

Unveiling the Subtleties of Language and the Symbolic Meaning of *Subur Boak* Ritual

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Abstract. This study aims to unveil the language functions and the meaning of a cultural discourse found in *the Subur Boak* ritual of people in Habi Village of Sikka Regency. This research is conducted in the ethnolinguistic field, and it analyzes cultural discourse through particular utterances. This research uses ethnolinguistic theory, which also covers speech act theories, which can be directly found in the cultural discourse uttered in this ritual. This research uses in-depth interview techniques as its primary source since the authors found difficulties because this ritual is very rare. The authors also collected data from prior literature reviews as additional sources. Meanwhile, the authors applied the descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. The findings in this study revealed that the *Subur Boak* ritual is held to repel misfortune done by the incest couple. There are some traditional fines that the incest couple should fulfill in the *Subur Boak* ritual. Those fines involved an uncastrated pig, a headless dog, a dog's tail, and coins, and the incest couple had to walk around the village. Meanwhile, the language functions found in this ritual are directives and declarations functions. Language in this context stands as a bridge for social reconciliation and also as a bridge that can connect and unite people in Habi Village with their abstract highest entity.

Keywords: ethnolinguistic, language functions, symbolic meaning, ward off misfortune

1. Introduction

Language, with its characteristics, has become one of the main foundations of people's lives. It shows the existence of humanity since the beginning of human civilization. Therefore, language allows people to express their abstract thoughts by combining words that create meaningful statements. These words are understood by the members of every society based on tradition and passed down from generation to generation. Every society has its language, which reflects the existence of different worldviews. People in one community may see or interpret things differently than others. From a micro perspective, it is clear that every language has its own rules and grammatical structures. We need to find a way to empirically prove that one language's structure or grammatical devices are better than another. From a macro perspective, language is viewed from the context of its use. Language is not only about grammatical structure; more than that, language is understood together with context. These differences arise because the reality faced or experienced by members of one society is very different from that faced or experienced by members of another. Therefore, in the social context, [1] stated that language has two crucial functions. They are the interactional function and transactional function.

Interactional function means how human being practice their language to interact with each other, socially or emotionally; it also covers how they indicate their social friendliness, hostility, and emotions (happiness, annoyance, sadness, pain, or pleasure). Meanwhile, in transactional

function, people utilize their linguistic abilities to communicate their abstract thoughts and skills and as a tool to spread information. Those functions above show how crucial language is in human beings' lives. In terms of daily use, language is also used as a bond to integrate family. In contrast, as a social process and social product, language is generally related to the culture and social group to which it belongs. Another great feature of language is that it conveys power as a bridge to overcome the complex problems of global society. In addition, [2] language is a form of social communication in society, where cultural goods are observed as social phenomena, and the necessary skills must be acquired. Therefore, language is seen as an element of culture.

[3] noted that culture may be understood from three distinct perspectives: behavioral patterns (practices), cognitive and emotional frameworks (mental models, schemas, worldviews, ideologies, feeling structures), and linguistic expressions. These diverse ideas have influenced the history of thinking about language and culture in several domains. Besides that, [4] defines culture as a system of values, symbols, and life behaviors that are unique in a society. The community must maintain a custom because if it is ignored, unwanted things are very likely to happen; on the other hand, people also hope there will be blessings when they do it. Customs are usually in the form of ceremonies that contain a series of ritual offerings and prayers or mantras that cover them. All the series of events, offerings, and mantras that are in every tribal ritual, of course, contain many symbols that are full of meaning and a positive expectation for those who do it. Meanwhile, [5] stated that the relationship between language and culture can be seen as a part and a whole. Language can be considered a part of the culture and a tool of culture (which are not the same thing). However, at the same time, language is entirely independent of culture, and it can be considered a separate, autonomous semiotic system, except for culture, which occurs in traditional linguistics.

The concepts above can be found in studying language, culture, and society. In this context, the sociological perspective becomes the basis of this research. [6] defines sociolinguistics as the study of linguistics in which language affects society, although, on the other hand, society also defines language. It does not consider the structure of the language. However, it focuses on how the language is used in the rules of speech in different societies, which differ significantly in some areas. Regional languages are a cultural heritage in Indonesia that should be protected, nurtured, and developed. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the knowledge of regional languages and make efforts to promote, develop, and protect them [7].

Meanwhile, Holmes & Wilson (2022) understand sociology as the study of language in business. From this point of view, language is considered a part of culture and society. It aims to show that the conventions or rules, norms, and principles of language use that its users have already agreed upon are directly related to the cultural aspects within those societies. Performing his role as a member of society, he lives under the control of the culture, norms, and values of language use that must be followed. From this point of view, we can see that man as a social being is completely dependent because we live in a world with many values, written or unwritten, verbal or non-verbal, whereby those disobey are punished in response to their misdeeds. Language plays a crucial role in this context as a means of expressing reality, no matter how terrifying it may be.

Language as a means of revealing reality in social communication between its users also has a special function. In this context, language is used to reveal nuances and ways of understanding the world of its members [5]. From the perspective of linguistics, [2] proposed six '*functions of speech*' that enable human beings to communicate or to use language in a particular context. Those six '*functions of speech*' are expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and phatic. She also added that norms or values for polite behavior differ

between speech communities. In other words, linguistic politeness is culturally based. Various speakers prioritize distinct tasks and articulate these functions in distinct ways [6]. All these speech acts are interpreted or used differently by people in the same context or social setting. In addition, ethnolinguistic research is considered its fundamental basis in this study. [8] defined ethnolinguistics as a branch of linguistics that examines language systems based on the perspective of culture owned by the community. In addition, ethnolinguistics has a role in recording cultural phenomena so that they still exist as evidence of linguistic and cultural phenomena. In other words, it studies the relationship between language and culture and how different ethnic groups are perceived. It also explores how perception and conceptualization affect language and how this relates to different cultures and societies.

In ethnolinguistics, language has a deep root at the group level, the cultural understanding of the speaking communities. There are several approaches to ethnolinguistics. These approaches include ethnography, semiotics, cultural semantics, ways of thinking, stylistics, and pragmatics. Then, the authors consider cultural semantics as the basis for analyzing the language used in this ceremony. Cultural semantics has meaning according to the perception of its users. Cultural semantics is used to interpret or discover the meaning of verbal expression, local wisdom, and cognitive systems reflected in their thinking or way of thinking, their way of seeing the world, or their worldview from the context of their culture. Cultural assimilators consist of brief descriptions of situations with four possible interpretations of a conversation between two people. One is from the home culture, and the other is from the target culture.

In a particular place, a traditional ritual is held for various purposes or aims through oral discourse in the form of symbolic and magical words or utterances to solve or overcome a social difficulty around them. This idea also happens in Habi, one of the villages in the Kangae Sub-district of Sikka Regency, Indonesia. It is located in the eastern part of Maumere, the capital city of Sikka Regency. People in Habi Village have a unique tradition in the form of traditional rituals that convey some rules, prohibitions, norms, and values, which should be accepted and obeyed by its members. One of them can be seen in *the Subur Boak* ritual. People in Habi Village widely know this ritual as a precious legacy from their past generations.

The *Subur Boak* ritual is a well-known ritual by the villagers of Habi, inherited from their ancestors. *Subur Boak* itself is a healing ritual done to recover from sexual assault done by incest. This ritual is held to repel misfortune done by the marriage of incest, and it is done by saying purifying prayers from the misfortunes that occurred. *Subur Boak* is a ritual in the form of purifying prayers to keep away bad luck for the incest couple so their faults may not be inherited by their generations. It also avoids bad luck for the villagers from the rage of *Ama Pu* (God) and the curse from the ancestors. Generally, if the act of immorality is not admitted to the family, which means marrying their siblings and not following the ritual, misfortune will happen, such as a lack of rain, which will cause famine in society.

As a consequence, the incest couple will be paraded around the village while chanting repentance as a form of punishment so they will not repeat it. In the meantime, in the form of punishment, they are also instructed to carry a few things, such as Rice, *moke* (traditional alcoholic drink), pig, and horse (according to the local tradition, said to the elderly). The things they carry will be cooked and eaten at the village meeting hall or where the ritual occurs. The villagers attending the ritual must finish all the food and not take it home to avoid taking the misfortune home. While the ritual is being held, children, teenage girls, and the unmarried are forbidden to attend and watch the ritual so they will not do the immoral act. Parading the incest couple around the village while chanting repentance as a form of punishment so it does not repeat.

This research aims to unveil the ritual speech and reveal the meaning of the *Subur Boak* traditional ritual, which takes place at Habi Village from a sociolinguistic point of view. This research is done at Habi Village, Kangae Sub-district, Sikka Regency. The resource of this research is from the elderly who live in Habi Village. Therefore, to unveil this language and cultural phenomenon, the authors use the sociolinguistics theory, particularly about speech functions as proposed by Holmes and Yule, as the foundations and also the stepping point to reveal the nuances, the subtleties, and the peculiarities of *the Subur Boak* ritual. This research also attempts to reveal how people in Habi perceive the world through symbolic language and equipment or artifacts.

Much research has focused on unveiling the meaning of ward-off misfortune rituals from various indigenous cultures. The authors realize that almost all of these rituals try to pinpoint their analysis from the point of view of anthropology or sociology. At the same time, this current research will put its main concern on its cultural discourse to unveil the meaning beyond it. Therefore, symbolic utterances, equipment, or artifacts will be very different from their conceptual or lexical meaning because they are based on how people in Habi perceive the world and its existence.

The first related previous research was from [9], who conducted to ascertain the significance of the Jokhaju ritual process and its implementation methodology in Wolopau Village, Wiwipemo Village, Wollojita District, throughout the district's final period. The author's research topic focuses on the public figure Wolopau. The research reveals that the bolstering disapproval of the ritual (Jokaju) performed by the Wolopau community in Wiwipemo Village, Wollojita District, Ende Regency, encompasses several distinct stages, namely Peinel, Pana Manu, Koe Kol, and Tagaau. These stages represent the distinctive features of the Wolopau community, with the primary objective of this ritual being the expulsion of malevolent spirits from the village and the expression of gratitude for the abundant crop.

The second related research was from [10], which conducted an ethnolinguistics study to reveal the values of local wisdom of the Atoni Pah Meto Ethnic in the discourse of the traditional ritual "Helas Keta" in Timor Island, East Nusa Tenggara, based on an ethnolinguistic perspective. The study results show that the traditional "Helas Keta" ritual contains various local wisdom values. There are two forms of local wisdom: tangible and intangible. As such, tangible local wisdom containing noble values consists of reed leaves, sticks, stones and water, sacrificial animals, woven bags and betel nuts, and local wine (Tuak). Intangible local wisdom encompasses parables and advice. The values of local wisdom in the ritual "Helas Keta" are job description, recognition, kinship and brotherhood strengthening, cooperation and mutual respect, wisdom and justice, confession and repentance, reconciliation, self-purification, love, and true peace.

The following related research was from [11]. This research focuses on establishing the process and impact of dealing with the COVID pandemic through the ritual of refusing reinforcements by the Dayak community of Umin Village. The tradition of refusing reinforcements is a form of local wisdom of the Dayak Desa tribe, devised from their perspectives and constructed from their cultural, religious, and environmental understanding. These are modern diseases, different from previous diseases, which are spiritual, as a result of which the traditional process of refusing reinforcements is implemented with several innovations, although understanding the concept of health and illness is believed to use the local view of the Dayak Desa.

The fourth research was from [12], who researched the significance and principles of the Kasohaka custom within the Kadatua society. Researchers revealed that the kasohaka ritual involves inhabitants creating "kantila" (gutters filled with materials) placed on the kasohaka

building. The baruga was explicitly constructed to conduct the kasohaka practice. Within this structure, the community, under the guidance of the traditional leader, engages in prayer to avert calamity. The Kasohaka custom encompasses religious, cooperative, cultural, and deliberative values. According to common myths, neglecting this ritual may result in severe winds, intense rainfall, and large waves. The kasohaka ritual is believed to have the power to alleviate calamities due to its emphasis on praying [13]. They ask the creator to perform an exorcism on "demons." Catastrophe carrier.

Meanwhile, [14] tried to explore the symbolic meaning of the custom of Ratib dancing in the Tolak Bala customs, which is the focus of this study conducted in Sungai Kuruk III Village, Seruway District, Aceh Tamiang Regency. It was discovered that each symbol in the walking ritual equipment held a distinct significance, which led to the entire society being able to identify and understand its meaning.

The next research was from Indrawati and Derri Ris Riana, who tried to unveil the meaning of Ward off Misfortune's Symbol in Banjar Society: Ethnolinguistic Study. The results showed that Banjar people still have beliefs about objects as a ward off misfortune. This tradition is carried out individually and in groups through traditional ceremonies. This tradition is in the form of offerings, using amulets or magical objects, and installing decorative motifs at home [15].

The seventh research was from Seli (2021), who conducted semiotics research about *Tolak Bala* Mantra of the Dayak community. The study's results showed that heuristically and hermeneutically, the meaning of the *Tolak Bala* Mantra contains an entreaty to God so people are protected from COVID-19, disasters, calamities, and bad things that interfere with human life. The *Tolak Bala* Mantra is a communication medium to ward off spirits that bring disease, disaster, or catastrophe [16].

The eighth research was from Nofrita et al. (2019), who researched the Ritual Speech of *Lukah Gilo* Tradition of *Bonsai* Society: Value and Social Function Text Study. They found that the form of oral tradition is not only in the form of stories, myths, and fairy tales but also contains various matters regarding the life and community life of its owners, such as local wisdom, value systems, belief systems, and religion as well as various artistic products. In addition, *Lukah Gilo* tradition has several functions, such as (1) as a means of entertainment, (2) as a tool to maintain and pass on customs, traditions, and culture, (3) group identity, and (4) cultural validation [17]. The next research was conducted by Mangopo (2020), who conducted ethnographic and textual analysis to uncover the denotational power of speech in the *Ma'marakka* ritual. This research showed that the features of the *Ma'marakka* Ritual involved contextualization, parallelism, metaphor, and comparison. The denotational text means what is being said. It concerns the meaning of the structure of the text, person deictic, and spatial deictic. *Ma'marakka* Ritual in Tana Toraja can impact nature, society, and the life of the dead person's family [18].

The ninth research was from Pakuwali et al. (2022), who tried to analyze the traditional *Pahili Mbuala* Ritual utterances used by the performers of the ritual to represent the culture of the unique Sumba ethnic community unreservedly. These particularities are full of meanings that can be known through teaching spoken for generations by ritual practitioners. The results of the study showed that the form of a lingual unit of traditional *Pahili Mbuala* ritual speech in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and discourse can divulge cultural meanings that reflect the thought patterns and views of the Sumba ethnic community on the values and teachings adopted [19]. The eleventh research was from Sitoto et al. (2022), who used anthropolinguistic theories to study the symbolic meanings and values implied in the ritual speech of the *Pattomateang* ceremony of the *Towani Tolotang* community. The research was conducted in

Amparita Village of Sidrap Regency to reveal the symbolic meanings and values depicted in the *Pattomateang* ritual ceremony. Based on the data analysis, the research results reveal that the symbolic meanings implied in the *Pattomateang* ceremony are related to the invocation of the community represented by Uwatta or *Uwa* to God through Dewa Seuwae so they can settle the *Linoe* (earth) peacefully and prosperously as depicted in some utterances accomplished by *Uwatta* or *Uwa*. Besides, they also imply moral values and local wisdom related to human life [20].

The last research was from Suvina et al. (2020). They researched the creation of the "Akegh Cahayegh" Dance, the cultural representation of the Medicinal Ritual on Calamity Reversal of the *Talang Mamak* Tribe, Gedabu Village. They noticed this work was edited due to the writer's interpretation and imagination. The values involved in this work are those of loyalty, obedience, and togetherness. The implicit message conveyed is the development and change of time is not a barrier for the inland tribe of *Talang Mamak*, Gedabu Village, to carry out rituals and preserve ceremonies, namely the treatment of *Mahligai Tolak Bala* as a ritual of cleaning the village.

In addition, some researchers have researched the function of language and the meaning of a particular traditional ritual. The first research was from Ayu, who researched to analyze the language functions taken from some daily conversations in the Balinese language of a village in Klungkung Regency, Bali. Leech's theory about language function types was used to analyze the results. The result showed that the directive function became the most common function in conversations. This is because the participants of the conversations often produce the conversation by giving orders or requesting.

Meanwhile, the function that only sometimes appears is Aesthetic. The reason is that these participants often speak straight to the point and rarely try to beautify their utterances [21]. Rahmatika and Hamzah conducted a study to examine the role of language in the discourse generated by traditional medicine vendors [22].

The next previous research was from Sinaga, who tried to examine the musical forms, functions, and meanings of the traditional song IO-IO in the Karo community in North Sumatra. The function of IO-IO Song in the Karo community is to serve as a means of traditional ceremonies (rituals), entertainment and recreation facilities, self-expression, communication, dance accompaniment, and driver of economic gain. Meanwhile, the meanings of the IO-IO Song were the expression of longing, the symbol of loyalty, ritual prayer, entertainment, feeling, and the religious meaning of belief in the deceased person's spirit [23]. The fourth research was from Hadirman, who researched the language function of *Gambusu* oral literature performed by Muna communities, which stated that the oral literacy text Kabhanti Gambusu expresses language and culture in three ways: informative, interactive, and imaginative. Language in oral literacy kabhanti gambusu has meaning relating to local religion, character development, unity in diversity, morality, aesthetics, and love [24].

The fifth research was from Guruh and Kinanti, who researched to reveal society's form, function, nature, and view, which is very interesting when studying literary anthropology. Rejecting the *Bala Mantra* is a mantra in the form of a request used during the traditional *Tepung Tawar* ceremony in the Malay Sambasi community using water as a medium. The Reject *Bala Mantra* is a repellent against bad luck, treats illness, and asks for salvation. The spell used in the *Tepung Tawar* ceremony is new because the old spell can no longer be used for some reasons. Not all people's views on the Reject *Bala* mantra are the same, depending on people's understanding based on age and people's life experiences [25]. The next research was from Junaidi. In this research, he used socio-pragmatic analysis and discovered the linguistic function of *Bejeghum* traditional rituals. He found that this ceremony has different functions and purposes, such as *Bejeghum* for happy events and sad news, *Bejeghum* for marriage, death, and

thanksgiving, and *Bejeghum* for some cultural events. In addition, the language used can be in the form of request, order, invitation, and notification [26].

The previous research mentioned above put ward-off misfortune ritual as their point of discussion, even though they emphasize the history, the value, and all the symbolic equipment they use for the success of those rituals. Meanwhile, this research focuses more on the language functions used in this ritual, which will follow the use of particular equipment and artifacts. Thus, it will help the authors unveil how people in Habi Village understand the world and how they perceive it from their perception or point of view.

2. Methods and Material

Qualitative research can be defined as an inductive rule where the goal is to build knowledge to produce meaning. Most researchers utilize this approach in their goal to uncover, reveal, explore, and investigate a phenomenon that occurs in society known as a social phenomenon; to uncover the meaning found by humans through a situation, event, incident, or activity and artifacts that also aims to build a deep understanding or understanding of a social dimension of society. It also includes the importance of people's subjective experiences and meaning-making processes and gaining a depth of understanding. In addition, qualitative research is generally appropriate when your primary purpose is to explore, describe, or explain.

Moreover, [27] stated that qualitative research prioritizes lived experiences and is subjective and sensitive to researchers' and participants' biases. Thoughtful qualitative research is consistent and rigorous and addresses necessary inquiries about people and their lives. In addition, [28] stated that qualitative research includes the use and collection of a wide range of empirical materials studies, personal experiences, introspection, life stories, interviews, artifacts, cultural texts and productions, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic aspects of an individual's life. Therefore, qualitative design implies descriptive analysis. Nazir, as cited by [29], stated that the descriptive qualitative method is the search for facts with the precise interpretation to reveal what is meant by the research target's speech group and cultural group. From this perspective, the lingual forms and symbolic meanings that wrap and cling closely to the *Subur Boak* ritual are described according to the perceptions and conceptions of the Habi people (emically) and according to the author's interpretation (ethically). In other words, it aims at describing and unveiling the language functions used in *the Subur Boak* ritual (a ward-off misfortune ritual) seen from ethnolinguistics point of view and the symbolic meaning behind the use of unusual dictions, equipment or artifacts, which will also very helpful to unveil the peculiarity, the subtleties, the nuances of way of thinking, way of saying, and also way of behave from the perspective of people in Habi Village of Sikka Regency. Hence, primary and secondary data were used as data sources in this research. The primary data were directly taken from the informants in the field from an emic perspective. The data were obtained directly in the field, even though, unfortunately, in this research, the authors were not allowed to join or attend the ritual being held due to some rules made by the elders. Meanwhile, the authors obtained secondary data through some related and previous literature [30].

3. Results and Discussion

From the results of this research, two important points are going to be described. The first is about the concept of the *Subur Boak* ritual itself. The second point is about the analysis of

ritual speech, mainly speech functions proposed by Holmes and Yule, seen from a cultural semantics point of view as the foundation and the stepping point to reveal the nuances, subtleties, and peculiarities of the *Subur Boak* ritual. It is used to reveal how people in Habi perceive the world through symbolic language and equipment or artifacts.

Subur Boak ritual is held to repel misfortune done by the incest couple where they *Wain Nale Ina Buan Wi'nen Lu'ur* (the act of sexual intercourse with their mother or sister, even with their cousin) and also doing *Bahu Laput* (the act of sexual intercourse with the members of the family) or *Wi'nen Men/Naran Men* (the child of their siblings). If the marriage from those couples mentioned above occurs, the recovery ritual *Subur Boak* has to be done. *Subur Boak* consists of two words: *Subur*, which means to stick a soft object to a sharp object, whereas *Boak* means to slaughter an animal wildly. There is also a traditional fine in the form of one pig, one dog, *gobang wauk rigi goit* (coins will be thrown to repel the misfortune). A specific explanation of those fines can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Customary fine that the incest couple should fulfill

Customary Fine	Lexical Meaning	Sentence Meaning
<i>Wawi kamuk</i>	<i>Wawi:</i> Pig <i>Kamuk:</i>	uncastrated pig
<i>ahu arun sagar nora wi'ro, pa'at e'i natar dun, pa'at nora lepa ubun bura</i>	<i>Ahu:</i> dog <i>Arun:</i> chin <i>Sagar:</i> ripped <i>Nora:</i> with <i>Wi'ro:</i> Tamiang Bamboo <i>Pa'at:</i> Plant <i>E'i:</i> at <i>Natar dun:</i> village border <i>Lepa Ubun Bura:</i> yellowish coconut leaf	a headless dog, which is stick to a small sharpened bamboo with a yellowish coconut leaf and proclaimed at the village border
<i>ahu we'or sagar nora wi'ro, pa'at e'i natar wutun e'i ai gete, pa'at nora lepa ubun bura</i>	<i>Ahu:</i> dog <i>We'or:</i> tail <i>Sagar:</i> ripped <i>Nora:</i> with <i>Wi'ro:</i> Tamiang Bamboo <i>Pa'at:</i> Plant <i>E'i:</i> at <i>Natar dun:</i> village border <i>Lepa Ubun Bura:</i> Yellowish coconut leaf	a dog tail that is stick into a small sharpened bamboo and placed under a big tree at the rear part of the village, with the yellowish coconut leaf
<i>gobang wauk, rigi go'it lodo ei lewu tepo halar robong no weta herin le heron wawa, nian lau nian reta, luat rema rua lopa mala puher itun</i>	<i>Gobang:</i> coin <i>Rigi:</i> coin <i>Wauk:</i> bad things <i>Go'it:</i> bad things <i>Lodo:</i> throw away <i>Ei lewu:</i> under <i>Tepo:</i> through <i>Halar:</i> bamboo bed <i>No:</i> while <i>Weta:</i> say <i>Herin le heron wawa, nian lau nian reta:</i> the people who live in this village/ villagers <i>Luat rema rua:</i> in the future	The coins will be thrown between the <i>bale-bale</i> while chanting traditional prayers, which means that other villagers are not to make the same mistake, which is to marry your siblings from the same blood or even cousins

	<i>Lopa</i> : do not <i>Mala puher it</i> : marry own siblings	
<i>du'a la'i pano gole natar nora weta "le wawa lau reta lopa depo ganu ami. Ami gu'a naruk hemu</i>	<i>Du'a</i> : woman <i>La'i</i> : man <i>Pano gole</i> : walk around <i>Natar</i> : village <i>Nora Weta</i> : while saying <i>Le wawa lau reta</i> : villagers <i>Lopa</i> : do not <i>Depo</i> : follow <i>Ganu</i> : like <i>Ami</i> : us <i>Ami gu'a</i> : we did <i>Naruk hemu</i> : bad things	The incest couple has to walk around the village while saying, "Villagers do not follow what we have done."

There is a hidden, symbolic meaning in the use of equipment or traditional fine, as shown in Table 1. The first traditional fine is in the form of an uncastrated pig, followed by a traditional ritual for the rest of the villagers (*ata riwun*) that come and witness (*ata mai diri rena nora pile ileng*). Symbolically, *wawi kamuk* (uncastrated pig) is a symbol of fertility. The uncastrated pig will be taken and slaughtered, where its sex organ or genitals will be thrown away in the deep ocean as one of the processes of ward off misfortune ritual.

The next fine is a headless dog, slaughtered wildly, which is stuck to a small sharpened bamboo with a yellowish coconut leaf and proclaimed at the village border (*ahu arun sagar nora wire, part e'i nature dun, part nora leap ubuntu bura*). Next fine is a dog's tail, which is stuck into a small sharpened bamboo and placed under a big tree at the rear part of the village, with the yellowish coconut leaf (*ahu we are sagar nora wire, part e'i nature Futuna e'i ai get, part nora leap ubuntu bura*). People in Habi, since their past, have always considered a dog a symbol of wildness. Therefore, in this ritual, without any hesitation, the dog is tortured and slaughtered by the villagers. Symbolically, the dog in this ritual represents a human being (the incest couple) who have lost their mind and sensibility by intentionally having sexual intercourse with their mother or sister, even with their cousin, and also doing *Bahu Laput* (the act of sexual intercourse with the members of the family) or *Wi'nen Men/Naran Men* (the child of their siblings). Meanwhile, the yellowish coconut leaf (*Lepa Ubun Bura*) symbolizes purity. People in Habi expect that this ritual can be used to purify their village and prevent them from the bad things around them.

The next fine is the thrown-away coins to repel the misfortune. The coins will be dumped under the *bale-bale* or the bamboo-made bed. The coins will be thrown between the *bale-bale* while chanting traditional prayers, which has the meaning that other villagers are not to make the same mistake which is to marry their siblings from the same blood or even cousins (*gobang wauk, rigi go'it lodo ei lewu tepo halar robong no weta herin le heron wawa, nian lau nian reta, luat rema rua lopa mala puher itun*).

From their perspective, coins are seen as a symbol of luck. It is valuable belongings that can bring back their pride, their honor, and their chastity, which have been insulted by the act of sexual intercourse done by the incest couple. The coin is also thrown away as one of the ward-off misfortune ritual processes. The last line is that the incest couple has to walk around the village while saying or shouting, "Villagers do not follow what we have done" (*du'a lai pano gole nature Nora weta "le wawa lau reta lopa depo ganu ami. Ami gu'a nark hemp"*). Besides doing the adat *Subur Boak*, they are also fined with Ritual *Bahu Laput* because of sexual

intercourse with their close family; therefore, they must be punished with another fine, which is bringing a big jug of traditional alcoholic drink. Before the ritual, the people involved will negotiate/discuss/deliberate to find a solution. Their position has to be equal, they have to understand their purposes, and every side has to be willing to open up in negotiating a suitable fine. They also have to reconcile to accomplish the best agreement. The elderly are the members of the Habi Village Traditional Organization (*du'a moan*). The members are not involved in the material matters. Next, they will be mediated, and the elderly (*du'a moan*) as the mediator will emphasize truth and awareness from the dispute side. The main point is that both sides must be conscious of finding alternative ways to negotiate, conciliate, and meditate by referring to Village Regulation No. 02 of 2005 about The Village Law of Ritual.

Besides *Wain Nale Ina Buan*, *Wi'nen Lu'ur* dan *Bahu Laput* elaborated above, there is also other form of rituals, such as *Wain Ba'a Sogen Molen/Wain Ga'i Piara Nair*, *Oha Biha Loni Boga*, *Bue Wuan Pare Wulir* (an affair that happens with a married man/woman or impregnate a married woman), *Wain Nale Ata Wain/Huma Ata Wain La'in* (having an affair with a married man/woman), *Tabi Ta'in Boro Bo'ir* (ruining other people's belonging, whereas the things they broke are the tools to fulfill their daily needs), *Die Uhe Hading Dan* (destroy other peoples' house door without permission), *Tada Hera* (stealing other people's belongings), *Tapar Lahin Ge'ut Bowo* (a fight that causes casualties which leads the victim to pay fine), *Toe Hulir Rabek Hala* (insulting others by touching certain body parts), and *Wiwir Glohor Man Melur / Tutur Ropo Harang Bla'an / Solo Hulir Seang Hala* (insulting others). All kinds of disputes will be ended with the traditional ritual *Pati Wawi Perang Pare* (slaughtering a pig and cooking rice), which will be feasted on together.

When the traditional ritual *Subur Boak* is held, the elderly will light a fire (*Ikot Api Demu Lero Wulan*) as a sign that the incest couple is not allowed to greet each other. The smoke covering them signifies that they are forbidden to meet one another. The elderly will give them sage advice as follows:

Table 2. Sage advice uttered by the elderly

Form	Lexical Meaning	Sentence Meaning
<i>Luat rema rua, la'i male wawa napu lau mam</i>	<i>Luat</i> : tomorrow <i>Rema rua</i> : the day after tomorrow <i>Luat rema rua</i> : in the future <i>La'i</i> : man <i>Male</i> : also use the road <i>Wawa napu lau mam</i> : another way	In the future, though, men will meet women and be forbidden to greet one another.
<i>Du'a di male le napu lau mam</i>	<i>Du'a</i> : woman <i>Di male</i> : use the road <i>Le napu lau mam</i> : another way	Same as thou woman
<i>Ra'ik regang wair lalan</i>	<i>Ra'ik</i> : if <i>Regang</i> : meet <i>Wair lalan</i> : in the way/road	If you meet or pass by
<i>Ele newan plewo wi'im</i>	<i>Ele newan</i> : do not <i>Plewo wi'im</i> : greetings	You are forbidden to greet.
<i>Au la'i ma mala du'a ata higun let herin wawat</i>	<i>au</i> : you <i>la'i</i> : man <i>ma mala</i> : take <i>du'a</i> : woman <i>Ata</i> : from	Thou man is permitted to marry another woman with no blood relation with thou man.

	<i>higun let herin wawat</i> : marry another woman	
<i>Mole au du'a di ma mala la'i ata higun let herin wawat.</i>	<i>Mole</i> : also <i>Au</i> : you <i>Du'a</i> : woman <i>Di ma mala</i> : also take <i>La'i</i> : man <i>Ata higun let herin wawat</i> : marry another man	Same as thou woman is permitted to marry another man with no blood relation with thou woman.

From the perspective of people in Habi village, Rice (*pare hoban*) and a dried fish's tail (*i'an kekor*) have a distinctive meaning). Rice (*pare hoban*) is a symbol of prosperity. By doing this ritual, people in Habi expect prosperity to come upon them through abundant crops. Meanwhile, a fish's tail (*i'an kekor*) also means prosperity. The prosperity comes from the abundant marine products that can fulfill their daily needs.

In the dawn or before sunset (*lero heret ga'i meseng*), a cleansing ritual will occur (*Roni Hok*) separately in the woman's house and at the man's. *Roni Hok* means clean. Negative matters and the issues believed to have had a negative impact from or done by the incest will be paraded along with all the bad things within them to the border of the village named Nuba Nanga to hold the *Tung Tatung* ritual. *Nuba* means vessel, and *Nanga* means water. Meanwhile, *Tung Tatung* means Throw away *Tung Tatung* ritual is when the elderly bring Rice (*pare hoban*) and a dried fish's tail (*i'an kekor*) while chanting ritual this ritual speech:

Table 3. Ritual Speech of *Tung Tatung*

Form	Lexical Meaning	Sentence Meaning
<i>Go'it halan le napu lau nan, wawa napu lau nan</i>	<i>Go'it</i> : bad/negative <i>Halan</i> : things <i>le napu lau nan</i> : not to be followed <i>wawa napu lau nan</i> : not to be followed	All the negatives are not to be followed.
<i>Naruk hemu ganu en, lopa daa natar tana amin sai</i>	<i>Naruk</i> : things <i>Hemu</i> : bad/negative <i>Ganu en</i> : like this <i>Lopa</i> : should not <i>Daa</i> : come /arrive <i>Natar</i> : village <i>Tana</i> : land <i>Amin</i> : us <i>Sai</i> : again	All the negatives will not enter the village.

The authors consider the theory of speech act and speech event to analyze the cultural discourse uttered in the Subur Boak ritual. People not only produce utterances containing grammatical structures and words, but they also perform actions via those utterances. In doing this, people are helped by a situation or circumstances surrounding them. A speech event is generally defined as any instance in which communication occurs, follows the basic social rules of interaction established by a speech community, and includes key, unified elements; these unified elements include the use of the same language, a joint understanding of topic and purpose, a logical sequence of exchanges, a setting both participants share, and the same participants from beginning to end.

The authors then analyze the language functions based on the utterances spoken or uttered by the speaker in *the Subur Boak* ritual.

Table 4. The grouping of language functions is found in the *Subur Boak* ritual (sage advice by the elderly).

Ritual Speech	Language Function
<i>Luat rema rua, la'i male wawa napu lau mam</i>	Directives function through declarative utterances
<i>Du'a di male le napu lau mam</i>	Directives function through declarative utterances
<i>Ra'ik regang wair lalan</i>	Directives function through declarative utterances
<i>Ele newan plewo wi'im</i>	Directives function through declarative utterances
<i>Au la'i ma mala du'a ata higung let herin wawat</i>	Directives function through declarative utterances
<i>Mole au du'a di ma mala la'i ata higung let herin wawat.</i>	Directives function through declarative utterances.

In speech act, we interpret the meaning of an utterance in terms of what the speaker intended to convey. In daily interaction, human beings usually use direct or indirect speech during their communication process. Moreover, we mainly use indirect speech acts because actions, such as requests presented indirectly, are generally considered gentler or more polite in our society than direct speech acts. Exactly why they are considered more polite is based on some complex social assumptions. Meanwhile, a direct speech act is a kind of speech act with a direct relationship between an utterance's structure and communicative function.

In addition, one should consider some crucial aspects of meaning in the communication process to interpret the meaning. Those aspects cover sense, feeling, tone, and intention. In this sage advice, we can see that the elderly prefer direct speech over indirect speech during the ritual. It shows that they want the couple to understand the utterance's messages. The tone was normal, without any high tone, scolding voices, or frowning faces. The advice was also uttered using the directives function through declarative utterances. Directives are concerned with getting people to do things. In uttering the directive function of speech, the elderly express what they want and attempt to make the world fit the worlds (via the hearer). In performing declarative utterances, the elderly with power or special institutional roles try to change the world via their utterance. Implicitly, there is also a hidden message the elderly want to deliver. The elderly try to remind the couple about some future consequences, where disobedience will bring bad or negative impacts towards the incest and their family or even the whole village.

Table 5. The grouping of language functions is found in *the Tung Tatung* ritual (sage advice by the elderly).

Ritual Speech	Language Function
<i>Go'it halan le napu lau nan, wawa napu lau nan</i>	Declarations function through declarative statement
<i>Naruk hemu ganu en, lopa daa natar tana amin sai</i>	Declarations function through a declarative statement.

The speaker has to have a special institutional role in a specific context to perform a declaration appropriately, as seen in Table 2. Meanwhile, as shown in Table 5, by using a declaration, the speaker changes the world via words. [31] defines declarative as a sentence that declares a statement or an opinion. It can be positive or negative when we give information,

express opinions, etc. There are certain expected or appropriate circumstances for the performance of a speech act to be recognized as intended. Technically, these circumstances are known as felicity conditions. The performance will be infelicitous (inappropriate) if the speaker is not a specific person in a special context, such as the elderly in *the Subur Boak* ritual.

As shown in Table 4, the data clearly indicate that this ritual speech is commonly uttered as a request belonging to the highest entity or their local Gods. It is like a 'silent prayer' the elderly deliver to their highest entity. In doing this, the elderly always use the declaration function through declarative utterances. It is his (the elderly) polite attempts as a human being to ask for protection from his local God. On the other hand, he also shows his power as the only person who can make the utterances meaningful and powerful, and he stands as a bridge that can connect and unite people in Habi Village with their highest abstract entity.

Misfortune repellent or ward-off misfortune ritual (*Subur Boak* Ritual) ends at sunset (*lero heart gain musing*) as a sign that misbehaving behavior has ended and is expected not to be copied by others. From their point of view, sunset is believed to take away all the terrible things, and they wish for new hope the next day. From their past generations, as shown in Table 3, people in Habi Village have believed that Rice (*pare hoban*) is a sign of prosperity. With the misfortune-repellent ritual, it is believed that wealth will come upon the village, especially since the food produced from the soil will be abundant. Meanwhile, dried fishtail means that prosperity will be upon the village and the villagers, and the need for food from the sea will be plentiful. After that, they may return to their homes and not look back, and one of the elderlies will stick a dammar stem as a sign that all the negatives will not enter the village.

4. Conclusion

As the research topic was solved, the researcher revealed the symbolic meaning behind unusual dictions, equipment, or artifacts, which will also be very helpful to unveil the peculiarity, the subtleties, the nuances of way of thinking, way of saying, and also way of behave from the perspective of people in Habi Village of Sikka Regency and the language functions used in *Subur Boak* ritual (a ward-off misfortune ritual) seen from cultural semantics point of view. The researchers realize that this research needs to be narrower in analyzing the language and the culture of the inhabitants since it does not cover all the aspects of language and culture. However, it is expected that the results of this research can be used as a source to show the uniqueness, peculiarity, and subtleties of human culture, which are expressed through language, particularly from the perspective of *Sikkanese*. In addition, the researchers also realize the opportunities for conducting future research. The researchers see the possibility of similar rituals occurring elsewhere in the mainland of Flores. Therefore, the researchers seek to continue and develop this research into comparative research that can enable us to analyze further how the people of Flores, in general, perceive their cultural heritage through language and traditional speech contained in certain rituals (opportunities for future research). This research is also expected to remind the next generation to realize how rich we are in terms of cultural heritage and language and cultural preservation and maintenance.

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