



# Revitalization of *Besesombau* Oral Literature in Sekijang Village

Fatmahwati Adnan<sup>1,\*</sup>, Ahmad Nawari<sup>2</sup>, Rika Istianingrum<sup>3</sup>, Eka Suryatin<sup>1</sup>, Junaidi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, Indonesia*

<sup>2</sup>*Balai Bahasa Provinsi Riau, Indonesia*

<sup>3</sup>*Universitas Balikpapan, Indonesia*

<sup>4</sup>*Balitbang Provinsi Kalimantan Barat, Indonesia*

\*Corresponding author. Email: fatmaadnan@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

*Besesombau* is less practiced in Sekijang and the oral literature is almost extinct. Seeing such conditions, traditional figures and people in there are motivated to revitalize it. Revitalization efforts are carried out with inheritance activities through regular training for the younger generation. This study aims to find out (1) the supporting factors and problems in the revitalization activities and (2) people's attitudes towards *Besesombau* nowadays. This study used a qualitative descriptive method with an ethnographic approach. The data were collected by conducting observations, interviews, document studies, recordings, and questionnaires. The findings showed that (1) the supporting factors for revitalization activities are the motivation of traditional figures, community support, venue facilities, and financial support, as well as the enthusiasm of the participants, while the problems are the number of trainers which were only 2 people and time constraints to practice the literature and (2) there is a change in people's attitudes towards *Besesombau* from negative to positive, the community is motivated to re-enable the *Besesombau* in socio-cultural activities, realizes the importance of traditional knowledge and local wisdom in *Besesombau*, and realize the politeness and beauty of language in *Besesombau*. Thus, it can be concluded that the revitalization of *Besesombau* in Sekijang Village has succeeded in motivating the community to re-function *Besesombau* and change their attitude towards this oral literature. Based on the research findings, the local government should strengthen the revitalization of oral literature by issuing regulations and making *Besesombau* a subject at schools in Kampar.

**Keywords:** *Attitude, Besesombau, Oral literature, Revitalization.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The revitalization of *Besesombau* oral literature in Sekijang Village was initiated by the ideas coming from traditional figures called *mamak pucuok*, *mamak soko*, and *siompu* to pass it on to the younger generation. This idea was supported by village heads and people in Sekijang Village. *Besesombau* is oral literature delivered in Malay language, in this case, in traditional ceremonies, such as welcoming guests, crowning traditional titles, wedding ceremonies, etc. The register used is "high" register. The high register is not the same with everyday language. The register used is full of aesthetic and ethical elements.

The idea to revitalize the oral tradition was also influenced by concern over the socio-cultural conditions

in Sekijang Village. The traditional customs and conventions that prevailed for a long time in the village began to be marginalized. Ignorance of moral values and customary rules are commonplace and are considered normal. Traditional figures realized that the function of *Besesombau* oral literature in the life of the Sekijang Village community in the past was very strong and influential. They realize that *Besesombau* oral literature influenced the socio-cultural life of Sekijang Village in the last period which is one of several cultural and traditional products which in the past had a strong existence. *Besesombau* is the art of speaking that is displayed in traditional ceremonies. This oral literature makes a traditional event truly traditional.

Fatmahwati (2016) carried out on the revitalization of *Besesombau* in Sekijang Village. She affirmed that that the revitalization of *Besesombau* is beneficial for

preserving and reviving it in the socio-cultural life of the people of Sekijang.

In contrast to the above research, the focus of this research is the condition of the existence of the revitalization of *Besesombau* oral literature in Sekijang village. The focus of the research is discussed in 2 research indicators, namely the influencing factors and people's attitudes towards *Besesombau* oral literature nowadays.

This study aims to find out (1) the supporting factor and problem in the revitalization of *Besesombau* oral literature in Sekijang Village and (2) the attitude of the Sekijang Village community towards *Besesombau* today. The urgency of this research is to find out the factors that influence the success of revitalization activities, and people's attitudes towards today's *Besesombau* oral literature; then it can be determined the policy and form of the next program to preserve the oral literature of *Besesombau* and re-function it in the socio-cultural life of the Sekijang Village community.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical concepts discussed in this study are the concepts of revitalization and attitude. These two concepts are used as a reference in analyzing the data found.

### 2.1. Revitalization

According to Pudentia (2010), culture can be revitalized only if it is considered to have significant importance for the supporting community. Sibarani (2012) assured that that revitalization can be grouped into 3 components of revitalization, namely (1) livelihood/reactivation, (2) management, and (3) inheritance of oral traditions. Identification and analysis of the factors that influence the revitalization effort are also carried out in revitalization. Period and socio-cultural ecology in people's lives raise various problems that hinder revitalization. These factors include:

- a. Public concern or awareness of the importance of oral traditions and the importance of efforts to preserve the tradition;
- b. Pessimistic and apathy with any reform because reformation is something that must happen;
- c. Availability of time to carry out revitalization efforts due to changes in lifestyle, and;
- d. Economic conditions of the people supporting the oral tradition.

### 2.2. Attitude

Attitude is a complex readiness of an individual to treat an object. Readiness consists of aspects of cognition, affection, and a tendency to act which can be inferred from the individual's own behaviour.

Lambert (1967) assured that the attitude consists of three components, namely the cognitive component, the affective component, and the conative component. Lambert further explained as follows: (1) the cognitive component relates to knowledge about the environment and ideas which are usually categories used in the thinking process; (2) the affective component concerns the problem of good judgment, likes or dislikes, towards something or a situation, then the person is said to have a positive attitude. Otherwise, it is said to have a negative attitude; and (3) the conative component concerns behaviour or actions as a "final decision" of reactive readiness to a situation. Allport (1960) affirmed that (1) attitude is as a readiness to respond, (2) it is individual, (3) it controls behaviour, (4) it is innate, and (5) it is a learning outcome. In short, attitude is an action that is realized by someone who underlies the behaviour and character obtained from the environment.

## 3. METHOD

This research method is descriptive qualitative research which aims to describe, explore, find, reveal, and explain the aspects studied holistically. According to Miles and Huberman (2009), qualitative data are broad and valid source and the data contains in-depth explanation of the processes occurring in the local context.

This study uses an ethnographic approach in which the data were taken through participant observations and interviews that consider the community and cultural systems in the research location (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Creswell (2014) affirmed that ethnographic research is one of the qualitative research strategies in which researchers investigate a cultural group in a natural environment over a long period of time by collecting primary data, observation data, and interview data. In addition, according to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), ethnographic research emphasizes in-depth and continuous interviews in participant observation of a situation.

The technical stages of data collection and the instruments used are as follows:

1. Participant observation
2. Interview
3. Recording
4. Library research
5. Questionnaire

Based on the Oral Tradition Research Guidelines (Association of Oral Traditions, 2012), data analysis was carried out with the following procedures: (1) data reduction, (2) classification the data, (3) categorization, (4) tabulation of data, (5) data description, (6) interpretation of the data, and (7) conclusions.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Supporting Factors and Problems in the Revitalization

The revitalization of *Besesombau* in Sekijang Village has been successfully carried out since 2014. The implementation of this activity cannot be separated from various influencing elements. Based on the findings of the study, several factors supported the implementation of revitalization activities, namely the motivation of traditional figures, community support, venue, financial support, and the enthusiasm of the participants.

#### 4.1.1. Traditional Figure's Motivation

The motivation of traditional figures to carry out revitalization activities is very high. They have great commitment. They involve, supervise, and motivate the revitalization activities. The motivation given by these three components of traditional leaders has motivated people in Sekijang to preserve the continuity of the implementation of revitalization activities. They also provide direction and advice on the importance of inheriting *Besesombau* to next generation.

#### 4.1.2. Community Support

The people of Sekijang Village support the idea of traditional officials to carry out revitalization activities for *Besesombau* oral literature. They encourage children, younger siblings, and nephews who meet the requirements to take part in *Besesombau* training. In addition, they are also willing to provide financial assistance for the implementation of revitalization activities. Another support given by the community after participants can practice *Besesombau* is to invite participants to become *somba* practitioners in the events or ceremonies they hold, such as weddings series activities, welcoming guests, and others.

#### 4.1.3. Venue and Financial Support

The implementation of an activity cannot be separated from the funds and the venue to implement it. Based on the observations and responses of various parties regarding the place for the implementation of the revitalization activities, the venue is good. The training activity was held on the veranda of Masjid Raya Sekijang. The mosque has long been used as a center for community activities, not only religious activities but also social and cultural activities. The venue is considered feasible and representative because it is spacious. It also has sufficient lighting. As a result, there is no problem if the activity is carried out at night. It is also situated in a strategic position. In addition, the mosque has a large veranda and courtyard.

Financial support for the implementation of activities is obtained from non-governmental organizations and the village government. It is needed for consumption, performances, procurement of uniforms, and others. So far, the revitalization activists admit that the amount of financial support obtained are sufficient.

#### 4.1.4. Participant's Motivation

Training participants are a very important supporting factor in revitalization activities. According to traditional figures, they were at first, worried that the number of participants would be very little due to the young generation's indifference to *Besesombau*. However, after obtaining information on the oral literature from traditional figures, 15 young people from Sekijang Village stated that they wanted to take part in the training process. After the training activity started, the number of participants continued to increase.

The main reason they want to take part in the training is that they are interested in the *Besesombau* text and the performance of the *Besesombau* practitioners. According to the participants, the *Besesombau* text is full of beauty and politeness. It also has a very deep meaning. Through *Besesombau*, they also learn ethics in traditional meetings. Starting from how to sit, sitting position, how to talk, when to talk, how to eat, to how to express leave-taking. The enthusiasm of the participants to take part in the *Besesombau* training can be seen from their ability to practice the oral literature in three weeks. In addition, they have been practicing diligently for years to improve their *bessesombau* abilities.

In terms of the supporting factors for revitalization, it seemed that there are no problems that hinder the activities. However, based on the findings of the study, it was found that 2 factors inhabited the implementation of the revitalization of *Besesombau*. The two factors are the number of *Besesombau* practitioners who are able to become trainers and the less availability of time convenient to the trainers and participants.

#### 4.1.5. Number of Besesombau Trainers

*Besesombau* oral literature has been rarely practiced in traditional ceremonies since 1995. Since then, *Besesombau* started to be abandoned. In the end of 2005, the oral literature was even no longer performed in traditional ceremonies. Slowly but surely, traditional ceremonies in Sekijang were less and less practiced.

The traditional figures tried to find *Besesombau* practitioners who could be trainers in the revitalization activities. Then, two reliable practitioners were found to train the younger generation. However, since they did not practice it for a long time. They felt they did not have self-confidence in performing *Besesombau* at first. They need time to recall and write scripts of the oral tradition.

*Besesombau* practice was carried out by 2 people or in pairs. The participants watched and listened to the trainers. Since there are only 2 trainers, they needed much time to listen to the participants' performances. Considering that the time for practicing is also limited, the trainers could not watch the performance of all participants.

#### 4.1.6. Time Constraints

The traditional figures proposed that the time allocation for the *Besesombau* oral literature training was long enough with a frequency of 3 times a week. However, it is quite difficult to manage convenient time for trainers and participants. Trainers could train the participants at night only because they had to work during the day. Meanwhile, the participants could not attend the training at night because they had to study at school. In the end, an agreement between the two parties could be reached. The training was carried out at Saturday night. Another problem that arises was that the people of Sekijang Village tended to hold ceremonies, weddings, or other events on Saturday night so that training activities had to be cancelled.

#### 4.2. People's Attitude

To find out the attitude of the people of Sekijang Village towards *Besesombau* oral literature, 10 questions were asked to 100 randomly selected respondents who derived from various ages, occupations, and educational backgrounds. The questions are regarding the revitalization of *Besesombau* oral literature in Sekijang Village, namely knowledge about *Besesombau* which includes its form, meaning, function, and elements; feelings towards someone who includes existence in the past, conditions in the present, and hope in the future; and reactions to *Besesombau* which include traditional knowledge and local wisdom, politeness, and the beauty of language.

Respondents' responses to attitudes towards *Besesombau* oral literature prior to the revitalization in Sekijang Village were as follows: (1) knowledge are as follows: 4% of the respondents knew well, 29% knew a little bit, and 67% do not know at all; (2) feelings about the existence of *Besesombau* are as follows: 7% of the respondent are very concerned, 37% fairly concerned, and 56% do not concern at all; and (3) the reaction to the beauty of *Besesombau* oral literature is as follows. 11% of the respondents consider it important, 23% consider it fairly important, and 66% consider it unimportant.

Respondents' responses to the *Besesombau* oral literature underwent a very significant change after the revitalization program was carried out in Sekijang Village. Broadly speaking, most of people's attitudes towards *Besesombau* oral literature before the revitalization activities held is that they did not know

*Besesombau* a lot. They also did not care about it, they also considered *Besesombau* unimportant. That is, based on that response, the attitude of the people of Sekijang Village towards *Besesombau* oral literature is negative, because the majority of responses are on a negative continuum.

The public's attitude towards *Besesombau* oral literature after the revitalization activity for 3 years has changed from negative to positive. People in Sekijang have already known *Besesombau*, its meaning, its function, and its elements. Increased knowledge about *Besesombau* along with the more often they watch and listen to the performance of *Besesombau* both in the training and in traditional ceremonies. Increased concern for *Besesombau* also shows a change in attitude in the affective domain. After seeing and observing the appearance of the *Besesombau* oral literature, the respondents turned to be concerned about the existence of the *Besesombau* which was great in the past but not good nowadays. They hope that the *Besesombau* will be brought to traditional cultural events.

In the conative domain, respondents showed awareness of the importance of traditional knowledge and local wisdom, politeness in behavior, and the beauty of language that is full of aesthetics. In addition, respondents are aware of the role of *Besesombau* and the content contained in it as a social controller of the socio-cultural life of the Sekijang Village community.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Referring to the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that (1) the revitalization of *Besesombau* in Sekijang Village has succeeded in triggering the community to revive oral literature in socio-cultural activities that featured it in the past, such as traditional wedding events, welcoming guests, and others; (2) society's attitude towards *Besesombau* oral literature changes to be positive; and (3) the community understands the importance of *Besesombau* in their lives. Based on the results of this study, it is hoped that the local government will strengthen the revitalization of oral literature with regulations and help efforts to make *Besesombau* a local content in Sekijang Village.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: conceptualizing and designing research, collecting and analysis, and wrote the paper. Author 2: collecting and analysis the data, and wrote the paper. Author 3, 4, dan 5: collecting, analysis, and describing the data.

## REFERENCES

- Allport, G. (1960). *Personality and social encounter*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Association of Oral Traditions (2012). Pedoman penelitian tradisi lisan [The handbook of oral tradition research]. *Materi Pelatihan Penelitian Tradisi Lisan*, 7-19.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014) *Research design: Pendekatan kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan mixed [Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed approach]*. Achmad Fawaid (Translator). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Fatmahwati, A. (2016). Tradisi lisan *Besesombau Melayu Tapung* (Struktur, fungsi, revitalisasi, pemanfaatan bagi masyarakat, dan implikasinya pada pembelajaran bahasa) [*Basesombau Melayu Tapung* oral tradition (Structure, function, revitalization, utilization for society and its implication toward language learning)]. *Disertasi*. Bandung: Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia.
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E. & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. New York: MacGraw-Hills Companies.
- Lambert, W. E. (1967). A social psychology of bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 23(2), 91-109.
- McMillan, J. H. & Schumacher, S. S. (1997). *Research in education*. San Fransisco: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, M. A. (2009). *Analisis data kualitatif: Buku sumber tentang metode-metode baru [Qualitative data analysis: A reference book about new methods]*. Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi (Translator). Jakarta: UIP.
- Pudentia, M. P. S. S. (2010). The revitalization of Mak Yong in the Malay world. *Wacana*, 12(1), 1-20.
- Sibarani, R. (2012). *Kearifan lokal: Hakikat, peran, dan metode tradisi lisan [Local wisdom: Fact, role and oral tradition method]*. Jakarta: Asosiasi Tradisi Lisan.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

