

# Structure and Function Of The Beluk Oral Tradition

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**Abstract,** This study aims to describe the structure and function of the *Beluk* oral tradition in the Rancakalong village community, Sumedang Regency. The method used in this research is qualitative method. The data source was obtained directly from the singers *Beluk* by documenting, observing and interviewing. The instrument used was the observation and interview guidelines. The data analysis technique in this study is divided into four stages, namely: (1) the data collection stage, (2) the reduction stage, (3) the interpretation stage, and (4) the data conclusion and verification stage. The results of this study, the stages of the *Beluk* performance begin with a prologue from the puppeteer, followed by prayer and burning incense to ask permission from the ancestors, and apologize if the offerings are not complete, *Juru Ilo* starts the show by reading *Wawacan Ogin Amar Sakti* as much as one or two padalisan, after That is what *Juru Ilo* reads, is sung by *Tukang Ngajual*, while *Tukang Meuli* is in charge of continuing the song in a high tone but the articulation is still clear, then *Tukang Naekeun* continues with a shrill, contorted, and unclear articulation voice. At the end of each sentence, they are sung together or called *ngagoongkeun*, the show closes with an apology and thanks to the audience, and continues with a prayer reading, after the series of performances is completed the dalang allows the audience to eat the offerings that are served together. *Beluk* has a function as a social controller and educational facility, and a negation function that we can emulate. Hopefully, with this study the community and the younger generation will pay more attention to and continue this tradition.

**Keywords:** Structure; Function; Oral Tradition of Beluk

## 1 Introduction

Oral literature is part of the oral tradition which is a cultural phenomenon that occurs in society. Each type of oral literature has many variations with the essence and orientation of its content with respect to various events that occur in society (Finnegan, 2018). Oral literature contains many cultural messages to provide knowledge for the next generation. According to (Hutomo, 1991) the function of oral literature is as a means of enforcing social norms, as a means of social control and as a means of children's education. It is said to be a social controller because oral literature shows a function that can make moral guidance that will keep people behaving. It is said to be a means of education because it is always used as a tool for educating.

*Beluk* is an intangible cultural heritage of Indonesia since 2012, its distribution is recorded in Sumedang, Bandung (Ciapus), Banten, and Majalengka areas. However, in the Majalengka area it is better known as Gaok (Direktorat Warisan dan Diplomasi Budaya, 2018). *Beluk* is the art of reading wawacan script. Wawacan is a long story (narrative) but there is also a descriptive description set out in the form of poetry pupuh (Ruhaliah, 2018). Texts *Wawacan* are generally long narrative, marked by changing pupuh accompanying changing episodes. Meanwhile, the content of the text has *Wawacan* literary value and reflects the socio-cultural conception of the Sundanese people in the past (Haerudin & Koswara, 2017). Wawacan is a form of literary work originating from Java, and brought to the Sundanese region through the aristocracy and the clerics (pesantren circles) (Rosidi, 1996). In the mid-19th century the script was *Wawacan* very popular, therefore Dutch scholars concluded that *Wawacan* was the most traditional and prestigious genre among the various forms of Sundanese writing and the best means of education (Moriyama, 2004).

Wawacan is more commonly known in oral performances, namely *Beluk*. However, today's young generation is no longer familiar with the cultural values of their ancestors, including not knowing local customs, philosophy, and art. The main factor that caused this cultural shift was the lack of appreciation of the Sundanese people for their own culture (Teeuw, 1994). As happened in the oral tradition of *Beluk* in Rancakalong Sumedang which is now suspended animation because it is rarely performed and only performed when someone invites or becomes research material. The *Beluk* singers are increasingly difficult to find, which indicates the neglect of the younger generation who do not want to inherit the *Beluk*. This can be seen from the audience of the show *Beluk* which is dominated by parents. When field observations, researchers only saw one young person watching the show, and that was not his own will but an invitation from his parents. This illustrates the low inheritance effort so that future generations are increasingly scarce.

It is very unfortunate when the community, especially the younger generation, allow the art of *Beluk* to become extinct as the *Beluk* singers age. Through this research, the structure and function of the oral tradition of *Beluk* for the Rancakalong community in Sumedang district will be revealed. The importance of this research is because the oral tradition of *Beluk* is unique in every performance and has a strong role and function in society.

Some of the previous studies that examined the performance *Beluk*, including: Research (Fakhrurozi, 2018) entitled The Maintenance of the Gaok Oral Tradition in Kulur Majalengka Village. This research describes the various efforts made by a dalang (oral tradition speaker) to maintain the existence of the *Gaok* oral tradition in Kulur Village, Majalengka which is almost extinct. These various efforts include developing a studio, making changes to the concept of performances, storing discourses, and inheriting through the teaching process to the younger generation. The research entitled The Revitalization Efforts of *Beluk* Art as Folklore Teaching Materials for Class X High School Students by (Rizki dan Sumiyadi, 2018) this research describes the efforts to revitalize the art of *Beluk* as folklore teaching materials for grade X high school students.

The research entitled *Gaok's Oral Tradition Document Management as a Manifestation Of Cultural Preservation in The Library* by (Septa & Heriyanto, 2020) this research explains the efforts to revitalize the oral tradition *Gaok* (*Beluk*) by recording it in the Majalengka regional library. And a research entitled *Seni Beluk Cikondang Indigenous Village Reviewed From The Perspective Of Music Education* by (Cipta, Sandie, & Susanto, 2020) this research develops a music model based on local wisdom. The results obtained reveal that the learning process of art *Beluk* in Cikondang Village has occurred in the context of community education, which is carried out informally, and is formed naturally. Several studies above discuss the efforts to

revitalize *Beluk* in various ways so that this tradition can survive. This research was conducted to complement some of these studies, because of the importance of studying the structure and function of *Beluk* so that the values contained in it are known and imitated by the community.

## 2 Method

The method used in this research is qualitative method. Sources of data in this study include: 1) primary data, namely basic data, in this case in the form of performances and speeches collected from sources obtained from documentation, recordings, and interviews; and 2) secondary data, namely complementary data obtained from the results of existing research related to research. The main resource person in this research is Abah Yeyet Taryat, he is *Beluk* Singers as well as the leader of the Mitra Buhun Group, which is located at Rancakalong Village, Rt. 01 Rw 08 District Rancakalong Sumedang Regency. The research data collection technique was carried out by direct observation in the field. For this reason, an observation instrument is needed which includes: camcorders, cameras used for documentation. Then interview guidelines and personal notes to help researchers collect respondent data. Interview guidelines are used as a reference or frame for questions, while in data collection activities in the field, interviews are often carried out that develop spontaneously in accordance with the current situation and conditions. The data analysis technique in this study was divided into four stages based on the division proposed by (Miles, M.B. dan Huberman, 2009),, namely: (1) the data collection stage (this stage was in the form of observations, recording results, and field notes), (2) the reduction stage is a form of analysis that sharpens, classifies, directs, removes unnecessary, and organizes data in such a way that the final conclusions can be drawn and verified (the implementation of this stage consists of organizing, sorting, and coding), (3) the interpretation stage (the implementation of this stage consists of interpretation and analysis), and (4) the data conclusion and verification stage.

## 3 Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Description and Structure of *Beluk*

In ancient times it was different from now, the location or distance between one house and another was far apart so that it required people to communicate loudly. Likewise, when people in their fields communicate with *Beluk*. *Beluk* from the word *cumeluk*, namely *hugging or calling* other people a high and loud voice. This is in line with research (Alamsyah P, 2013) that the art of *Beluk* originally developed from the farming community, or *huma* who communicated with each other to state that they were in a hut which was far from each other, they muttered "calling" or ngagorowok "shouting" and shouting.

*Beluk Tatanen* is associated with the tradition of "*mikanyaah munding*", which is a manifestation of the buffalo owner's affection for his pets. Buffaloes are considered as pets that are very useful for residents, especially in agriculture. Buffalo power is considered to be better used for plowing the land. The presence of the art of *Beluk* as a symbol of respect for buffalo, also functions as a medium of entertainment when farmers work in the fields. But over time, the people of Rancakalong village did not use buffalo as a means of plowing the

fields and switched to using a tractor, this is in line with research conducted by (Gunardi, 2014)

*Beluk Rengkong* is part of a series of traditional ceremonies *Ngalaksa*. Implementation in addition to the opening ceremony. *Beluk Saman* or better known as *Dzikir Saman* is a Rancakalong life cycle ceremony. *Dzikir Saman* is usually carried out on the 40th day after the person dies, precisely done at dawn. *Rudat* is carried out when commemorating the birthday of the Nabi Muhammad SAW, which contains prayer *mulud*. And *Beluk Wawacan* comes from reading the script *Wawacan*. The script *Wawacan* that is often used by the Mitra Buhun group is entitled *Wawacan Mahabarata*, *Wawacan Ogin Amar Sakti*, *Wawacan Ahmad Muhammad*, *Wawacan Nyai Pohaci Sanghyang Sri* and *Wawacan Ranggawulung*. *Beluk wawacan* are often used in the 40 day event of a newborn, circumcision, and marriage (Source: Observation and Interview with Abah Yeyet Taryat on 19 September 2019).

The time used in performing the art of *Beluk* is usually done at night and even over night, starting at 20.00 WIB or after Isha prayer until before dawn by reading the entire script. There is a change regarding the performance time, now it is adjusted to the requests of those who have a desire, usually starting at 20.00 WIB to 22.00 WIB and not reading the entire contents of the discourse. The costumes of the players, namely black clothes, are usually called *pangsi* or *kampret* clothes and are equipped with *iket* (headband using batik cloth).

The steps for reading the *Wawacan Ogin Amar Sakti* in the *Beluk* performance in Rancakalong village, by four singers namely *Abah Yeyet Taryat*, *Abah Mihya*, *Abah Yeyet*, and *Abah Ending*. Starting with a prologue from the *puppeteer* as notification and introduction to the script that will be read out. The puppeteer *Abah Yeyet Taryat*, leads the prayer accompanied by burning the incense to ask permission from the ancestors and apologize if the offerings are not complete. Offerings are an expression of gratitude for the almighty because they are given such fertile land, which consists of:

1. Coconut symbolizes struggle.
2. *Puncak Manik* is egg that is steamed in rice. The top of the bead is a symbol of the history of human form from father and mother.
3. *Acining geni* from fire, *acining cai* from water, *acining the earth* from the ground, *acining wind* from the wind, which symbolizes human form from the essence of the earth
4. *Bakakak* symbolizes humans who ask like praying, surrendering to Allah SWT.
5. White Porridge and Red Porridge represent the red and white flag,
6. *Rujak Cau* and *Rujak Kalapa* which symbolize taste. When we drink *rujak cau*, we will all feel a sour taste, it makes no difference. This means that there is no caste that distinguishes humans from one another. All humans feel the same way.
7. The *hanjuang* tree or called *hanjuang tanah Sumedang* that is in the tomb is related to humans after death. Humans will also leave the world so we have to abandon the arrogant.
8. *Papais Bodas*, which is made from finely ground rice into flour, when it becomes flour it can be used as anything, be it porridge or papais. Why is that? Because humans, even though they have rank, position, wealth, when they die, no matter what they do, they will not be able to fight, there is no more effort because they are wrapped in a shroud. So this is a symbol of the human image.
9. *Dupi*, symbolizes that a woman must be able to withstand any temptation, not like a bamboo leaf even though it is slightly cut down by the moving wind, now a woman must have a strong soul to resist temptation.

10. *Ketupat*, which symbolizes a man having to work fast and have provisions when he wants to get married, because this is made using coconut leaves which have a lot of meaning.
11. Bananas, bananas symbolize a collection of people who are different but with one type, we must be able to respect other humans.
12. Incense, in which there is charcoal, if it is burned, will turn red and then pour it out and will emit white smoke. If in the world there are many sins when you die, you must be like white smoke, being born in a holy state when you die must be holy.
13. White water, symbolizes purity or cleanliness and the source of human life.
14. Sweet coffee water and bitter coffee water symbolize that human life is not all bitter and conversely not all sweet.

*Juru Ilo (Abah Yeyet)* start the show by reading *Wawacan* as much as one or *two* padalisan, after that what was read by the *juru Ilo* sung by *Tukang Ngajual* (Abah Ending), while *Tukang Meuli* (Abah Yeyet Taryat) tasked follow through songs with high notes but the articulation still be heard clearly, then spliced by *Tukang Naekeun* (Abah Mihya) voice shrill, twists, and articulations are not clearly heard. The song used comes from the *pupuh* standard. At the end of each sentence, *alok* is interspersed or called *ngagoongkeun*. This performance lasted until the end of the show which was closed with an apology and gratitude to the audience who had followed it to the end in an orderly manner, and continued with a prayer reading by Abah Yeyet Taryat.

### 3.2. The function of oral traditions for the community

*Beluk* is a traditional performance or a type of folk performing arts that has lived, grown and developed in a community in the village of Rancakalong Sumedang for generations whose existence has been part of the cultural aspects of its supporting community. In line with the functions expressed by (Hutomo, 1991), *Beluk* has a function as a social controller, an educational function. In addition, ins and outs also have a negation function (to rebel and change existing norms) (Teeuw, 1994)

1. The function of social control and educational facilities

Can be seen from the technique of presenting the show directly facing the audience. There is no grand decoration and no lighting to enliven the atmosphere, but the presentation technique is close to the audience so that it can interact. The occurrence of reciprocal communication between the outsiders and the audience is a socialization process that needs each other. The social controlling function contained in Ogin's *wawacan* story is in the *pupuh Asmarandana* section.

<u><i>Pangampun ieu kuring</i></u>	I apologize
<i>Ka sadayana anu aya</i>	to all those present
<i>ka nu anom</i>	To parents and young people
<i>(Bait 1 line 1-3)</i>	

In the first line underlined there is an act of apologizing to fellow humans. In this discourse the intention is to apologize to the reader before the discourse begins.

<i>Bisi ujang acan harti</i>	Perhaps utterances do not understand
<u><i>Handap asor ka sasama</i></u>	Humble towards fellow people
<u><i>Ka pangkat nyembang cingogo</i></u>	Respect for those with the rank of
<u><i>Ka budak sing hade basa</i></u>	Budi, a good language for children
<i>(Bait 9 lines 1-4)</i>	

In that stanza there is discussion about good deeds that must be applied to fellow humans. Like having to be humble, respect each other, and speak well. In its performance, *Beluk* teaches people to always protect and make good use of nature. Teaches how the human relationship with humans, and the relationship between humans and their gods. As in the performance which begins and ends with a prayer.

The relationship with God is as shown in the pupuh kinanti below

<u><i>Nu waspada gusti Yang Agung</i></u>	<u>Only by God's will</u>
<u><i>Urang mah ngan darma usik</i></u>	<u>We are helpless</u>
<i>Geura teang ibu ujang</i>	now, pick up your your
<i>Ibu ujang sing kairing</i>	mother, mother to come
<i>(Bait 190 lines 1-4)</i>	Bring it here

The underlined means surrendering to God.

## 2. The function of negation

The negation function shows resistance or rebellion or changing the prevailing norms (Attas, 2019). Can be seen from the fragment of the story when Patih Durjaman suggested that marriage with Pangeran Sabang of Madusari be carried out. However, when the marriage took place, Lasmaya's entourage came from Malebah and insisted that his son be the husband of the daughter. There was a fight between Madusari and Malebah. Dewi Lasmaya joined the battle and could not be defeated. Nurhayat was finally found to have cheated. So Bagenda Ma'ruf returned to take the role of Lasmaya, while Ogin Amar Sakti married Bidayasari. In the story Ogin and his mother fight for their rights and regain their position after being cheated by Nurhayat. They not only accept their cheating, but try to prove the truth of what happened.

## 3. Conclusion

The oral tradition of *Beluk* in Rancakalong, Sumedang Regency has changed from time to time. This change is a preservation effort carried out by the singer *Beluk*, such as the performance which was originally at night, starting after Isya prayer until dawn by reading the entire script, now it is adjusted to the demands and conditions of the players who not young anymore. Although there are indications that the oral tradition of *Beluk* is increasingly marginalized, this tradition has a strong role and function in Sumedang society. As can be seen from the structure of the performance and its function, the ins and outs are unique, which reflect the relationship between humans and humans, with nature, with God, and to achieve outer and inner happiness. Everything contains a philosophy that we can emulate.

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