

The Communication Pattern of Wahyu Turonggo Aji Reog Dance in Merti Dusun Kemawi Sumowono as a means of Preserving Environment

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Abstract. *Merti Dusun* is a ritual ceremony carried out by the villagers as a thanksgiving social act. This is expressed through a series of events covering cleaning the village, offering agricultural products, and performing *Reog*. *Reog Wahyu Turonggo Aji* (we will call it *The WTA Reog*) is one of Kemawi village's cultural art performances that symbolizes cultural, spiritual values and also performs the magical power of the performer. The performance is a kind of traditional drama consisting of dancing, singing, and dialogue. The valuable symbols are represented through the lyrics of the song and the patterns of dialogue. That is the reason the *WTA Reog* is necessary to study. This study aims to reveal and describe communication patterns in the *WTA Reog* with an ethnographic communication approach. The researcher uses a qualitative descriptive paradigm method. Data were collected using observation and interview techniques were analyzed using Spradley's theory of cultural relations and meaning, and Dell Hymes's theory of the components of communicative events. The results of the study show and describe the communication patterns of *WTA Reog* in the ritual *Merti Dusun* Kemawi. There are two patterns, non-verbal and verbal communication. Verbal communication can be seen in the form of scriptures, *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo*'s song lyrics, and spells for summoning and returning the spirit. Moreover, non-verbal communication can be seen in the form of dance movements, offerings, clothing, and make-up. The trance event is a means of communication between the spirit and the ancestral spirits of Kemawi village by borrowing the body of a dancer to give advice, as a sign of protecting the village from the beginning until now. Prayers and chanting of holy verses also represent the village community as creatures who believe in God and as a form of respecting and expressing gratitude to God. It is also a means of representing a respectful attitude to nature. All of the social acts represented in the performance have an indirect intention to preserve nature because society believes that God through His nature has given them well-being.

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1 Introduction

Kemawi is a village located at the foot of Mount Ungaran, Central Java, where most of the people are farmers. Kemawi is one of the villages that preserve its cultural ceremony called *merti dusun* or the thanksgiving ceremony. The ceremony aims to express their gratitude to the spirits that rule the village. The ceremony is held yearly on *Selasa Kliwon* (one certain Tuesday among four Tuesdays in a month) in the month of *Muharram* (the first month of the Islamic year). The event was held from morning to night starting from cleaning a graveyard, offering procession, conducting a carnival parade, and performing traditional arts such as *ludruk* and *reog*. In the ceremony, *reog* performance must be held because it is believed that *reog* is one of the favorite performances of the spirits of the village. The *WTA Reog*, like other *reogs* in general, is a kind of traditional drama. It is a traditional dance especially from East Java that developed during the Hindu kingdom in Indonesia that consists of dynamic dancing, showing the art of extraordinary physical strength, as well as colorful costumes and decorations. *Reog* performs a story with the main character that is called *Singa Barong*. It is constructed as a magical lion-like creature. One of the interesting scenes in the *reog* performance is the process of summoning the spirit to enter the body of the *reog* dancer so that he is in a trance. During the process of summoning, there is communication between (chairman of the *reog*) and the spirits. The communication can be executed through reciting *mantra* or singing *tembang* (the Javanese song). *Mantra* are sounds and sentences that have a magical and spiritual impression that are used to create spiritual changes. *Mantra* are utterances used by a person that can bind and control the mind [1].

The such communication between the chair of *reog* and the spirit has specific forms and patterns. There are some expressions that cannot be identified as normal communication among human-being. Therefore, the researchers are interested in studying the forms and patterns of communication conducted by the chairman of the *reog* using the ethnography of communication approach. Research on *mantra* is very important from a communication perspective. Through the research, we want to know how human beings communicate with the spirit in which the relation between the communicator and interlocutor is indirect. People do not understand the performance of the spirit, cannot hear the sound of the spirit, and cannot understand whether the spirit understands or not the utterance produced by the chairman. The spiritual communication conducted in the *WTA Reog* performance is believed as communication between human beings and the spirits ruling the village. They are called *Kyai Semar*, *Kyai Petruk* and *Kyai Cantrik*. They are believed residing on Mount Merapi. The three spirits are considered as propagators of Islam combined with cultures in Java. The development of Islam with a mixture of Javanese culture is very close and can be found in various events in Javanese society such as *tahlilan*, pilgrimage graves, and so on. *Danyang* is a spirit that protects places like villages, tree, and so on. The *danyang* of Kemawi village, namely *Mbah Rono Wijaya Hadi Badrun*. *Pepunden* and the elders of Kemawi village are *Mbah Kyai Kodal*, *Kyai Jamplang*, who is the founder of the village.

Research on *mantra* has been carried out previously, such as research from Siti and Oktiva with the title *The Relation of Human Beings and Environment in the cultural of Laesan Performance*, the form of communication of *laesan* art is *mantras* and song lyrics divided to communication between *laesan* and nature also to the audience [2]. The second research from Siroy Kurniawan with the title *Suroan Ritual Communication in Javanese Tribal Communities in Bengkulu City*. The analysis in the study provides an explanation of traditional rituals having a very close meaning and important lessons in life [3]. The difference between this research and the two previous studies is in the object of research.

This study aims to describe the communication patterns that exist in *WTA Reog* Dance in the ritual ceremony of *Merti Dusun* Kemawi as a form of communication between humans and God and also the spirit.

2 Research Method

This study uses an ethnographic communication approach with a qualitative descriptive paradigm method. The data was taken by observation and interview techniques. The observation technique is used as data to be taken through observing what happened in the *merti dusun* ritual ceremony, such as offerings, dancer's make-up, clothes used by dancers, and object that are used to summoning spirits. Interviews were used to collect data in the form of *mantras*, and a list of questions regarding the origin of *reog*, *danyang*, and the holy spirit summoned in the ritual ceremony. The informan of the study is the leader of *WTA Reog*, namely Mr. Suratin, and at the same time as a *reog* handler in the *reog* performance. The data obtained were then analyzed using Spradley's theory of cultural relations and meaning with *Dell Hymes* of communication ethnography. Spradley says that the basis of ethnography is to reveal the meaning of a cultural event through acts of communication carried out by people with certain cultures [4]. Communication events were also analyzed using *Dell Hymes* to analyze the components of communication events covering situations, communicative events, and communicative acts [5]. Through the explanation in analysis, it can be described the pattern of communication in *WAT Reog* at *Merti Dusun Kemawi* ritual ceremony.

3 Result and Discussions

3.1 The Communication before The Reog Shows

Before the *reog* performance begins, there is a ritual ceremony performed by the *reog* handler praying and offerings to summoning spirit can be described as follows:

Setting/situation	: <i>reog</i> stage area
Participant	: handler <i>reog</i>
Topic	: request for blessing
Communicative act	: praying

The communication pattern in the *WTA Reog* before shows includes verbal behaviour in the form of chanting praying (*Al-Fatihah*) and nonverbal behaviour in the form of activities carried out by *reog* handler. Verbal communication at the *reog* before shows the existence of human interaction with God evidenced by the reading of praying (*Al-Fatihah*) which intends to ask for blessings from the Almighty so that the event procession will be blessed. Readings of *Al-Fatihah* show that the people of Kemawi village are Muslim. *Al-Fatihah* is the opening *surah* in the *Qur'an* (the holy book of Muslims) [6] in this ritual as the opening of the event with praying to the Almighty. This is followed by the reading of the names of *danyang*, elders, and *pepunden* by the handler of *reog*, which is a ritual to summon the spirits, indicating the existence of communication between humans and spirits. Spirits are creatures that are believed to have greater power than humans.

In the ritual of asking for the blessing of the handler *reog* reads *Surah Al-Fatihah* and simultaneously holds offerings. It represents the religion of Islam with the acculturation of Javanese culture. The offerings are symbols of addressing spirits who will later come to the *merti dusun* ritual. Non-verbal behavior in the *reog* preshow event is burning incense, and sowing yellow rice. Burning frankincense is interpreted as a form of offering to God Almighty. When incense is burned it will emit smoke. The smoke that rises vertically, and does not turn right or left means that the offering is well received by the spirits. Burning incense before the *reog* stage has the meaning of connecting humans with their God. Sowing of yellow rice by the handler of *reog* means inviting the spirits which will later possess the *reog* players in a trance event. It also means as respect and gratitude as an exorcist of evil aura and protecting the village from all *candrasengkala* (bad conditions will occur in the future).

3.2 Communication Pattern in the Show of *Wahyu Turonggo Aji Reog* Dance

The reog performance begins with the accompaniment of reog instruments with the strains of *Gendhing Puspawarna* and *Gending Ladrang Slamet Slendro*.

Setting	: reog stage area
Participants	: reog dancers, reog handler, and audience
Topic	: reog dance performances (<i>kuda lumping</i>)
Communicative act	: music, dance, and songs

Table 1. Lyrics Song *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo*

<p><i>Rumeksa ingsun laku nisto ngoyo woro</i> I keep myself from doing insults at will <i>Kelawan mekak howo, howo kang dur angkoro</i> Against controlling our passions <i>Senajan syetan gentayangan, tansah gawe rubedo</i> Even though the devil still haunts us <i>Hinggo pupusing zaman</i> Until the end of time <i>Hameteg ingsun, nyirep geni wisu murko</i> With all my might to extinguish the fire <i>Meper hardaning ponco, saben ulesing netra</i> Control the five senses in every blink of an eye <i>Linambangan sih kawelasan, ingkang paring kamulyan</i> Based on the mercy of the Giver of Glory <i>Sang Hyang Jati Pengeran</i> The True Supreme Lord, God Almighty</p>

Communication pattern in the *WTA Reog* Dance performance includes non-verbal communication and verbal communication. Non-verbal communication between humans and God is proven by the movement with the body half sitting and then bending with the hands touching parallel in front of the chest to ask for blessings without any obstacles. It is also a communication of fellow humans between reog dancers and the audience. The next non-verbal communication is a dance movement that holds many meanings. The elements contained in *WTA Reog* include *wiraga*, *wirama*, *wirasa*, and *wirupa*. *Wiraga* means “body”. The reog dancers are able to master the appearance in every movement from head to toe that is expressed appropriately, from timing, movement, tempo, and changes in motion. *Wirama* means “rhythm/ tempo”. Reog dancers must be able to move their bodies according to the music and tempo. *Wirasa* is the expression of feelings that be done through movements and facial expressions that are in accordance with the accompaniment of music like feelings of anger, sadness, joyful, and so on. *Wirupa* means “form/face”. This element provides clarity of the message to be conveyed through colour, clothing, and dancer’s makeup conveying a meaning/intention.

One of *WTA Reog* dances is *kuda lumping*. It is performed using a piggyback property made of woven bamboo which is decorated in such as *gongs*, *kenong*, *slompret*, and others. Dance movements imply various meanings of human life. The next non-verbal communication is contained in the *kuda lumping* dance. It is found in the piggyback property being taken from the horse. Symbolizing human beings as a horse has an intention that human beings must have the strength to use to carry out the activities that exist in life, and the unyielding nature of trials, and problems encountered by humans in their lives. Red, white, and black clothes and makeup patterns express meaning. Red has the meaning of courage, while white contains a symbol of sanctity. It means the sanctity of the mind and heart to live

life and avoid negative thoughts and bad intentions by humans. Black has a symbol as a bad trait in humans. Humans as God's creatures are weak, and sometime have bad qualities in themselves.

Verbal communication in the *reog* performance through of song *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo*. It proves the existence of communication fellow humans between *reog* dancers and the audience. *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo* is a song that has the meaning of God's message (containing instructions for humans to live their lives) to humans when facing God Almighty at the Doomsday. The uses of the song represents the Kemawi village as a Muslim community. The song *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo* is a song composed by Sri Narendra Kolosebo [7]. The meaning of the song title is based on the origin of the word, *kidung* which means song, *wahyu* which mean revelation is a message, the song is mentioned as a message from God to humans, *kolo* has the meaning of time/ when, and the word *sebo* which means facing. The meaning of *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo* is a song with the meaning God's message to humans when facing (God). It implies the meaning that humans are actually God's creatures who live in the world with a clue to return to their God.

The lyrics of the song *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo* function as a reminder, achive to behave well while living according to God's instructions. It is believed that humans are always persuaded by Satan to always do evil through the five parts of the body, namely the mouth, nose, ears, eyes, and the two holes under the stomach. The last part is believed to be the center of bad lust. *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo* functions as a guide to fight lust and to fortify oneself with awareness to be good human being. The lyric of the song is expressed using the *Krama* Javanese. That is the highest level of the Javanese language. The language level is used to speak to the higher level interlocutors, such as parents, leaders, or God. Singing the song with such a language level represented the respected act to God. The content of the lyric also represents the act of communication between human beings when there is a switch code to *Ngoko* Javanese. It it's the act of informing the message of God. The lyric expressed the unequal relationship between human beings and God. Human beings are positioned as weak creatures that must always glorify God. The use of the song as an accompaniment in the *reog* represents the Islamic religion's acculturation with Javanese cultural values which are inserted in the *merti dusun* ritual.

3.3 Communication Pattern of *WAT Reog* Dance in Trance Possession Ritual

One of the unique characteristics of *WAT Reog* has a pure trance ritual event. Trance is a state loss of conciousness caused by the entry of spirits into the human body which can control and change behavior patterns. The magical value can be recognized when the dancer is possessed by spirits and ancestral spirits. This event is marked by the emergence of magical and spiritual powers in the dancer's bodies. Those who are in a trance will have the power to fight sharp objects and eat coals. This is because their bodies have been controlled by spirits and ancestral spirits that enter the bodies of the *reog* dancers. Possessions occur because the charmer communicates with spirits through uttering mantra. The communication patterns formed at the *reog* trance ritual event researchers describe as follows:

Setting/situation	: <i>reog</i> stage area
Participant	: <i>reog</i> handler, <i>reog</i> dancer, and audience
Topic	: trance
Communicative act	: non-verbal (<i>offerings</i>) and verbal (<i>mantras</i>).

Communication patterns in the ritual of summoning spirits and ancestral spirits carried out by the *reog* handler are in the form of non-verbal and verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is carried out through the action of the *reog* handler holding the *kantil* flower in the left hand and incense in the right hand. The flower of the *kantil* in the Javanese language means the *kantil kemantil*, the word symbolizes the message to always remember the close

relationship between humans and spirits wherever they are. The *kantil* flower also symbolizes the close relationship between humans and spirits though they are already in a different place. It also has meaning that although the *danyang*, *pepunden*, and elders (spirits) of Kemawi village already have a different nature, they still have a close relationship with the villagers. Frankincense is a means to invoke/ invite ancestral spirits and spirits to the ritual ceremony of the trance event. Spirits and ancestral spirits love frankincense. By holding frankincense in hand, the handler intends to invite spirits and give way for spirits to enter into ritual ceremonies.

Verbal communication contained in the ritual of the summoning of spirits by the handler *reog* carried out read *Surah Al-Fatihah* seven times and mantras in Javanese as follows:

“*Jagad kawula ingsun mung titah merta suci kang sejati, sejati ingsun manunggal ana ing jiwa raga Sang Cahya Cipta, ciptaan ing Batara Guru ingsun ngundang roh suci lan dulur-dulur kabeh kang ana sak indenging bawana taha welas asih saka kersaning Allah*”.

‘The world in which I stand is truly holy, I am united in soul and body, the light of creation, creation from *Batara Guru* (God Almighty) I invite the holy spirit and all brothers around the world to be merciful with God’s permission’.

This *mantra* use Javanese manners. The use of the Javanese language which has the highest level in the hierarchy in the Javanese language implicitly expresses the meaning that humans are weak creatures and God is the exalted essence. The *mantra* said when the spirit is summoned to enter the dancer’s body. The Javanese language used in *mantra* also represents the position of the spirit and God which is much higher than humans.

The word of *ingsun* in the *mantra* means ‘I’, the handler of *reog* as the person who communicates. The word “*Batara Guru*” in the *mantra* means ‘God Almighty’ where *Batara Guru* is the ruling god in Hinduism. The art of *reog* emerged and developed in the era of the Hindu kingdom where its appearance at that time also had an effect, especially on the *mantra*. The word *Batara Guru* is used to refer to God, the ruler of the world, who has power over all created beings, so the handler of *reog* still uses the word “*Batara Guru*” but what is referred to in this word is God Almighty. The use of the word “*holy spirit*” in the *mantra* refers to the holy spirit who is invited to enter the *reog* dancer’s body. The holy spirits is *Kyai Petruk*, *Kyai Semar* and *Kyai Cantrik* who believed reside in Mount Merapi. The three *kyai* are propagators of Islam by combining it with Javanese culture, Mount Merapi is also the place where the forerunner of the creator of the *WTA Reog*.

The invitation of the holy spirit is believed to be a being who can see things in the future beyond the five human senses, so that his presence later is believed to be able to give advice about *chandrasengkala* and *melala* (bad conditions that will occur) in the future. The mention of the word “*dulur-dulur kabeh*” in the *mantra* which means ‘all brothers’ refers to the ancestral spirits, *pepunden*, *danyang*, and elders of the forerunner of Kemawi village as the people who built Kemawi village in ancient times then and keep it until now. His presence is believed by the community to provide advice about *chandrasengkala* and *memala* (bad conditions that will occur) in the future. The summoning of the spirits in the *reog* performance with God’s permission is also proven in the chanting of the *mantra* which mentions the words *Allah*, *Batara Guru*, and *Sang Cahya Cipta* which is believed to be a form of designation to God.

The spirits who were invited/ summoned in the ritual ceremony as spirits of different nature who gave advice about *candrasengkala* and *memala* (bad conditions will occur in the future) and how to refuse that. It is means as guarding the village that had been built by borrowing the body of the *reog* dancer. There is a communication pattern between the spirit in the dancer’s body giving advice at the sentence as follows:

“*Jogonen dusun iki ubengono dusun ping pitu dina Selasa Kliwon bar maghrib*”.

‘Take care of this village, go around the village seven times on Tuesday *kliwon* after sundown’.

This sentence uses Javanese *ngoko*. *Ngoko* Javanese is the Javanese language with the lowest level (informal speech) which is used to talk to people whose has a close relationship/distance, people whose age is below the speaker's, and people who have lower status. The sentence was uttered by a dancer who was in a trance, it means the spirit controlling the body. Communication occurs between the spirit and humans. The use of the Javanese *ngoko* shows a hierarchy of the existence of the spirit higher than humans. The sentence it shows that there is advice from the spirit for humans to protect their village. The utterance in the sentence proves that there is the spirit gives way to refuse *balak* (danger). The *reog* in the *Merti Dusun* Kemawi ceremonial ritual proves the communication of spirits (*pepunden*, *danyang*, and ancestral spirits) to the village as a form or evidence of participating in guarding the village that has been built until now. After completing their goal of giving advice by spirits the dancers are healed with *mantra* by the *reog* handler asking the spirits to return to their place. The *reog* handler returns the spirits by reading *Al-Fatihah* and the *mantra* as follows:

“*Sayahu bisintari godiyahu biqinthory*”.

The *mantra* is in Arabic. Arabic is the language used in the holy book of Islam (*Al-Qur'an*). The use of *mantra* in Arabic represents the Kemawi village who are Muslim and know God, namely Allah SWT. The use of *mantras* and the use of chanting verses from the *Qur'an* implies that the Kemawi village believes in the existence of a power greater than the human being as a form of respect and offering to God Almighty.

4 Conclusion

This study shows and describes the communication patterns of *WTA Reog* in the ritual *Merti Dusun* Kemawi. There are two patterns, non-verbal and verbal communication. Verbal communication can be seen in the form of scriptures, *Kidung Wahyu Kolosebo*'s song lyrics, and spells for summoning and returning the spirit. Moreover, non-verbal communication can be seen in the form of dance movements, offerings, clothing, and make-up. The trance event is a means of communication between the spirit and the ancestral spirits of Kemawi village by borrowing the body of a dancer to give advice, as a sign of protecting the village from the beginning until now. Prayers and chanting of holy verses also represent the village community as creatures who believe in God and as a form of respecting and expressing gratitude to God. It is also a means of representing a respectful attitude to nature. All of the social acts represented in the performance have an indirect intention to preserve nature because society believes that God through His nature has given them well-being.

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