

SIMBOLIC MEANING OF MANGGARAIN FUNERAL CEREMONY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the symbolic meaning of the Manggarain funeral ceremony. To obtain the data, interview, direct observation, and documentation study were conducted. Then, following semiotic and pragmatic theories, the data were analyzed through some stages namely data reduction, data display and verification. The results of analysis revealed that the Manggarain funeral ceremony has social and religious meanings or so-called socio-theo relation establishment. Further studies are suggested to deeply reveal the metaphoric language used in the funeral ceremony in question.

INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are two terms that are related each other. Language is used in the context of the culture. People can learn language successfully if they dealt with the user of the language in question. (Brown, 2001; Byram, 1993; Couper & Watkins, 2016; Darong, Jem, & Niman, 2021; Tin, 2014). In the meantime, one importantly characteristic of language is culturally transferred. Such characteristic makes it feasible for it to be learned. In this regard, the importance of cultural as a context in the use of language is undeniable.

Moving further, language is a symbol, it is an object, word, or action representing something and culturally defined following the idea, conception of the people where it belongs to. One can

understand the symbols by concerning with the culture of people who use them, otherwise it might be meaningless. Such relationship is incorporated in three aspects namely (a) culture building. In this regard, symbol is the conveyor of culture, while culture is the use of symbol that covers both spiritual and material aspects. (b) culture extension. In this respect, symbol is regarded as means in interaction (c) culture reformulation. Following the community's development, culture, indeed is reshaped following new life, norm and conception. Language change follows the change of people who use it and subsequently reformulate the culture, (Dongxiang, 2018).

There have been some studies about symbols. For example; Saharudin (2019) who found the transformation in

the symbols and mythos in Sasak culture following the Islamic Worldview. As such, Sasak culture reinterpretes the relation of human, nature and God resulting from the change of Sasak community. Meanwhile, Sujito, Sriningsih and Maris (2016) examined symbols from gua ceremony of olaia society. They found that Gua ceremony used some symbols and every symbol has its own meaning. These two studies highlight a very important thing that is language which is reflected in the use of symbols are closely related to the people's culture.

Manggarain people as other ethnic group has its own language which is spoken by every speaker of Manggaraian. It has its own rules, forms as well as linguistic elements in the subfields of linguistic such as semantic, syntax, morphology, and phonology and so fourth (Kadarisman, 2015). Semantically, the manggarain language is interesting to be looked upon. Every word, both written and spoken, and any things implicated through symbols, is meaningful. This leads to the truth that learning a language is concerned with the agrreed meaning units, the smaller meaningful units into larger parts through its socio- construction (Duranti, 1997; Eggins, 1994). In addition, a meaning of certain language can also be best understood through symbols. In this context, language basically is a system of symbol including the Manggarain language. It is a fact, Manggarain people employ many various kind of symbols in order to carry the meaning out.

In the field, some studies were carried out to examine the symbols used by Manggarain people. For example; a study conducted by Surya (2009) who examined the symbols used in Caci dance. She found that the symbols used in Caci dance has meanings namely power, peace and solidarity. Besides, Marfiatun (2019) studies about symbols of Mbaru gendang. She confirmed that Mbaru Gendang has symbolic meaning. The symbolic meaning of the Mbaru gendang consists of individual meanings, social meanings and religious meanings.

Another study was also done by Raru (2018) who explores the phonology verbal symbol in "ritual speech Hambor Haju at Todo-Manggarai society. The results indicated some importants points. They are: (1) esthetic form of ritual speech Hambor Haju consists of parallelism and metaphor; (2) phonology verbal symbol of ritual speech Hambor Haju that include assonance, alliteration, rhyme, and free sound form; (3) functions and meanings of ritual speech Hambor Haju that consist of (a) function and meaning about relation with God and the spirit; (b) function and meaning about unity and harmony; (c) function and meaning about loyalty to ancestors; (d) function and meaning about fear, suspicion and anxiety (e) function and meaning about request to escape from obstacles; (f) function and meaning about request to escape from disease; function and meaning about request to escape from sick; and (g) function and meaning about hope to live in peace and prosperity. The most recent

study was conducted by Menggo, Ndiung & Pandor, (2021) who highlighted the use of symbols in welcoming guest in Manggarai. The symbols used reflect the ways life of the indigenous people of Manggarai to live socially both to others and nature as well.

Despite the fruitful findings of the previous studies mentioned, an examination of symbolic meaning used in Manggarain death ceremony is not yet done. Therefore, the writer would like to investigate the symbolic meaning focusing on action-symbols employed in the ritual of Manggarain funeral ceremony. Aside from fulfilling the requirement of my study, this research is of benefit to keep understanding of Manggarai local ceremony both linguistically and culturally as well.

METHODOLOGY

The process of gathering data of this descriptive qualitative design was carried out naturally from the point of view (emic and ethic) of the Manggarai community. In this context, emic is concerned with the perspectives of Manggarain in explaining culture phenomena. Meanwhile, ethics sees a phenomenon of the indigenous people of Manggarai from the outsiders (researchers) perspectives.

According to the theme, the data of this research were symbols used in funeral ceremony. The data were obtained by using interview/interview techniques and direct observation.

Results and Discussion

Observations were carried out by participating in the process of funeral ceremony. Meanwhile, the interview was done with the key informants namely 3 spokespersons (*tukang tudak*) and 3 old men who have better knowledge on Manggarian culture. In addition, to confirm the data obtained from the informants in question, two experts on Manggaraian culture were interviewed

Beside observations and interviews, a documentation study was carried out by researchers in finding or collecting data/information related to the focus of the study. Documentation in this study was beneficial for supporting and completing the data from interviews and observations. As such, the documentation in question was in the form of a video document (youtube) which helped the researchers to collect data regarding the symbols used.

Based on the theory of semiotics and pragmatics about wording (Mey,1993), the researchers processed and analyzed data by presenting, reducing, making temporary conclusions or verification activities (Miles & Huberman, 1994). All data were presented, reduced according to the needs of the research focus. Furthermore, the data were analyzed, concluded, and gave meaning to obtain a provisional conclusion. For the sake of validity, the researchers double-checked each the findings to strengthen the proposition built.

Stages	Action symbol (s)	Meaning
	Wero, pande bo	Social and religious meaning

	haeng nai	Religious meaning
	poe woja/latung	Religious meaning
Pre	Ancem peti	Religious meaning
	tokong Bakok	Religious and social meaning
	Teru wae cor	Religious meaning
	Waca lime	Religious Meaning
Whilst	Tura waks	Religious meaning
	Tente panggol	Religious Meaning
Post	Reis gu depa lime	Religious Meaning
	Ceki telu/lima or Saung Ta'a/	Religious Meaning
	Wentar buing lulung loce	Religious meaning
	Kelas	Religious Meaning

Pre-Funeral Ceremony

Manggaraian are custom to using *meriam* when anyone is dead. It always made a from big hard bamboo. The use of Meriam is to inform all people around that there is a death. The sound of *bo* cannon should be heard by ll the villagers. As they heard it, they are suggested to take part in the mourning. Activities must be stopped and go home to participate in condolence. Using *cannon (bo)* is something common conducted by Manggarai community when someone pass way. It is already become rooted culture andstill exists up to now. They consider it as a symbol of tolerance to the other people.

Wero means to inform. In this case, it has the same function with the cannon (*bo*). The difference is only on the means. The cannon (*bo*) uses bamboo as a tool. Meanwhile, *Wero* do needs a human as means. Someone is appointed to inform all families of the dead person. However, as the advance of information and technology, instead of going to inform physically some media can be used to inform such as short message

service, whatsapp or video call. So, *wero* has a social meaning.

More interestingly, for some part of Manggarai community, there is a belief that the soul of the dead person will go everywhere to visit all his.her families, friends, as well as relatives. Then, the informant or messenger is actually the soul of the dead person. The soul is being reincarnated to be visible man. His visit is done intentionally for the shake of permission as well as saying good bye. In this regard, *wero* has religious meaning in accordance with the concept of Manggarain belief toward the soul of the dead person.

Haeng Nai is the third ritual in pre-funeral ceremony. *Haeng* means “get “ *nai*” means “ breath, heart, life, inner feeling”. Lexically, *haeng nai* means the breath, heart or life of the dead person that can be got by all relatives. As such, people are suggested to be with him/her before his.her life is going to be end. Thus, *haeng nai* is concerned with religious values of the Manggarai community regarding the existence of soul. It is about the belief of

the end of human's life. The the soul will come out from the body and go to place where he/she belongs to. Therefore, the family and relatives should conduct *Haeng nai* to be with him/her before leaving this world permanently.

Lexically, *poe woja/latung* means to keep all the rice or corns that belong to the dead person. Standing on the belief conception, it is a symbol of request. The family and relatives do ask that all things belong to the dead person must be given to his family particularly rice, corn and lands. In addition, the dead person would be their caretaker and the messenger of the God for their land and corps. In this context, It is implicitly regarded as a pray for God and ancestors to their land and corps.

Ancem means to close; *peti* means coffin. Lexically, *ancem peti* means to close the coffin of the dead person. It has a close link with the traditional ceremony of Manggarai when they live firstly in a new house. There must be a “*ra'um bubung mbaru*” (an opening residence) ceremony. When one dies, it is a must for conducting *ancem peti* which is considered as an opening residence or new house; new place simblolized by coffin.. In this context, *ancem peti* is a ritual indicating the starting point of new residence of the dead *person*. The Manggarai community believe that when the coffin is closed, he starts living in a new universe.

Lexically, *tokong bakok* means to take care or protect the corpse which covered by a shet of white fabric. It is from the word *tokong* means “To take care or to protect” and *bakok* means a

shet of white fabric. It is conducted in three nights. In addition, based on the results of interview, this activity or stage deals with the concept of soul. The dead person must be strengthened by the prayer of his/her family and relatives for the sake of his/he trip to the next nife. So, *tokong bakok* can be defined as symbol of safety of the soul. It has a close link with belief of people (religious meaning). However, more importantly, it is regarded as tolerance to the family and relatives of the dead person.

As the coffin is taking out from house, there is a man who pour some water on the place where the corpse was lied to the front door. This symbol (*Teru wae cor*) has a close relationship with the dream of a woman as she is getting pregnant. Manggarai can predict the sex of the baby whether a male or a female based or their dream. If a mother takes some water from a tap, the baby would be male, on the other hand, if the mother takes some water from the small hole the baby will be female. Yet, more importantly, this stage is symbol of cleanness. Manggarai community believe that the dead person has many fault and sins. Consequently he/she should not leave the bad things for the family and relatives. Thus, it has a religious meaning.

Whilst Stage

Tura means to speak or to utter. *Wakas* is wild sugarcane. *Tura wakas*, lexically means to speak with a sugar cane. It is a kind of symbol that used firstly in funeral before the coffin is going to be buried. It is strictly defined as a

plant which is able to avoid the disturbance made by snake or scorpion or unseen-cosmological living things in the hole where the dead body would be laying down. Manggarai community believe that he/she would sleep soundly even in the darkness of the grave because of the power of the *wakas* (wild sugarcane) defeating poisoned living or unliving things in the hole which are actually truly believe as the the evils. Thus, it has a religious meaning.

Tente means to plan, and *Panggol* means “cross”. *Tente panggol* means to plant/put the cross above the grave (exactly above the heads side). *Panggol* can be made of steel, wood or bamboo and usually written the name, date of birth and date of dead person successively. The use of *pangeol* is something common in Manggarai. Most of the grave always have have *panggol* (cross) as the influence of Catholic church. Manggarai do believe the crucifixion of their saviour Lord Jesus would save the dead person. They have to identify him/her as the follower of Jesus who would save his life.

Post- Stage

Lexically *waca lime* means to wash, *lime* mean hands. *Waca lime* always done after the coffin completely buried. All who have just joined the funeral should wash their hands with some water placing in the front door of the dead person. Conditionally, they also can wash their hands in the reachable river. As such, Manggaraian believe that the soul of the dead person always follows whenever and wherever

they are. That is why they have to use some water in order to avoid the coming of the soul. It is a hope to the soul should live safely in his/her world. They do The river is the border between his world and his/her family or relatives’ world who still alive. Then, *waca lime* is a symbol of their belief toward the concept of soul (religious meaning).

Reis and *depa lime* means to greet and spread the arms side ways. It is conducted after people who have just joined the funeral arriving at home. As they came, the people who are sitting in the front room of the dead person should greet them. They respond the greeting and spread their arms side ways. This activity confirms that the dead person is totally there (his world) and does not follow them anymore. This activity is still related with the conception of soul following the belief of Manggarain.

Saung ta'a means green leaf. It is also called *ceki telu* or *ceki lima*. As such, the name indicates the time. Some clan conduct this activity after three days of the death, yet some do it after five days. Regarding this activity, some participants that the researchers interviewed confirm that it has something to do with the death and resurrection of Jesus. Yet, it is not absolutely true as the fact, certain clans do it after the five days. At this point, they are same in terms of the purpose that so-called a leading prayer to the safety of soul. Thus, it has religious meaning.

Lexically, *paka* means hope *di'a* means good. So *paka dia* is a hope for the goodness. *Paka di'a* is the crucial

moment of post funeral ceremony because all people of each clan, family, relatives, villagers are invited. To exaggerate, this activity is regarded as a party for the dead person. However, the party is concerned with the happiness of his/her family or relatives believing that the dead person is totally there. He/she already live in his/her place inagurately and safely. The world is totally different and the mourning is definitely over. New life both the deap person and the left-family is coming and should be passed through. Then, this dealt with Manggarain belief of human soul.

To date, the finding of this study corroborates the previous findings Hendro (2020), Marfiatun (2019), Raru (2018), Saharudin (2019), and Surya (2009) confirming that the use of Manggarain symbols has functions and meanings. These two in question relate to the conception of Manggarain people about others, life and hereafter. Saying it differently, the employment of symbols in funeral ceremony is the reflection of horizontal and vertical relation. Horizontally, symbols used to manage the life with other people. Meanwhile, vertically, the symbols deeply manage the relation between human and God (socio-theo interpersonal relation). Meanwhile, in line with the theory of pragmatics on wording, the indigenous people of Manggarai have interacted naturally by means of symbols used in context.

CONCLUSION

With respect to the findings, the writers may conclude that Manggarain

funeral ceremony has three stages namely pre, whilst and post. Each stage has their rituals having symbolical meanings. As such, in addition to the social meaning, the rituals in question mostly dealt with religious meaning. In this regard, the religious meaning is closely related to the concept of soul which has benn existing in Manggarain community for far too long before in their life. The meanings in question are the result of wording process of Manggarain People in conducting life.

Since this study dealt only with symbolic meaning, further studies might cope with other aspects of Manggarain funeral ceremony such as the metaphorical language used. It is highly recommended as the Manggarain funeral ceremony use many meaningful metaphorical languages.

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