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A Semantic-Template Analysis of *Peunajôh* in Nagan Raya Aceh

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the diversity of *Peunajôh* that are found in Nagan Raya, Aceh. It analyses the variety of *Peunajôh* as an Acehnese snack food by applying the semantic templates which are developed within the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) framework, with semantic primes as its foundation. This provides an analytical approach for examining lexical categories. Wierzbicka's (2015) work on artifacts provides the conceptual basis for treating *Peunajôh* as a culinary artifact, which Fitrissia (2019) adapted to traditional cuisine. This descriptive qualitative study collected data through semi-structured interviews with five elderly informants (aged 56–90) and field observations in Lhok Rameuan Village, Suka Makmue District, Nagan Raya, Aceh. Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The analysis identified 52 unique *Peunajôh* lexical types and grouped their uses into four overlapping functional domains: *Peunajôh Uroe Raya* (religious and festive food), *Peunajôh Khanduri Adat* (customary ceremonial food), *Peunajôh Khanduri* (life-event ritual food), and *Peunajôh Ie Sirap* (everyday subsistence food). This means a single type of *Peunajôh* serves not only one functional domain. Systematic culinary variation occurs through changes in ingredients, fillings, and naming patterns, such as *Leupek* varieties, which reflect humans' creative ability to create food styles. Therefore, culinary traditions are not static, the community preserves the form and identity of traditional foods while simultaneously making creative modifications based on available ingredients, specific needs, and cultural contexts. *Peunajôh* functions not only as food but also as a medium for social relations, cultural knowledge, and intergenerational heritage transmission. The findings concluded that *Peunajôh* functions not only as sustenance but also as a symbolic medium for expressing Acehnese identity, values, and social relations. Documenting this traditional snack food contributes to heritage preservation through the scientific study of language and food from a culinary linguistic perspective.

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between language and food as media for cultural expression and identity. Language facilitates the sharing of thoughts and emotions, while food embodies heritage and communal experience. Food is not only sustenance, and language is not only a tool to transmit information. As a fundamental medium for society, language is essential for effective social interaction. Linguistics, the scientific study

of language, examines how language shapes social interactions and cultural norms (Warde, 2016; Fitrissia et al, 2022).

Indonesia has a rich diversity of traditional foods. Each region has unique culinary traditions and characteristics that utilize locally sourced ingredients (Wijaya, 2019). The country's cuisines are a treasure, distinguished by a variety of spices and seasonings that create rich taste, aroma, appearance, and historical value inherited from

ancestral practices. These traditional cuisines differ significantly between regions; even dishes with similar names may vary in taste due to differences in ingredients, local experiences, and cultural influences (Wibowo, 2009). In Aceh, traditional snack food is called *Peunajôh*, which is different from the main cuisine. The diversity of Aceh's *Peunajôh* reflects the region's greater amount of natural resources, both marine and terrestrial. It is made from natural raw ingredients, which have biological, social, and economic value (Zurriyati & Perangin-angin, 2022; Zurriyati & Sinar, 2018). Therefore, *Peunajôh* denotes traditional Acehnese snack foods characterized by diversity that arises from variations in local ingredients, cultural influences, and environmental resources. It is also subject to cultural and linguistic shifts, particularly as globalization and technological advancement contribute to the decline of local cultural consumption and regional language use, especially among younger generations (Aziz et al., 2021; Fitrissia et al., 2018a). Regarding language vitality, Fishman (1991), a reference for this research, has emphasized the idea that the vitality of a language is highly dependent on its transmission from one generation to the next. This process shows that the language itself, as well as the transmission of culturally embedded vocabulary, including traditional culinary terms. Recent research reinforces this perspective. Sitaresmi et al. (2023) found that in multilingual communities, reduced use of the mother tongue across social domains reduces language vitality and increases the risk of language shift, while Syahputera et al. (2026) show that intergenerational language transmission, language use across social domains, and positive attitudes of society are important factors in preserving the Acehnese language.

As younger generations become less familiar with traditional food practices, these local terms may gradually disappear from everyday use. Therefore, the erosion of culture is closely associated with the loss of specific local lexicons that encapsulate a community's traditions and values. It can be assessed across several stages: safe, unsafe, endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered, and extinct (Moseley, 2010). Further, Zurriyati et al. (2023) concluded, from an ecolinguistic perspective, that Acehnese knowledge of traditional food, especially *Kuah Pliek U*, began to shift, even though all age groups still consume

the traditional food. The term *Peunajôh* is closely linked to food, identity, and cultural heritage in this area. Exploring Nagan Raya provides valuable insights into how language and food intersect to shape social life in this Acehnese society. Therefore, examining *Peunajôh* provides valuable insights into the relationship between language, culture, and traditional culinary practices in Acehnese society.

The use of distinctive local terms that are beginning to fade—along with the cultural knowledge embedded within them—may no longer be passed down to the younger generation. This weakens the intergenerational transmission of local culinary traditions and increases the risk of losing culturally unique vocabulary. Furthermore, globalization is accelerating this process by introducing more commonly used terms, particularly among younger speakers. For this reason, documenting and analyzing local lexicons is essential to understanding the cultural meanings they convey.

Preserving local culinary lexicons is important because they encode cultural knowledge that cannot be fully understood through literal translation alone. Their meanings are closely tied to local practices, shared experiences, and ways of interpreting the world. For this reason, the present study draws on the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), a theory of lexical semantics developed by Wierzbicka (1996) and further elaborated by Goddard (2010; 2011; 2012). NSM assumes that even highly culture-specific concepts can be explained through combinations of universal semantic primes, simple meanings that are shared across languages. Rather than replacing one language with another, the framework seeks to make culturally embedded meanings explicit and comparable across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The NSM framework has also developed the notion of semantic templates to account for recurrent semantic patterns within particular lexical domains. A semantic template does not define an individual lexical item in isolation; instead, it identifies the semantic components shared by members of the same conceptual class (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 1994; Goddard, 2012). Originally developed for semantic classes such as artifacts and natural kinds, the approach has since been extended to other lexical domains. Wierzbicka's (2015)

discussion of artifacts illustrates this point clearly. Her comparison of *spoon* and the Chinese *tangci* shows that objects with similar physical forms may nevertheless differ semantically because they are associated with different functions, conventional uses, and cultural practices. Lexical meaning, therefore, cannot be explained solely in terms of physical properties; it also reflects the cultural knowledge shared by a speech community.

The same principle applies to traditional food. Although *Peunajôh* is commonly understood as a type of Acehnese cuisine, it represents more than food meaning extends itself. It is closely connected to ingredients, preparation methods, social occasions, and local cultural practices. From this perspective, *Peunajôh* can be viewed as a culinary artifact that is well suited to semantic-template analysis. Building on the NSM framework, Fitrissia (2019) proposed a semantic template for traditional cuisine consisting of four interrelated dimensions: functional category, material, processing method, and appearance. The present study applies this template to identify and classify *Peunajôh* varieties in Aceh Nagan Raya according to these four dimensions. The analysis is confined to semantic-template classification and does not extend to full NSM semantic explications of individual *Peunajôh* lexicons. Such semantic explications constitute a subsequent stage of analysis and remain a direction for future research.

Studies of Indonesian traditional food have approached culinary practices from ethnographic, anthropological, semantic, and culinary linguistic perspectives. Lubis et al. (2022), for example, describe *Peunajôh* as a culturally significant culinary tradition associated with ritual practices, ecological knowledge, and community life, but their discussion does not examine its semantic organization. Other linguistic studies show that traditional food names encode information about ingredients, preparation techniques, and cultural identity (Hoerunisa et al., 2023), while Simanjuntak et al. (2024) demonstrate how culinary vocabulary reflects morphological processes. More recently, Christy et al. (2024) applied the NSM framework to Batak Toba cuisine and showed that culinary concepts can be analysed systematically through semantic components related to purpose, material, preparation, and social function. Nevertheless, comparable analyses remain scarce for Acehnese culinary lexicons. This study addresses that gap by

applying the NSM semantic-template framework to classify the semantic structure of *Peunajôh* varieties in Nagan Raya and to explain the cultural meanings encoded in these traditional culinary terms.

Further, previous studies on Acehnese culinary traditions, such as Fitrissia (2019), studied the culinary traditions of Aceh Besar, focusing on the relationship between language and cultural identity through semantic patterns in food naming, the semantic meaning of food processing, and Acehnese commensality (Fitrissia et al 2018b). Another study on the linguistic representation of *Peunajôh*, based on field observations and interviews, reveals the cultural meanings embedded in its preparation and consumption (Zurriyati & Perangi-angin, 2022). However, previous studies have not systematically applied the NSM framework, combined with an Acehnese-specific semantic template, to classify *Peunajôh* varieties. Therefore, this study offers a semantic-based classification of *Peunajôh* in Nagan Raya to contribute to culinary linguistics, semantic theory, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

II. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to examine the semantic classification of *Peunajôh* varieties in Nagan Raya, Aceh, using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) framework and the semantic template for traditional cuisine proposed by Fitrissia (2019). The study was conducted in Lhok Rameuan Village, Suka Makmue District, Nagan Raya Regency, where traditional culinary practices remain actively maintained. The researchers selected five elderly informants (aged 56–90 years) through purposive sampling. They included traditional cake makers, community elders, and local residents recognized for their knowledge of *Peunajôh*, customary practices, and the Acehnese language. All participants were native speakers of Acehnese and had long-term experience in preparing or transmitting traditional culinary knowledge. The selection of elderly informants was intended to ensure the authenticity and completeness of the culinary lexicons documented.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in Acehnese, with Indonesian used for clarification. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and verified with the informants to ensure the accuracy of local

culinary terms and their meanings. Observations focused on representative *peunajôh* varieties during food preparation and serving in both household and ceremonial settings, allowing the researcher to document ingredients, cooking techniques, presentation, and cultural practices.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014): data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. Initially, each *Peunajôh* lexical type was coded based on Fitrissia's (2019) culinary semantic template, which includes four dimensions: (1) functional category (religious and festive food, customary ceremonial food, life-event ritual food, and everyday subsistence food), (2) material/ingredients (main components), (3) preparation method (culinary process), and (4) appearance (shape, colour, texture, observable features).

The second stage involved distinguishing lexical types from their contexts. A lexical type was a specific culinary name, while a functional occurrence indicated usage in social, ritual, or daily settings. One lexical type could be linked to multiple functional domains, which overlapped rather than being mutually exclusive classes. The third stage compared related lexical types to identify recurring culinary patterns, focusing on similarities and differences in ingredients, fillings, methods, appearance, and naming, to uncover systematic variations without assuming each was a new invention. Finally, the study analyzed patterns through the culinary semantic-template of the NSM framework to see how context, material, preparation, and appearance shape *Peunajôh* lexical categories. Findings were validated by triangulating interview and observation data and sharing key interpretations with informants.

III. RESULTS

The study documented 52 *Peunajôh* items from interviews and field observations (Table 1). Each lexical type was coded using Fitrissia's (2019) traditional culinary semantic template, with functional category, materials/ingredients, preparation method, and appearance treated as interrelated semantic dimensions. *Peunajôh* may be used on different occasions that represent functional occurrences rather than mutually exclusive lexical membership. The data reveal similarities in the presentation of *Peunajôh* (traditional dishes) across functional categories, as

well as variations in ingredients or toppings, such as *Leupek & bu leukat*. This demonstrates that human food preparation involves selecting, substituting, and recombining locally available ingredients using traditional techniques and familiar culinary styles (Adrianto, 2014). As a product of human endeavour and an expression of culture, food originated as a primary necessity—specifically, to meet the physical requirements for survival. Over time, however, food came to serve not only physical needs but also religious ones. Consequently, the functions of food evolved into a complex interplay of physical and non-physical roles, mirroring the continuous growth of culture driven by both internal and external factors. This creativity should not be viewed as limitless invention, but rather as innovation within tradition.

Peunajôh's recurring presence across four key categories showcases its versatile role in Nagan Raya. Words with similar social functions are grouped into four broader categories: *Peunajôh Uroe Raya* (religious and festive food), *Peunajôh Khanduri Adat* (traditional ceremonial food), *Peunajôh Khanduri* (ritual food for life events), and *Peunajôh Ie Sirap* (everyday subsistence food). This classification highlights how these foods serve multiple purposes rather than fitting into a single lexical category, as the same dish appear in different cultural contexts. The study also finds consistent culinary differences within related food types, especially *Leupek* varieties, which are modified and recombined through changes to ingredients, fillings, and names while maintaining a recognizable culinary structure. The semantic-template analysis reveals diverse functions and a lively pattern of culinary innovation, where traditional foods are adapted within Nagan Raya's cultural fabric. This will be explained in greater detail in the section on the categorization of *Peunajôh*.

***Peunajôh Uroe Raya* (Festive Religious Snack Foods)**

Uroe Raya is a major Islamic celebration like Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, involving prayer, charity, and social gatherings. Its dates change yearly according to the Islamic lunar calendar, making it calendar-based. *Peunajôh* plays a key role during *Uroe Raya*, especially in social visits and family rituals. The cakes served symbolize respect, unity, and family obligation. Younger relatives,

Table 1. *Peunajôh* Nagan Raya Aceh

No.	Name of <i>Peunajôh</i>	No	Name of <i>Peunajôh</i>
1	<i>Leumang</i>	28	<i>Engkhui</i>
	<i>Tape</i>		
2	<i>Tape Boh Ubi</i>	29	<i>Bu Payeh</i>
3	<i>Tape Breuh Bit</i>	30	<i>Bu Leukat</i>
4	<i>Tape Breuh Leukat Puteh</i>	31	<i>Bu Leukat Keurabe</i>
5	<i>Tape Breuh Leukat Puteh</i>	32	<i>Bu Leukat Teumpoe</i>
6	<i>Keutupat</i>	33	<i>Bu Leukat Srikaya</i>
	<i>Leupek</i>		
7	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Puteh</i>	34	<i>Kuah Bu Leukat Boh Drien</i>
8	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Mirah</i>	35	<i>Kuah Bu Leukat Boh Kuini</i>
			<i>Leughok</i>
9	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Puteh</i>	36	<i>Leughok Sagee</i>
10	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Mirah</i>	37	<i>Leughok Breuh</i>
11	<i>Leupek Teupong Asoe Kaya</i>	38	<i>Leughok Boh Ubi</i>
12	<i>Kipang Kacang</i>	39	<i>Boh Rom Rom</i>
			<i>Bada</i>
13	<i>Kue Seupet</i>	40	<i>Bada Pisang</i>
14	<i>Kue Sagon</i>	41	<i>Bada Sukon</i>
15	<i>Kue Ek Glang (Kue Pret</i>	42	<i>Bada Boh Ubi</i>
16	<i>Kue Loyang</i>	43	<i>Boh Geudok</i>
17	<i>Putu</i>	44	<i>Boh Geudok Pisang Beureune Sage</i>
18	<i>Karah</i>	45	<i>Pisang Reuboh</i>
		46	<i>Pisang Keurabê</i>
19	<i>Bungong Kayee</i>	47	<i>Ubi Reuboh Manisan</i>
20	<i>Bolu Eungkot</i>	48	<i>Ubi Reuboh Keurabê U</i>
21	<i>Bolu Pongkit</i>		
22	<i>Bhoi</i>		
23	<i>Bu Thôe</i>	49	<i>Putroe Manoe</i>
24	<i>Kolak</i>	50	<i>Lupis</i>
25	<i>Wajik</i>	51	<i>Haluwa Meuseukat</i>
26	<i>Apam Kuah</i>	52	<i>Glamo</i>
27	<i>Tumpoe</i>		

such as sons-in-law (*linto barô*) and daughters-in-law (*dara barô*), visit elders and present *Peunajôh* as homage, called *peujamee tuha*. These foods carry symbolic meanings, reflecting qualities like function, appearance, and respect.

Karah is one of the *Peunajôh* for *Uroe Raya*. *Peunajôh* has social and ritual significance beyond being snacks. During *Uroe Raya*, they are respectful offerings that reinforce family bonds and honor elders. Ingredients like glutinous rice, coconut milk, palm sugar, and bananas—staples of Acehese cuisine—are used, symbolizing sweetness and prosperity. *Karah*'s materials include rice flour, sugar, and coconut.

Preparation methods are passed down through generations. *Karah* is made using a perforated coconut shell, placing dough inside and tapping it on heated oil for a crispy texture. Other cakes

like *Leumang* and *Kue Seuopet* are steamed or grilled; grilling *Leumang* in bamboo symbolizes community and abundance, while frying *Karah* signifies effort and care for guests. Appearance matters: *Karah*'s crispy, net-like pattern signifies respect, while *Kue Ek Glang*'s crescent or pretzel shapes represent transition or cycles, reflecting the symbolic role of food during *Uroe Raya*.

The data show that the *Uroe Raya* category includes both single-context items and those in other categories. For example, *leupek teupong boh labu u puteh* is listed as festive religious food and for rituals, while *leupek teupong boh labu u mirah* and *boh glidek* variants are linked to *Uroe Raya* and everyday use. These overlaps indicate the semantic template's function is context-sensitive, not fixed. Materials, preparation, and appearance help distinguish variants: *leupek* forms are steamed with a soft, round structure, while pumpkin, sweet

Table 2. Types of *Peunajôh* Served During *Uroe Raya* in Social Visits

No.	Name of <i>Peunajôh</i>	Functional Category	Material	Preparation Method	Appearance
1	<i>Leumang</i>	Festive religious food	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, salt	Grilled	Soft, sticky, cylindrical
	<i>Tape</i>				
2	<i>Tape Boh Ubi</i>	Festive religious food	Cassava, sugar, yeast	Fermented	Soft, moist, slightly sweet
3	<i>Tape Breuh Leukat</i>	Festive religious food	Glutinous rice, palm sugar	Fermented	Soft, sweet, round
4	<i>Keutupat</i>	Festive religious food	Rice, coconut leaves	Boiled	Firm, compact, woven shape
5	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Puteh</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with white coconut filling
6	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Mirah</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with red coconut filling
7	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Puteh</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, sweet potato, grated white coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
8	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Mirah</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, sweet potato, palm sugar, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
9	<i>Leupek Teupong Asoe Kaya</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar	steamed	Soft, compact
10	<i>Kipang Kacang</i>	Festive religious food	Peanuts, sugar	Cooked	Hard, crunchy
11	<i>Kue Seupet</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, sugar	Grilled/Steamed	Rolled or folded
12	<i>Kue Sagon</i>	Festive religious food	Grated coconut, rice flour, sugar	Baked	Dry, crumbly, golden
13	<i>Kue Ek Glang (Kue Pret)</i>	Festive religious food	Flour, sugar	Fried	Crescent or pretzel-shaped
14	<i>Kue Loyang</i>	Festive religious food	Flour, sugar	Fried	Molded with brass iron (loyang)
15	<i>Bolu Engkot</i>	Festive religious food	Flour, eggs	Baked	Fish-shaped sponge cake
16	<i>Bolu Pongkit</i>	Festive religious food	Wheat flour, eggs, sugar, butter	Baked	Soft, fluffy, golden brown
17	<i>Bhoi</i>	Festive religious food	Flour, sugar	Grilled	Soft inside, golden exterior
18	<i>Putu</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, palm sugar, coconut	Steamed	Soft, cylindrical
19	<i>Karah</i>	Festive religious food	Rice flour, sugar	Fried	Crispy, net-like pattern
20	<i>Bungong Kayee</i>	Festive religious food	Eggs, rice flour	Fried	Flower-shaped, firm texture

potato, and coconut filling color vary. Preparation methods also differentiate *Peunajôh* varieties: grilling (*leumang*), fermentation (*tape boh ubi*, *tape breuh leukat*), boiling (*keutupat*), steaming (*putu*, *leupek*), frying (*karah*, *bungong kayee*, *kue ek glang*), and baking (*bolu engkot*, *bolu pongkit*). Appearance varies from cylindrical and sticky to crispy, net-like, rolled, folded, flower, or fish-shaped. These differences show the semantic template captures systematic culinary variation, not just food names.

***Peunajôh Khanduri Adat* (Customary Ceremonial Snack Food)**

In traditional rituals, *Peunajôh* extends beyond food, symbolizing cultural, social, and spiritual meanings that vary with customs. This practice by the Nagan Acehnese expresses their beliefs and social ties. It involves symbolic items from local ingredients like rice, coconut milk, palm sugar, and bananas, carrying ritual significance. *Peunajôh*,

always present in *Khanduri adat*, include *buleukat u mirah* and *buleukat tumpoe*. They play roles in events like *peusijuk* (wedding blessings), *peudông rumôh* (housewarming), *seunudôh* (prayer), and *khanduri blang* (rice harvest). *Tumpoe* is a soft, sweet cake served with yellow sticky rice.

Peunajôh in rituals is a sacred offering symbolizing reverence, with deep cultural and spiritual meaning. It is a traditional snack food. Whether in *peusijuk* (purification and blessing rites), *peudông rumôh*, *seinudôh*, and *khanduri blang*, aiming to connect the community with supernatural powers, invoke blessings, and honor ancestors. Some, like *buleukat mirah* and *tumpoe*, accompany the performance of the *peusijuk ritual*. The materials used to prepare these *Peunajôh* also involve local, traditional ingredients. Glutinous rice, palm sugar, coconut milk, and fruits like bananas, these foods reflect natural resources and spiritual significance, symbolizing sweetness, life,



Fig. 2. Bu Leukat u Mirah & Tumpoe as *Peunajôh* *Keu Khanduri Adat*

and purification. For example, *tumpoe* combines ripe bananas, glutinous rice flour, sugar, and salt. The preparation method can vary widely depending on the type of ritual. For instance, some cakes are fried, such as *tumpoe*, which is prepared by kneading a banana and flour mixture into dough, then shaping it like a rose or a full moon and frying it, sometimes with banana leaves to add a unique aroma. Other methods include boiling (e.g., *kolak*, *boh rom-rom*) and steaming (e.g., *leughok*, *lupis*). Each cooking method reflects the ritual context. Frying is cooking food using oil at a specific temperature, whereby the food cooks through direct contact with the hot oil, and typically results

in a dry, crispy, or browned surface. Frying may symbolize transformation or purification. Steaming cooks food using hot steam, so it cooks without direct contact with water, while boiling uses heat from boiling water, with the food in direct contact with or submerged in the water. Steaming or boiling can symbolize humility, simplicity, or spiritual nourishment. The appearance of the *peunajôh* reflects its spiritual significance. For instance, *buleukat* has a soft, rounded texture that symbolizes protection and family unity. In contrast, *tumpoe*'s soft texture and rounded or rose shape represent gratitude and harmony.

Table 3. Types of *Peunajôh* Used in Customary Ceremonial in Nagan Raya

No.	Name of <i>Peunajôh</i>	Functional Category	Material	Preparation Method	Appearance
1	<i>Engkhui</i>	Customary Ceremonial food	Banana, glutinous rice flour, grated coconut, sugar, salt	Steamed	Soft, sticky, elongated
2	<i>Kolak</i>	Customary Ceremonial food	Banana, sweet potato, coconut milk, palm sugar	Boiled	Soft, thick, sweet
3	<i>Bu Payeh</i>	Customary Ceremonial food	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, sugar, salt, banana	Steamed	Soft, sticky, wrapped in banana leaves
4	<i>Bu Leukat</i>	Customary Ceremonial food	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, salt	Steamed	Soft, sticky, white/yellow
5	<i>Bu Leukat U Mirah</i>	Customary Ceremonial food	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, salt, brown sugar		Soft, sticky, brown/red with grated coconut (topping)
6	<i>Bu Leukat Keurabê</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice, grated coconut, cooking oil	Steamed	Soft, sticky, white with grated coconut (topping)
7	<i>Bu Leukat U Puteh</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, salt, white sugar	Steamed	Soft, sticky, white with grated coconut (topping)
	Leupek				
8	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Puteh</i>	Customary Ceremonial	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with white coconut filling
9	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Mirah</i>	Customary Ceremonial	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with red coconut filling
10	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Puteh</i>	Customary Ceremonial	Rice flour, sweet potato, grated white coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
11	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Mirah</i>	Customary Ceremonial	Rice flour, sweet potato, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
	Leughok				
12	<i>Leughok Sagee</i>	Customary Ceremonial	Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, salt	Steamed	Soft, white, square shaped

13	<i>Leughok Breuh</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice, banana, salt, sugar	Steamed	Soft, white, compact
14	<i>Boh Rom Rom</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice flour, palm sugar, grated coconut, pandan leaves	Boiled	Small, round, green with white grated coconut
	Bada				
15	<i>Bada Pisang</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Banana, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft, golden, crispy
16	<i>Bada Sukon</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Breadfruit, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft inside, golden and crispy outside
14	<i>Bada Ubi</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Cassava, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft inside, golden and crispy outside
20	<i>Pisang Keurabê</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Banana, grated coconut, palm sugar	Steamed	Soft, fibrous, white
21	<i>Pisang Reuboh</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	banana, water	Boiled	Soft, tender, yellowish
22	<i>Leughok Boh Ubi</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Cassava, glutinous rice flour, grated coconut, sugar	Steamed	Soft, sticky, white, compact
1	<i>Leughok Sagee</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, salt	Steamed	Soft, white, square shaped
2	<i>Leughok Breuh</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice, banana, salt, sugar	Steamed	Soft, white, compact
23	<i>Ubi Reuboh Manisan</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Cassava, honey like sweet syrup	Boiled	Soft, tender, sweet, and glossy
24	<i>Ubi Reuboh Keurabê U</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Cassava, grated coconut, palm sugar	Boiled	Soft, sweet, white with grated coconut
25	<i>Putroe Manoe</i>	Food for traditional rituals	Glutinous rice flour, coconut milk, palm sugar, water	Boiled	Small, round, soft, served with sweet coconut milk
26	<i>Lupis</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice, banana leaves, grated coconut, palm sugar	Boiled	Cylindrical or triangular, white with brown syrup
27	<i>Boh Geudok Pisang Beureune Sagee</i>	Food for traditional rituals	Banana, sago (beureune sage), grated coconut, sugar, salt	Fried	Soft inside, soft, served with sweet coconut milk
28	<i>Bolu Pongkit</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Wheat flour, eggs, sugar, butter	Baked	Soft, fluffy, golden brown
29	<i>Tape Breuh Leukat</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice, palm sugar	Fermented	Soft, sweet, round
30	<i>Leumang</i>	Customary Ceremonial Foods	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, salt	Grilled	Soft, sticky, cylindrical

The data indicate that this category is mainly defined by customary use and social-ritual contexts rather than by specific ingredients or cooking techniques. *Buleukat u mirah* and *tumpoe* are particularly common in traditional rituals, while other items such as *leupek teupong* variants, *bada pisang*, *bada sukon*, and *bada ubi* also fall into this category. The semantic-template analysis reveals that traditional ceremonial roles coexist with variations in ingredients, preparation methods, and presentation. For example, *tumpoe* is made from ripe bananas, glutinous rice flour, sugar, and salt, then fried, whereas *bu leukat* is steamed with rice and coconut milk. *Leupek teupong* variants are also part of *Khanduri Adat*, mainly differing in their base plant ingredients and coconut fillings. These results suggest that traditional functions provide a cultural framework within which diverse culinary forms are chosen, rather than restricting them to a single recipe. Preparation methods such as frying,

boiling, steaming, and baking are key to preserving and evolving cultural knowledge. Although they produce different textures and shapes, from soft and sticky to crisp, compact, elongated, or round, these methods fall within the same functional category. The semantic template highlights these recurring contrasts, explaining why items with significantly different materials and procedures still belong to the same *peunajôh* domain.

Peunajôh Khanduri (Ritual Life-Event Snack Food)

Acehnese *khanduri* in the human life cycle includes several stages: birth, Qur'anic learning and completion (*khatam al-Qur'an*), *Khitan* (male circumcision), marriage, and finally death (Soelaiman, 2011). Life-cycle rituals, including childbirth, circumcision, weddings, and death, are accompanied by the preparation and sharing of *peunajôh*. These foods are symbolic, representing

Table 4 Peunajôh in *Ritual Life-Event Snack Food* in Nagan Raya

No.	Name of Peunajôh	Functional Category	Material	Preparation Method	Appearance
1	<i>Karah</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, sugar, water, cooking oil	Fried	Crispy, net-like pattern, golden brown, thin
2	<i>Bungong Kayee</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Glutinous rice flour, rice flour, tapioca flour, eggs, sugar, food coloring, cooking oil	Fried	Dry, crispy, flower shaped, white to pale yellow
3	<i>Bu Thôe</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Cooked rice, sugar	Fried	Crispy, dry, sweet, and brown
4	<i>Kue Ek Glang (Kue Pret)</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Flour, sugar	Fried	Crescent or pretzel-shaped
5	<i>Haluwa Meuseukat</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Wheat flour, sugar, butter, coconut milk	Stirred	Soft, smooth, dense, yellowish
6	<i>Wajik</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, palm sugar, salt	Steamed and cooked	Soft, sticky, brown, usually square-shaped
7	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Puteh</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with white coconut filling
8	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Mirah</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with red coconut filling
9	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Puteh</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, sweet potato, grated white coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
10	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Mirah</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, sweet potato, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
11	<i>Leupek Teupong Asoe Kaya</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, srikaya filling	steamed	Soft, sticky, elongated, with sweet srikaya filling
12	<i>Putu</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, palm sugar, coconut	Steamed	Soft, cylindrical
13	<i>Apam Kuah</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, jackfruit	Grilled	Soft, round, white, served with sweet coconut milk sauce
14	<i>Tumpoe</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Glutinous rice flour, ripe banana, coconut milk, sugar, salt	Fried	Round, thin, brownish, soft
15	<i>Bu Leukat</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, sugar, salt, banana	Steamed	Soft, sticky, white
16	<i>Kue Loyang</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Flour, sugar	Fried	Molded with brass iron (loyang)
17	<i>Bhoi</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Flour, sugar	Grilled	Soft inside, golden exterior
18	<i>Kue Seupet</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, sugar	Grilled/Steamed	Rolled or folded
19	<i>Bolu Pongkit</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Wheat flour, eggs, sugar, butter	Baked	Soft, fluffy, golden brown
20	<i>Agar Agar Sarikaya</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Agar-agar powder, eggs, coconut milk, sugar, pandan leaves	Boiled	Soft, smooth, layered, greenish-yellow
21	<i>Bolu Engkot</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Flour, eggs	Baked	Fish-shaped sponge cake
22	<i>Bada Sukon</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Breadfruit, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft inside, golden and crispy outside
23	<i>Bada Pisang</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Banana, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft, golden, crispy
24	<i>Bada Ubi</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Cassava, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft inside, golden and crispy outside
25	<i>Leumang</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, salt	Grilled	Soft, sticky, cylindrical
26	<i>Tape Breuh Leukat</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Glutinous rice, palm sugar	Fermented	Soft, sweet, round
27	<i>Bu Payeh</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Glutinous rice, coconut milk, sugar, salt, banana	Steamed	Soft, sticky, wrapped in banana leaves
28	<i>Glamo</i>	Ritual Life-event Foods	Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, grated coconut	Steamed	Soft, white, round, and slightly sticky

spiritual passage, respect, and community solidarity. Each stage in life has its own designated cakes, reflecting the values and beliefs surrounding those events. For example, during pregnancy rituals (*Rayeuk Prut*), cakes such as *karah*, *bungong kayee*, and *bhoi* are offered to the expectant mother

as blessings for a safe and healthy pregnancy. At childbirth (*Peucicap*), cakes such as *bue leukat* and *leupek* are presented as part of the *peusijuek* ceremony, symbolizing life, protection, and gratitude. Wedding rituals involve cakes such as *leumang* and *bue leukat*, which symbolize unity,

family, and prosperity. Each ritual has specific cakes that reflect not only the physical changes but also the spiritual and social responsibilities that accompany each life stage.

These cakes serve ritual and symbolic roles during life-cycle events and reflect community values. Made from staples like glutinous rice, coconut milk, and palm sugar, they symbolize sweetness, fertility, and spiritual nourishment, nourishing the body and spirit. Preparation involves techniques like grilling (*leumang*), boiling (*tape*), and slow cooking (*wajik*), each enhancing the dish's symbolism: *leumang* for abundance and *wajik* for patience and unity. This is because the preparation process requires patience and precision to ensure the ingredients of both delicacies blend together perfectly. Their appearance symbolizes their function: *leumang* is cylindrical and sticky, representing unity; *wajik* is square and dense, symbolizing a solid foundation.



Fig.3 Bungong Kaye cake *Peunajôh intat dara barô* (Wedding cycle)

Within this category, the functional dimension is broader than the food's material composition. The same lexical item may be used in more than one cultural context. For example, the *leupek teupong* variants appear in life-event rituals and in *uroe raya*, *khanduri adat*, and *ie sirap*, while *leumang* appears in multiple categories. This overlap shows that a *peunajôh*'s social role can change by context without altering its basic ingredients or preparation method.

The data on life events also reveal significant variation in cooking methods and appearance. Techniques such as grilling, boiling, steaming, frying, stirring, and baking are all represented, and the food's appearance can range from thin and crispy to soft, sticky, dense, layered, flower-shaped, cylindrical, and fish-shaped. Therefore, the semantic template identifies life-event *peunajôh*

mainly through the interplay of functional context with material, process, and visual or sensory features, rather than a fixed culinary profile.

Peunajôh Ie Sirap (Daily Function-Based Snack Food)

Peunajôh Ie Sirap is a traditional snack food consumed by workers including construction workers, farmers, traders, and other office workers (Zurriyati&Perangin-angin, 2022). *Peunajôh Ie Sirap* serves as a nourishing meal for construction workers and communal laborers, as well as a gesture of hospitality and social solidarity in the community's daily life. It represents physical support for those who toil, shared burdens in unity, and respect for local traditions and ceremonies that bind people together such as *pisang keurabê* and *bada pisang*.



Fig.4. *Pisang keurabê* and *bada pisang* are *peunajoh ie sirap*, for construction/farmer workers and community daily life

These cakes use similar materials as other ritual foods, like glutinous rice, palm sugar, and coconut, focusing on comfort and remembrance. They are prepared by frying (e.g., *bada pisang*) or steaming (e.g., *leupek teupong*, *pisang keurabê*), with methods varying by recipe. Their textures can be soft, sticky, or crispy, and colors depend on the processing method.

The data indicate a strong overlap between this category and the other three functional

Table 5. *Peunajôh Ie Sirap* (Daily Function-Based Snack Food)

No.	Name of Peunajôh	Functional Category	Material	Preparation Method	Appearance
	Leughok				
1	<i>Leughok Sagee</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Rice flour, coconut milk, sugar, salt	Steamed	Soft, white, square shaped
2	<i>Leughok Breuh</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Glutinous rice, banana, salt, sugar	Steamed	Soft, white, compact
3	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Puteh</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with white coconut filling
4	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Labu U Mirah</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Rice flour, pumpkin, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish, with red coconut filling
5	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Puteh</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Rice flour, sweet potato, grated white coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
6	<i>Leupek Teupong Boh Glidek U Mirah</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Rice flour, sweet potato, grated red coconut	Steamed	Soft, round, yellowish-brown, with white coconut filling
7	<i>Kuah Bu Leukat Boh Drien</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Glutinous rice, durian, coconut milk, palm sugar, salt	Mixed and stirred	Thick, creamy, yellowish
8	<i>Kuah Bu Leukat Boh Kuini</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Glutinous rice, kuini(mango), coconut milk, palm sugar, salt	Mixed and stirred	Thick, creamy, yellowish-orange
9	<i>Boh Rom Rom</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Glutinous rice flour, palm sugar, grated coconut, pandan leaves	Boiled	Small, round, green with white grated coconut
	Bada				
10	<i>Bada Sukon</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods /Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Breadfruit, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft inside, golden and crispy outside
11	<i>Bada Pisang</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Banana, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft, golden, crispy
12	<i>Bada Boh Ubi</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Cassava, wheat flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil	Fried	Soft inside, golden and crispy outside
13	<i>Ubi Reuboh Keurabê U</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Cassava, grated coconut, palm sugar	Boiled	Soft, sweet, white with grated coconut
14	<i>Bu Leukat Keurabê</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Glutinous rice, grated coconut, palm sugar, cooking oil	Steamed	Soft, sticky, white with grated coconut
15	<i>Pisang Keurabê</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Banana, grated coconut, palm sugar	Steamed	Soft, fibrous, white
21	<i>Pisang Reuboh</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	banana, water	Boiled	Soft, tender, yellowish
16	<i>Lupis</i>	Everyday Subsistence Foods / Snack for family gatherings and daily consumption	Glutinous rice, banana leaves, grated coconut, palm sugar	Boiled	Cylindrical or triangular, white with brown syrup

domains. Variants like *leupek teupong*, *bada pisang*, *bada sukon*, *bada boh ubi*, *ubi reuboh keurabê u*, *bu leukat keurabê*, *pisang keurabê*, and *lupis* demonstrate how foods, commonly eaten daily, can also play roles in ceremonial or family

gatherings. *Ie sirap* should thus be viewed as a regular consumption domain rather than a fixed food classification. The material and preparation details support this view. Common ingredients such as glutinous rice, rice flour, coconut, palm

sugar, banana, cassava, breadfruit, durian, and kuini appear in both everyday and ceremonial foods. Preparation methods like steaming, frying, boiling, and stirring are also shared. The repeated use of similar ingredients and techniques across categories shows that cultural function depends not only on the ingredients but also on how foods are prepared, named, presented, and used within specific social contexts.

Peunajôh Cross-Category Overlap and Variation

Tables 2–5 reveal a pattern of functional overlap, with the same lexical items appearing in multiple *peunajôh* categories without losing identity. For example, *leupek teupong boh labu u puteh*, *leupek teupong boh labu u mirah*, *leupek teupong boh glidek u puteh*, and *leupek teupong boh glidek u mirah* appear as snack food in all *peunajôh* domains (*Uroe Raya*, *Khanduri Adat*, *Khanduri* life event ritual, and *Ie sirap*). Data analysis shows culinary variation, such as a naming schema, seen in *leupek teupong boh labu u puteh* and *leupek teupong boh labu u mirah* as *leupek* family that share the base and differ in pumpkin/coconut, while *boh glidek* variants replace pumpkin with sweet potato, maintaining the steamed, soft, round form. *Leupek teupong asoe kaya* introduces different fillings but keeps the same basic structure. Similar variations occur in *bada pisang*, *bada sukon*, and *bada ubi*, which use banana, breadfruit, and cassava in fried preparations, and in *ubi reuboh manisan* and *ubi reuboh keurabê u*, where cassava is the base but the ingredients differ. The pattern *peunajôh* of functional overlapping can be described in Table 6.

It indicates that humans have the creative ability to flavor their food and create unique dishes and food styles (Gerhardt et al, 2013). Therefore, culinary creativity is a culturally constrained variation, as traditional dishes are defined by

recognizable ingredients, techniques, naming patterns, and sensory expectations, and creativity involves recombining or substituting selected components to produce distinct food variants. This interpretation aligns with research describing traditional-food innovation as a balance between continuity and change and with recent work conceptualizing culinary diversification through changes in ingredients, processes, and sensory profiles (Fibri et al., 2022; Samson et al., 2025).

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that *peunajôh* lexical types group into four functional domains: *peunajôh uroe raya* (religious and festive food), *peunajôh khanduri adat* (customary ceremonial food), *peunajôh khanduri* (life-event ritual food), and *peunajôh ie sirap* (everyday subsistence food), which are described in detail in Figure 5. *Peunajôh* functions more as a dynamic culinary-semantic system than as four fixed food categories. Fitrisia's (2019) semantic template remains useful because it highlights common dimensions such as function, material, preparation, and appearance. However, the current data show that context strongly influences the functional aspect. A food can keep its lexical identity, ingredients, preparation, and look while being used in different social settings. This adaptability is most evident in the *leupek teupong* variants and in repeated items such as *leumang*, *tape breuh leukat*, *bada pisang*, and *bada ubi*.

Functionally, *peunajôh* is not uniform across events. In *uroe raya*, food can function as a medium of hospitality, respect, and family interaction; in *khanduri adat* and life-cycle ritual *khanduri*, it participates in customary and ritual performances; in *Ie sirap*, it supports everyday subsistence and communal labor. The same lexical item may participate in several of these domains. This overlap

Table 6. Patterns of Functional Overlap and Culinary Variation in *Peunajôh*

Pattern	Peunajôh examples	Peunajôh variation	Semantic interpretation
Functional overlap	<i>leupek teupong</i> variants; <i>leumang</i> ; <i>tape breuh leukat</i> ; <i>bada pisang/ubi</i>	Same lexical item appears across more than one functional category such as <i>Leupek</i> appear in all domain category of <i>Peunajôh</i>	Functional category is context-sensitive rather than mutually exclusive
Ingredient substitution	<i>leupek labu</i> / <i>leupek glidek</i> ; <i>bada pisang</i> / <i>sukon</i> / <i>ubi</i>	Base culinary pattern retained while main ingredient changes	Culinary variation is structured by a recurring semantic schema
Filling/modifier variation	<i>leupek</i> variants; <i>u puteh</i> / <i>u mirah</i> ; <i>asoe kaya</i>	Colour, filling, or ingredient modifier changes	Lexical naming makes culinary distinctions explicit
Fruit-based diversification	<i>kuah bu leukat boh drien</i> / <i>boh kuini</i>	Fruit component changes while core construction remains similar	Natural resources become productive culinary components

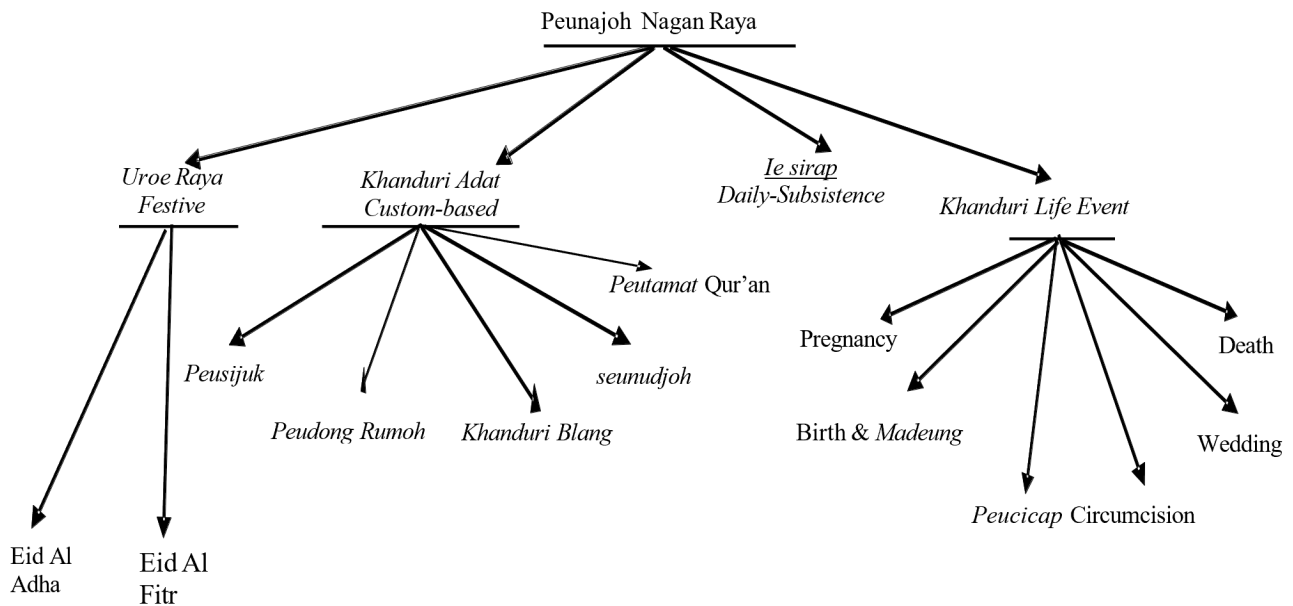


Fig.5. The Categorization of *Peunajoh Nagan Raya Aceh*

is therefore not a weakness of the classification but evidence that social context partly constitutes food meaning. In semantic-template terms, function operates as a relational component that connects the culinary item to the event in which it is used.

The results also show that food can operate as a cultural sign when embedded in ritual practices. The use of *kue karah* in *khanduri blang*, for example, is described in the manuscript as part of a ritual associated with hopes for agricultural fertility. These practices show that the cultural meaning of *peunajoh* cannot be recovered from ingredients or physical appearance alone; it must also be linked to the social and ritual practices in which the food participates. This supports the broader NSM view that lexical meaning is connected to conventional use and culturally shared knowledge (Wierzbicka, 2015).

The *Ie sirap* data further highlight that daily cooking routines are socially structured. Food given to workers during communal labor serves as both sustenance and a gesture of hospitality and solidarity. Since some of these foods also feature in ceremonial settings, the line between “daily” and “ritual” food is better understood as a difference in social roles rather than in physical characteristics. As a result, these categories are flexible, and this fluidity plays a key role in how *peunajoh*’s cultural language is organized. From a material perspective, *peunajoh* is closely tied to the local environment and to the community’s culinary repertoire of plant-based and other available resources. The

data repeatedly show glutinous rice, rice flour, coconut, palm sugar, banana, cassava, pumpkin, sweet potato, breadfruit, durian, and kuini being combined in different ways. *Kuah bu leukat boh drien* and *kuah bu leukat boh kuini* are particularly illustrative because the same basic culinary construction is differentiated through the selected fruit. Thus, natural resources do not simply supply raw material; they provide components that can be recombined within culturally recognizable culinary patterns.

The data document lists preparation methods such as boiling, steaming, frying, grilling, baking, fermentation, and mixing/stirring as recurring processes. These techniques convert natural or agricultural materials into culturally recognized *peunajoh* forms. Notably, the same ingredient can yield different culinary results based on its preparation, while the same preparation method can be used with various ingredients. This exemplifies a nature-to-culture perspective, where culinary knowledge mediates between ecological resources and culturally significant food forms (Fitrisia, 2019; Zurriyati & Perangin-angin, 2022). Appearance is another differentiating dimension in the semantic template. The tables show recurrent contrasts in shape, texture, colour, and surface form; for example, *karah* is net-like and crispy, *leumang* is cylindrical and sticky, *kue ek glang* is crescent or pretzel-shaped, and the *leupek* variants are soft and round with different fillings and colour characteristics. These observable properties help distinguish closely related culinary items and

demonstrate that food naming and categorization are grounded in a combination of material, process, and appearance rather than in ingredients alone.

Previous studies have examined traditional food as a cultural and linguistic phenomenon, including its relationship to ritual, ecology, identity, and culinary vocabulary. Existing work on *peunajôh* has particularly emphasized its ecological and cultural value, while NSM-based studies of traditional food have shown the usefulness of semantic components such as purpose, material, preparation, and social function. The present findings extend this literature by showing that the functional categorization of *peunajôh* overlaps and that culinary diversity arises through both contextual reuse and systematic variation in ingredients and culinary components.

From a linguistic perspective, previous studies show that food names can encode ingredients, preparation techniques, taste, and cultural background, while studies of culinary word formation show how linguistic structure interacts with cultural practices. Further, *peunajôh*, which consists of a food lexicon term, reflects the relationship between humans, culture, and the environment (Widayati, 2019; Zurriyati & Perangin-angin, 2022).

The present data add a semantic-structural dimension: lexical diversity links to recurring culinary schemas in which a stable base combines with variable ingredients or modifiers. The *leupek* and *bada* patterns show that naming can make these distinctions linguistically visible, allowing the lexicon to preserve knowledge about culinary variation.

The NSM-based work on Batak Toba cuisine further supports analyzing traditional food through semantic components related to purpose, material, preparation, and social function (Cristy et al., 2024). The *peunajôh*'s Nagan Raya data are consistent with this approach but also reveal a dynamic property that deserves greater emphasis: functional category is not always stable for a lexical item. Rather than weakening the semantic-template model, this finding shows that the template can capture both stable culinary structure and context-sensitive cultural function.

Further research on culinary terminology shows that compounding, reduplication, and affixation contribute to naming traditional foods

(Simanjuntak et al., 2024; Fitrissia, 2019). The present analysis suggests that culinary naming also reflects a kind of productive culinary patterning. In the *leupek* variants, the shared base is retained while the ingredient or filling component changes; in the *bada* variants, different plant ingredients are incorporated into a similar fried-food construction. The lexicon therefore records not only existing foods but also culturally recognized possibilities for making variation within a traditional culinary system.

Overall, the findings suggest that *Peunajôh* illustrates a dynamic interplay between language, culture, and environment. The research confirms four primary functional domains, though these domains often overlap. Crucially, the data highlight culturally guided culinary creativity: human food preparation involves choosing, substituting, and recombining locally available ingredients using traditional techniques and familiar culinary styles. This creativity should not be seen as unlimited invention but as innovation within tradition. This view aligns with scholarship indicating that traditional foods can diversify and evolve while preserving their connection to identity, ingredients, processes, and cultural continuity (Fibri et al., 2022; Samson et al., 2025).

This interpretation suggests that semantic templates in culinary-linguistic studies can do more than assign lexical items to a single category. They can also help identify which components remain stable and which change as one culinary form produces multiple lexical variants or shifts in social function. Future research should investigate semantic explanations for specific *peunajôh* items, productive naming schemas, and the historical or ethnographic factors that make culinary variants conventional. Such investigations would expand the current classification system and provide insights into the transmission, adaptation, and preservation of culinary knowledge.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined *peunajôh* in Nagan Raya using Fitrissia's (2019) semantic template for Acehese cuisine. It identified 52 lexical types, categorized into four main areas: religious and festive foods (*peunajôh uroe raya*), ceremonial foods (*peunajôh khanduri adat*), foods for life events (*peunajôh khanduri*), and daily foods (*peunajôh ie sirap*). These areas overlap, with many

items spanning multiple categories. The semantic template, covering function, ingredients, method, and appearance, reveals systematic variation through ingredient substitution, filling, and naming patterns. Overall, traditional culinary diversity persists through transmission and culturally driven ingredient variation and recombination. Therefore, *peunajôh* is not a fixed culinary category but a dynamic and linguistic system shaped by the interaction of tradition, environmental and natural resources, and the community's cultural practices. The four domains of *peunajôh* provide a useful classification framework; their overlap reveals the flexibility of culinary functions and the community's capacity to adapt traditional food forms to changing needs and available ingredients.

Moreover, applying semantic templates not only clarifies the organization of *peunajôh* variants but also shows how culinary knowledge is maintained through innovation, reinforcing the value of culinary linguistics as an approach to understanding cultural identity and the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge. *Peunajôh* is more than food, it represents a culturally structured knowledge system in which ingredients, preparation methods, appearance, naming, and social roles are interconnected. Future research should analyze specific *peunajôh* lexicons using comprehensive NSM semantic explanations and explore how certain culinary variations become standardized and passed down through generations.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with standard ethical research principles. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement in semi-structured interviews and field observations, and they were informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw

at any time. Participation was voluntary, and the authors ensured participants' confidentiality and anonymity by removing all personal identifiers. Data were collected through interviews and observations of food preparation and social or ritual events related to Peunajôh, and were used solely for academic purposes in accordance with institutional guidelines.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Dohra Fitrisia: Conceptualization, data curation, fieldwork, methodology, data collection, formal analysis, investigation, writing, and finalization of the manuscript.

Mailan Adhima: Conceptualized the study, collected data, and wrote the original draft.

Zulfadli A. Aziz: Supervision, conceptual support, and writing in the process of review and editing, with particular assistance in drafting the manuscript.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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