as togetherness, social bonds, and society brotherhood in the Desa Tugu Selatan Village.



Figure 11: Pasar Murah is an innovation from the village government to help local MSMEs that sell staple foods such as rice, oil, eggs, and fresh vegetables. Several other small snack sellers also participate in this Pasar Murah. This market is held on the first day, starting in the morning until all goods are sold out.



Figure 12: Conducting interviews with the head of Early Childhood Education Flamboyan at Kampung Baru Karamat who participated in and attended the annual Rebo Wekasan event.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The Rebo Wekasan traditional event in Tugu Selatan Village, Cisarua District, Bogor Regency, West Java Province is a representation of religious, social, and cultural practices. Through a series of activities such as Pasar Murah, Bedah Kulah, and Dongdang Festival, the society interprets this event as an expression of gratitude that strengthens social solidarity. It uses four main aspects, namely sense, feeling, tone, and intention, which serve to affirm the values of togetherness, collective joy, and the sustainability of local cultural identity. In addition, new innovations such as Pasar Murah indicate a process of modernizing traditions that can adapt to contemporary needs without eliminating the sacred values that have been passed down. Support from religious leaders, village governments, and society participation demonstrates that Rebo Wekasan plays an important role in maintaining the continuity of traditions, strengthening social networks, and fostering communal bonds. Thus, this tradition is not only seen as an annual event and a means of preserving culture, but also as a manifestation of society culture and an instrument for educating values to future generations, as well as a form of cultural adaptation that is relevant to the development of the times.

Suggestion

In order to preserve the Rebo Wekasan tradition and keep it relevant to the times, it is recommended to strengthen documentation and digital promotion through social media to attract the interest of the young generation, involve educational institutions as a means of learning about local culture, and encourage sustainable innovation such as educational activities or creative competitions that remain rooted in traditional values. In addition, collaboration between the government, religious leaders, and the community needs to be enhanced to strengthen support for the annual event and maintain a balance between modernization and sacred values so that the spiritual and cultural essence of Rebo Wekasan is preserved.

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