

Ritual Communication and Cultural Resilience in Digital Space: A Netnographic SPEAKING Model Analysis of Peresean in the Modernization Era

Ilmining Mandiri*, Mite Setiansah, Wiwik Novianti

Master of Communication Science Department, University of Jenderal Soedirman, 53123, Indonesia

*Corresponding author's email: ilmining.mandiri@mhs.unsoed.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Keywords

Cultural Resilience; Netnography;
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SPEAKING Model; TikTok.

Modernization and digitalization have transformed traditional rituals into digital content, raising questions about the continuity of their communicative structures. This study analyzes the transformation of the *Peresean* ritual on TikTok using a netnographic approach and Dell Hymes SPEAKING model. By examining 20 videos uploaded between 2024 and 2026, the study maps how ritual communication is reconfigured in digital space. The findings indicate that the elements of Setting, Participant, and Act Sequence undergo significant transformation: the ritual arena shifts from a physical community space to an algorithmic digital stage, participants expand to include active online audiences, and ritual sequences become fragmented due to short video formats. However, the elements of Norms and Key remain consistent, as sportsmanship values are reaffirmed through audience interaction in the comment section. The element of Genre also reveals variations in representation across account categories, including documentation, tourism promotion, and entertainment framing. These results demonstrate that digital modernization does not eliminate ritual meaning but reconfigures its communicative structure through symbolic adaptation and audience negotiation. The study contributes to ritual communication research by applying the SPEAKING model to analyze cultural resilience within the social media.

1. Introduction

Social change in the era of modernization is marked not only by physical development and economic expansion, but also by the transformation of cultural practices within local communities. Traditions and rituals that previously functioned as internal community mechanisms are now increasingly confronted with the dynamics of globalization and digitalization, which are reshaping how culture is practiced, interpreted, and displayed in public spaces. In the context of modern tourism, local culture is also vulnerable to shifting function when positioned as part of attractions and public consumption. Studies on cultural commodification confirm that digital promotion plays a crucial role in expanding the reach of local cultural initiatives, attracting tourism products for both domestic and international markets (Avrianto et al., 2025). This suggests that digital media is not only a means of cultural dissemination but also a new space where traditions are negotiated within modern logic.

Amidst these changes, traditional rituals continue to play a crucial role as a collective communication practice that connects communities with their cultural values. Rituals cannot be understood as static relics, but rather as adaptive social practices that continually transform according

to the context of the times. (Djufri, 2025) assert that rituals are not merely cultural relics, but dynamic infrastructures of meaning that underpin the resilience of contemporary urban communities. This perspective positions rituals as the foundation of cultural resilience, namely the ability of a community to maintain its identity while adapting to social change.

In the context of the Sasak community in Lombok, one tradition that has survived and yet undergone change is *Peresean*, a symbolic fighting art that holds a significant position in the socio-cultural structure. *Peresean* cannot be understood solely as a physical performance or entertainment, but rather as a ritual communication practice rich in symbols, morals, values, and expressions of collective identity. *Peresean* is a fighting art tradition unique to the Sasak community in Lombok that does not merely emphasize physical aspects but also represents moral and cultural values rooted in the social life of the community (Ningsih & Suryadmaja, 2025). Thus, *Peresean* function as an arena for symbolic communication where the community reproduces cultural identity through collective rituals.

As a ritual practice, *Peresean* involves not only symbolic combat but also a social communication structure governed by customary norms. The presence of *pepadu*, *pakembar*, and a community of spectators indicates that this ritual is a communication event involving specific social roles. (Khotimah et al., 2025) emphasize that in the implementation of the *Peresean* tradition, there are rules (*awiq-awiq*) to maintain sportsmanship. These rules demonstrate that the conflicts depicted in *Peresean* are controlled, functioning as a symbolic channel that emphasizes the values of respect and reconciliation in Sasak society.

Several previous studies have discussed *Peresean* as a cultural tradition containing moral values and social functions. (Ningsih & Suryadmaja, 2025) showed that *Peresean* serves as a medium for transmitting the values of courage, sportsmanship, and strengthening the Sasak cultural identity. On the other hand, research by (Khotimah et al., 2025) also highlighted the shifting orientation of *Peresean* practices over time, particularly related to the shifting function of rituals in community life. These studies confirm that *Peresean* is a living tradition that continues to interact with social change.

However, cultural rituals like *Peresean* do not take place in a static social space. Changing times have influenced how these traditions are practiced and understood by society. (Khotimah et al., 2025) assert that changing times have influenced the practice of *Peresean*, from a ritual to summon rain to a commercial performance. This shift indicates the risk of a reduction in symbolic meaning as rituals are increasingly presented as public spectacles and entertainment content.

In the context of digital culture, the transformation of traditions is further enhanced by social media promotion and the tourism industry. (Avrianto et al., 2025) emphasize that digital promotion and destination attractiveness significantly influence cultural commodification, with digital promotion having a more dominant effect. This suggests that local traditions have the potential to experience commodification when represented as cultural products in digital spaces, allowing their ritual meanings to shift according to market logic and public consumption.

On the other hand, social media also opens new spaces for the existence of traditions as a form of contemporary cultural communication. In digital ethnography, the boundaries of field research undergo significant changes. (Padricelli & Punziano, 2023) state that in a digital scenario, the need for long-term field investigation changes radically. They also emphasize that user-generated content is an example of new data that is possible to gather from sources not available before the digital turning point. Thus, *Peresean* videos on Instagram can be understood as a new arena for traditions to be reproduced and interpreted in the digital space.

Although various studies have discussed *Peresean* as a cultural symbol and a medium for preserving traditions, most studies still focus on the offline dimension or traditional symbolism in general. There is still limited research that systematically maps *Peresean* as a complex ritual communication event through Dell Hymes SPEAKING model framework, especially in the context of digital representations on social media. Yet, platforms like TikTok have become new spaces where traditions are displayed, negotiated, and adapted in the era of digital modernization.

To address this gap, this study employs a netnographic approach with the SPEAKING model analytical framework, encompassing setting, participants, ends, act sequences, key elements, instrumentalities, norms, and genres (Hymes, 2010). This framework allows for mapping of the

Peresean ritual communication structures as represented in TikTok videos, enabling an understanding of how this tradition is maintained, adapted, or transformed in the digital space.

Based on this context, this study aims to analyze the transformation of ritual communication structures and the negotiation of cultural meaning of *Peresean* on TikTok using the SPEAKING model within a netnographic framework. By analyzing 20 *Peresean* videos on TikTok from 2024-2026, this study explores how the symbolic structures, ritual norms, and moral values of *Peresean* remain present and are negotiated in contemporary representations. The findings of this study of ritual communication, the ethnography of digital communication, and the understanding of how local traditions persist as a symbolic communication system amidst modern social transformation.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with netnography methods to explore *Peresean* ritual communication practices within the TikTok digital environment. Netnography is a qualitative research approach that aims to gain cultural understanding through systematic observation and interpretation of digital traces within online communities (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2024).

(Kozinets & Gretzel, 2024), defines netnography as a new qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to the study of culture and communities emerging through electronic networks. This definition emphasizes that netnography goes beyond analyzing online content but also seeks to understand cultural patterns and social meanings constructed in digital environments.

As an adaptation of traditional ethnography, netnography focuses on online communities, digital communication patterns, and the construction of collective meanings that emerge through virtual interaction (Tarumingkeng, 2024). In this study, TikTok is positioned as a digital field or digital space, where *Peresean* ritual practices are not only represented through video content but also negotiated through audience comments, hashtag use, and patterns of interaction between users.

To clarify its methodological position, this study draws on the spectrum of netnographic practices as described by (Costello et al., 2017), who state that netnography spans the spectrum from lurking to active participations and activities. Although this study uses a non-participatory observation approach, the analysis is not reduced to mere content categorization. Instead, it maintains interpretative depth by examining the dynamics of interactions, discursive exchanges, and symbolic negotiations that occur within digital communities.

The implementation of netnography in this study was conducted through non-participatory observation of accounts that consistently upload *Peresean* content. Observations focused on the representation of ritual practice and audience interaction patterns on the TikTok platform. Particular attention was paid to how the meaning of rituals is constructed, fragmented, and negotiated through video content and conversations in the comments section. During the observation process, the researchers also compiled reflective notes to document emerging themes, patterns of cultural affirmation, and forms of identity negotiation within the digital space.

2.1 Research Data and Data Collection Process

The data in this study consists of 20 *Peresean* performance videos uploaded to TikTok between 2024 until 2026. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, focusing on fourth key account categories that shape the digital discourse of the Sasak culture:

1. Local Media Account: news or community account in Lombok that actively documents social and cultural events.
2. Influencers/Content Creators: individual accounts with significant followings that promote local traditions through personal perspectives or digital aesthetics.
3. Cultural Institution & Branding Platform: A large account or official tourism account that presents *Peresean* as a national cultural product and strategic tourist attraction. Managed by da cultural promotion group, local cultural observers who focus on preserving traditions.
4. Cultural Community account: profiles managed by *Peresean* groups or local culture observers.

In accordance with the logic of qualitative research, the selection of this category aims to capture the diverse spectrum of *Peresean* representations. Video inclusion criteria included the presence of complete ritual elements (*pepadu*, *pakembar*, and music), original audio, and user interaction (comment) for analysis of communication aspects.

2.2 Analytical Framework: The SPEAKING Model

To map the complex structure of ritual communication, this study applies Dell Hymes's SPEAKING model. Each video that is the object of research is studied based on the following eight analysis categories:

Setting: analyze the physical performance venue in Lombok compared to the digital stage on TikTok videos

Participants: identify the roles of the *pepadu* and *pakembar* on site, and the interactions of the digital audience in the comments section.

Ends: Explore the shift in the ritual's purpose, from its traditional function (summoning rain) to entertainment content or tourism promotion.

Act Sequence: Examine video editing patterns and how the ritual's duration is adapted for social media consumption.

Key: Identify the emotional tone of the content, whether it is heroic, sacred, or simply sensational.

Instrumentalities: Analyze the use of the Sasak language, accompanying music (*Gendang Beleg*), and digital features such as captions and hashtags.

Norms: Examine the tension between customary rules (*awiq-awiq*) in the ritual and the norms of social media interaction.

Genre (type): Categorizes the video as news, lifestyle, or pure cultural documentation.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was conducted thematically, with a consistent writing sequence between the methods and results sections. Findings from the SPEAKING model were synthesized to identify patterns of cultural resilience and adaptation strategies of the Sasak people in the era of digital modernization. This process ensured that each data finding was honest and representative of the research objectives.

Operationally, the analysis was conducted through several steps. First, all 20 videos were watched repeatedly (at least 3 times each) to understand the visual structure, ritual flow, and symbols displayed. At this stage, researchers noted the video's duration, which parts of the ritual were shown or cut, and which visual elements were enhanced through editing.

Second, researchers read the entire comment section on each video to identify audience responses. Comments were then grouped based on dominant themes, such as identity pride, entertainment framing, tourism promotion, or criticism of cultural commercialization.

Third, each video was analyzed using the eight elements of the SPEAKING model. Researchers created a coding table containing the elements Setting, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre for each video. This table enabled researchers to compare transformation patterns across account categories.

Fourth, the coding results were then compared to identify ritual elements that underwent significant changes (e.g., fragmentation in the Act Sequence). And elements that remained consistent (e.g., the Norms). This process is conducted interpretively, in accordance with netnographic principles that emphasize understanding cultural meanings in digital interactions (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2024). Through these stages, patterns of cultural resilience are identified based on a combination of ritual representational structures and the dynamics of audience interactions in digital spaces.

3. Result and Discussion

The result of this study indicates that the representation of *Peresean* on TikTok has not only undergone structural changes but also undergone a process of negotiation of meaning in the digital space. Using a netnographic approach, TikTok is understood as a social arena where rituals are not only performed but also interpreted, debated, and reaffirmed through user interaction.

Based on an analysis of 20 videos using the SPEAKING model, the most significant transformations occurred in the Setting, Participants, and Act Sequence elements, while the Norms and Key elements of ritual values were in adaptive forms. As a researcher, the repeated digital immersion process demonstrates that the dynamics of meaning emerge not only from the video content but also from the conversation that develop in the comment section. These interactions become an integral part of ritual communication practices in the digital spaces.

3.1. Transformation of Setting and Fragmentation of Act Sequence

In a traditional context, the setting for *Peresean* is a village field with clear spatial boundaries, traditional figures, and binding customary rules. However, on TikTok, the setting shifts to an algorithmic space without geographical boundaries. Rituals now appear in a vertical format, are short-lived, and are subject to the logic of digital visibility. Most videos only show key fragments of the fight without the entire procession of the Act Sequence element, which is not simply a result of time constraints to digital consumption preferences that prioritize visual intensity.

Comment such as:

“seru banget tadi nonton ini min”

“kapan lagi nih”

“sering-sering adakan Peresean, seru”

Demonstrate that audiences respond to *Peresean* as a dramatic and entertaining experience. The key element (emotional nuance) in SPEAKING is strengthened through the emphasis on the fight scenes.

However, on the other hand, there are informative comments such as:

“ini daerahku NTB, dan disebut Peresean : petarung atau pesertanya akan saling cambuk menggunakan rotan sampai ada yang kalah”.

This comment demonstrates that the comment section also serves as a space for cultural education. Thus, visual fragmentation does not automatically eliminate the meaning of the ritual, as that meaning is reproduced through digital discourse.



Figure 3.1: Audience comments regarding the implementation of *Peresean* on TikTok

3.2. Negotiating Identity and Collective Pride

One of the most significant transformations is the representation of *Peresean* on TikTok lies in the element of participants. In traditional contexts, ritual participants are limited to the *pepadu*, *pakembar*, traditional leaders, and community members physically present in the arena. However, in the digital space, participation is no longer spatial, but rather discursive.

The comment section demonstrates that digital audiences act not only as spectators but also as active subjects constructing and affirming cultural meaning. Expression of local pride emerges in various forms, such as:

“NTB Makmur Mendunia”

“Bangga ite jari dengan Lombok”

“Tradisi Lombok tiap tahun”

These statements demonstrate that *Peresean* functions as a symbol of collective identity, reaffirmed through social media. In other words, TikTok has become a space for affirming ethnicity and regional pride. Furthermore, there are also corrective interactions between users, demonstrating the dynamics of collective knowledge production. For example, when one user stated that *Peresean* is held annually, another user responded:

“Bukan setiap tahu, tapi sering dalam setahun bisa beberapa kali”

“sekarang bakalan diadakan secara resmi pada bulan Desember saja”

This interaction demonstrates that the comment space functions as an arena for clarification and negotiation of meaning. From a netnographic perspective, this practice indicates that rituals are not only represented visually but also reconstructed through digital conversation. Based on immersive observation of comment patterns, the more dramatic the video, the higher the intensity of emotional engagement among the audience. Conversely, videos with educational framing tend to elicit informative discussion. This demonstrates the link between visual representation and the formation of digital discourse as part of ritual communication practices.

3.3. TikTok as a Digital Ritual Arena

From a netnographic perspective, TikTok is not simply a distribution medium, but a social space where culture is interactively negotiated. The ritual setting shifts from a village field to an algorithmic stage that enables symbolic participation through comments, likes, and shares. The setting elements in SPEAKING shift spatially, but instrumental elements such as the Sasak language, *gendang beleq* music, and ritual gestures remain present as symbols of continuity.

Thus, digital modernization does not eliminate ritual structures but rather creates symbolic adaptations. The fragmentation of the Act Sequence does not mean a loss of value, as these values are reproduced through digital interactions.

In addition to structural transformation, the element of Genre also demonstrates variation in the digital representation of *Peresean*. Based on the analysis, *Peresean* videos on TikTok can be categorized into three dominant genres: cultural documentation, tourism promotion, and entertainment-oriented content. Videos uploaded by cultural community accounts tend to frame *Peresean* as documentation of ritual continuity, while institutional or branding accounts position it within tourism narratives. Meanwhile, influencer-generated videos often emphasize entertainment values and dramatic fight sequences.

This genre differentiation influences how audiences interpret the ritual. Documentation-oriented videos tend to generate informative and identity-based discussions, whereas entertainment-oriented videos elicit emotional and sensational responses. Thus, Genre interacts with other SPEAKING elements, particularly Key and Participants, in shaping the digital negotiation of ritual meaning.

3.4. Variations Across Account Categories

Participants Beyond structural transformations, representation patterns also differ according to account categories. Local media accounts tend to frame *Peresean* as a documented cultural event, emphasizing informational value and public visibility. Influencers and content creators prioritize dramatic fight sequences and emotional engagement, often amplifying entertainment aspects.

Cultural institution and branding platform accounts position Peresean within tourism discourse, highlighting its attractiveness as a cultural asset and destination appeal. Meanwhile, cultural community accounts emphasize ritual continuity and identity affirmation, generating more identity-based and corrective discussions within the comment sections.

This differentiation demonstrates that the transformation of ritual communication is not uniform but mediated by the communicative intentions and institutional positioning of each account category. Thus, the element of Genre in the SPEAKING model is closely linked to account typology, shaping how ritual meaning is constructed and negotiated in digital space.

4. Conclusion

This research concludes that the transformation of Peresean on TikTok is not simply visual, but rather a shift in the structure of ritual communication in the digital space. Based on analysis using the SPEAKING mode, it was found that the Setting, Participants, and Act Sequence elements underwent the most significant changes. The ritual setting shifted from a community-based physical arena to an open, algorithmic space without geographical boundaries.

Participant expanded from ritual participants and live spectators to a digital audience actively participating through commentary and discourse. Meanwhile, the act Sequence experienced fragmentation due to the short video format emphasizing dramatic scenes. Nevertheless, the Norms and Key elements demonstrate the continuity of ritual values. Sportsmanlike gestures such as handshakes and hugs remain prominent and reaffirmed through audience responses in the comment section. These findings suggest that digital modernization does not eliminate the essence of ritual but rather encourages symbolic adaptation, where core values are maintained through technological mediation.

Thus, the analysis confirms that Peresean on TikTok functions as an adaptive, digitally negotiated ritual communication event. Rituals are no longer static and local but have become cultural practices that are continuously reconstructed through visual and discursive interactions. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in the application of the SPEAKING model to interpret the transformation of ritual communication within the social media ecosystem, demonstrating that changes in communication structures do not necessarily mean a loss of meaning, but rather a reconfiguration of its expression.

This research is limited to the analyzed dataset of popular videos, thus not encompassing a wider variety of representations. Future research could expand the data coverage or conduct cross-platform comparative studies to more comprehensively understand the dynamics of changing ritual meanings.

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