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# Cultural Semiotic Anlaysis of Mecah Tigan/ Wiji Dadi in Panggihing Temanten Javanese Wedding Ceremony

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to reveal the meaning of the signs used at the Mecah Tigan ceremony in Javanese weddings. This research uses video documentation of the wedding of a couple in Central Java with the initials NB and DA. The aims of this research are: (1) to describe the Mecah Tigan process, and (2) to analyze the reflection of Javanese culture in the Mecah Tigan procession. By using descriptive qualitative research and use a semiotic approach, the type is cultural semiotics. And uses Roland Barthes' semiotic theory with the concepts of denotation, connotation and myth. Research data was collected using documentation, interviews and content analysis from informants. The results of the research show that: (1) There are five steps in the Mecah Tigan ceremony, namely preparing equipment, respect by the bride to the groom (Sembah Kalbu), stepping on the egg (Mecah Tigan), washing the groom's feet (Wijiki), and last helps to stand (Lantingan); and (2) each equipment and process in the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony has its own meaning according to its purpose. The equipment used is a gold tray (Bokor Kencana), clear water, three kinds of flowers, and chicken eggs. This equipment has the meaning of bringing good fortune and as a symbol of new life. Each process is reflected as the start of a new life after marriage, and a form of devotion from the wife to her husband. Apart from that, it has a deep meaning that reflects the harmony between the big universe and the small individual. These concepts of meaning are referred to as macrocosm and microcosm meaning. In this procession it is not only a bond between the bride and groom, but also a harmonization between the bride and groom with the universe and spiritual forces.



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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

To build good communication, an understanding between the speaker and the listener is required. This understanding is to encourage indication of a meaning that must be understood. Listeners must understand the meaning or intent spoken by the speaker so that there is no misunderstanding of a word. Language itself has a very complex structure that involves pragmatic and semiotic elements.

Pragmatics and semiotics are two interrelated fields in the study of language and communication. Morris (1938) states that pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that deals with semiotics, which studies the system of signs or symbols. Etymologically, semiotic comes from the Greek word "simeon" which means "sign". And terminologically, semiotic can be described as the study of a series of objects, events from all cultures as signs.

The meaning of the sign can be conveyed by studying the parts of semiotics that support the meaning to be conveyed properly and correctly. Semiotics is concerned with how signs and symbols and their interpretation. Both fields explore the complex relationship of how context, culture, and social factors influence the interpretation of signs and symbols in social communication. Signs and symbols that contain meaning are generated from the variety of languages that emerge in each country. The languages used are very diverse, even within one country have different regional languages. One of them is in Indonesia, there are many languages from each region in this country. The existence of these language differences is also one of the characteristics of each region and creates a

cultural identity in Indonesia. Cultural identity in Indonesia presents signs or symbols that contain hidden values and meanings that are rarely or even unknown to many people.

Traditional ceremonies or rituals from each region are one of the cultures that are in the spotlight of many people. Circulating on social media that the author often encounters, there are many traditional ceremonies and rituals that are seen by a number of social media users, producing various positive responses. Many social media users are curious about the meaning of these traditional ceremonies and rituals. One of the most prominent examples of traditional ceremonies and cultural rituals is wedding ceremonies and rituals from several regions that are interesting to study. For example, the Javanese wedding culture, especially in Central Java has rules and rituals that are still practiced today. On the wedding day in Java, a Javanese traditional ceremony is held. This ceremony is usually held at the bride's house which is carried out all day long and with great celebration. One of the traditional processions in the Javanese wedding ceremony is the meeting of the bride and groom or *Panggihing Temanten*.

In the ritual of meeting the bride and groom or in Javanese called "*Panggihing Temanten*" is the core event in Javanese wedding culture. It is because at this stage the bride and groom are brought together or formalized in front of the guests who witness the union of two human beings.

The temu manten or Panggihing Temanten ceremony has several more processions in it. They are Balangan Gantal (throwing betel nut), Mecah Tigan / Wiji Dadi (stepping on an egg), Sinduran (carrying the bride and groom), Jumenengan (weighing), Kacar-Kucur (launching the "treasure symbol"), Dhahar Klimah (feeding each other), Ngunjukan (drinking), Mapag Besan (picking up besan), sungkeman (asking for blessing). Panggihing Temanten procession also uses equipment that has signs and deep meanings for the bride and groom. In this study, the researcher focuses on the meaning conveyed and how the action is described so that the meaning can be conveyed. Especially in the Mecah Tigan / Wiji Dadi procession, this procession is carried out by the bride and groom. This procession is often misinterpreted by several parties who see it. Some people who saw this traditional procession assumed that women were lowered because they had to wash men's feet. This assumption was not proven to be true, because the traditional procession of stepping on eggs has other meanings contained in it. This research was conducted to answer many people's assumptions regarding the Mecah tigan / wiji dadi procession.

The researcher used a semiotic approach to conducts the signs that exist in Javanese culture. Up to now, there are at least nine kinds of semiotic these include analytic, descriptive, narrative, natural, cultural, faunal, zoosemiotic, normative, social, and structural semiotic. Based on these kinds of semiotics and looking at the phenomenon of Javanese wedding ceremonies with many signs contained in Javanese culture. This research is included in cultural semiotic research which specifically examines the sign system in community culture (Rokhmansyah, 2014). Using the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes regarding the meaning of signs in a community culture.

This research uses the concepts of Roland Barthes' theory of denotation, connotation and myth. According to Roland Bathes (in Yan and Ming, 2014), semiotics has several core concepts, namely signification, denotation and connotation, as well as metalanguage or myth. Based on previous studies, researchers found that some of these studies did not reveal the meaning of the equipment used. So researchers conducted this research to find out the semiotic meaning of equipment and signs using the concepts of denotation, connotation and myth. This research also reveals the macrocosm and microcosm in Javanese culture which is reflected in Javanese wedding ceremonies, especially in the *Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi* procession.

#### 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to analyze the Javanese *Panggihing Temanten* Wedding Ceremony using a semiotic approach. This research uses qualitative research methods with descriptive research design. Data was obtained using observation, documentation, recording, and interview techniques to sources or *Pranata Adicara*. According to Sugiyono (2020) suggests that qualitative research methods are methods used to examine the conditions of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument, with data collection techniques in triangulation (observation, interview, documentation).

The data source in this research is the *Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi* procession in the *Panggihing Temanten* Wedding Ceremony. This research uses video documentation of the wedding of a couple in Central Java with the initials (NB and DA). The data taken is in the form of screenshots from the video of each *Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi* ceremony procession and the results of interviews with *Pranata Adicara* or the resource person who organized the procession and informants who are experts in Javanese culture with the initials (S). Data in the form of signs or symbols and process in the *Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi* semiotic meaning.

In data analysis, researchers carried out several steps as follows:

- 1. First, researchers made documentation by selecting wedding documentation videos that were appropriate to Central Javanese culture.
- 2. Second, the researcher took screenshots from videos of Javanese wedding ceremonies, especially the *Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi* ceremony.
- 3. Third, researchers classified the data based on the stages of Javanese wedding ceremonies.
- 4. Fourth, researchers conducted interviews with informant selected purposively to find the results of the research.

Cultural Semiotic Anlaysis of Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi in Panggihing Temanten Javanese Wedding Ceremony (Embun Titis)

- Fifth, the researcher regroups the meanings resulting from the research in the context of Roland Barthes, namely connotation, denotation and myth.
- And last, the researcher draws conclusions based on the data obtained from the analysis results.

#### 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### A. RESULT

In this section, it is explained the results of research conducted at Javanese Wedding Ceremonies in the Panggihing Temanten Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi session. The data display is presented in the form of flow charts and tables. Flow charts are used to show the process in a wedding ceremony and tables are used to show the meaning of the data obtained in the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony.

## 3.1 The Process of Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi in the Panggihing Temanten Javanese Wedding Ceremony The following chart presents a display of the process in the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi Ceremony at a Javanese Wedding

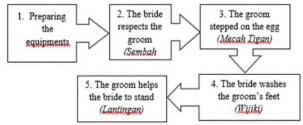


Figure 2. 1 Flow Charts from the process of Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony.

Based on the chart above, in the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony process at the Panggihing Temanten session there are 5 stages carried out by the bride and groom. Below, the researcher shows the steps in the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony in detail.

The steps in the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony:

- 1. The first step is to prepare the equipment used for the ceremony, this preparation is carried out by the bridal make-up artist. The equipment used in this ceremony is a *Bokor Kencana* or gold tray, a gold ladle, clear water, three types of flowers (roses, jasmine flowers and kanthil flowers), and last is free-range chicken egg. In Bokor Kencana there are 2 types, namely, gold urns and gold trays. In a gold urn filled with flower water and in a gold tray filled with flowers and free-range chicken egg.
- 2. The second step is the bride's respect for the groom or Sembah Kalbu. In this context it is not just the bride giving respect to the groom. But the bride also permits or welcomes the groom to step on the egg as a symbol of breaking the bride's virginity.
- 3. The third step is stepping on the egg by the groom. After being given permission by the bride in the form of the Sembah Kalbu, the groom then steps on the egg on the gold tray until it breaks. This step is the core of the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony. In Javanese, Mecah Tigan means breaking egg.
- 4. The fourth step is washing the groom's feet by the bride. After breaking the egg by stepping on it by the groom. Then the bride washes the groom's feet, using water mixed with three kinds of flowers in a golden urn.
- The last step is to go to the aisle. Then the groom helps the bride to stand. This step is the closing of the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony session. Then proceed to the aisle for the next ceremony session

The following is an explanation of the findings and discussion of the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony process at a Javanese wedding. This explanation is based on the theory used by researchers, Roland Barthes' theory regarding semiotics. In Roland Barthes' theory there are the concepts of connotation, denotation and myth. And the results of the research on the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi process, obtained the concept of the Roland Barthes myth. Every stage of the Mecah Tigan/ Wiji Dadi ceremony carried out by Javanese brides has meaning and is not just decoration. By carrying out this ceremony from start to finish, Javanese people believe that the bride and groom will easily bring good fortune and bring blessings to the family. This is reflected in every equipment used at the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony. Another research source that discusses Javanese wedding ceremonies, especially the Panggih ceremony or meeting of the bride and groom. Several studies show the same results as this research. Research by Agustin, H. P., et al. (2022) regarding the *Temu Manten* in Malang and uses the same theory, Roland Barthes' theory. The results of this research show that the meaning of the *Temu Manten* ceremony reflects that the bride and groom must build a good household and always support and provide benefits to other people. As well as the role of the family which always supports and guides them to live a harmonious life. Meanwhile, research conducted by researchers produces the same meaning that every step of the Mecah Tigan/ Wiji Dadi ceremony has prayers from Javanese ancestors. So that in the future the bride and groom can build a harmonious household, help each other, respect each other and obey every rule of Javanese culture.

E-ISSN: 2986-2078

## 3.2 The Reflected Javanese Culture in *Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi* Ceremony A. RESULT

In this section, it is explained the meaning of the equipment used and the meaning of each step of the ceremony. Which reflects Javanese Culture at the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony. The data is presented in the form of the table below.

Table 3.1 Steps of Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi Ceremony.

No.	Steps	Data
1.	Preparing the equipment Bokor Kencana/ Golden Tray.	1.A.1
	Preparing Clear water.	1.A.2
	Preparing <i>Sekar Tri Warna</i> / flowers consisting of 3 kinds, roses, jasmine flowers and kantil flowers.	1.A.3
	Preparing Chicken Egg.	1.A.4
2.	The bride doing Sembah Kalbu/ respect to the groom.	2.B.1
3.	Mecah Tigan/ the groom stepping on a chicken egg	3.C.1
	Broken egg.	3.C.2
4.	Wijiki/ the bride washing the groom's feet.	4.D.1
5.	Lantingan/ the bride is helped to stand.	5.E.1

## **Data 1.A.1**



Figure 3. 1 Bokor Kencana/ Golden Tray

## **Data 1.A.2**



Figure 3. 2 Clear Water

## **Data 1.A.3**



Figure 3. 3 Sekar Tri Warna/ Flowers consisting of three kinds

## **Data 1.A.4**



Figure 3. 4 Free-range Chicken Egg

## **Data 2.B.1**



Figure 3. 5 Sembah Kalbu/ Respect the groom

## **Data 3.C.1**



Figure 3. 6 Mecah Tigan/ Stepping on the egg

## **Data 3.C.2**



Figure 3. 7 An egg that breaks after being stepped on

## **Data 4.D.1**



Figure 3. 8 Wijiki/ Washing the groom's feet

## **Data 5.E.1**



Figure 3. 9 Lantingan/ Help to stand up

From the results of the data above, the researcher found the meaning of connotation, denotation and myth which is in accordance with Roland Barthes' theory that the researcher used. This meaning is shown in the explanation below.

## a) Bokor Kencana/ Golden Tray

**Meanings:** 

**Denotative** 

Preparing equipment for the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony. Bokor Kencana (Golden Cauldron) and a gold tray.

Bokor means the symbol of the world/universe. And Kencana is gold, one of the most valuable and noble elements.

E-ISSN: 2986-2078

#### Myth

*Bokor Kencana* or tray. In the Javanese view, *Bokor* symbolizes the world/universe and *Kencana* means gold which is a precious and high-value element. By using *Bokor Kencana*, Javanese people reflect on the lives of the bride and groom, hoping to receive fortune equivalent to gold.

In this case, the meaning of the macrocosm is reflected in *Bokor* which is a reflection of the world or universe and *Kencana* which is reflected in gold which is a high-value treasure. While the meaning of the microcosm is the Javanese people themselves, who use *Bokor Kencana* as equipment for weddings with the hope and prayer that the bride and groom will have treasures in the world or universe that are of high value such as gold.

#### b) Clear Water and Three Kinds of Flowers

#### **Meanings:**

#### **Denotative**

Clear water and Sekar Tri Warna/ flowers consisting of three kinds, roses, jasmine flowers and kanthil flowers.

#### **Connotative**

These flowers have the meaning that the bride and groom in the future when sailing the household ship, are expected to be "sesekaran" or "ngarumke asmane kluwarga" or "bringing glory to the family".

#### Myth

Clear water and flowers (rose, jasmine, *kanthil*). Javanese people believe that by using water mixed with these three types of flowers, it is hoped that the prospective bride and groom will become "*sesekaran*" or be able to raise a family that is considered good in society.

In this case, the meaning of the macrocosm is reflected in clear water and three types of flowers which are related to parts of the universe which are considered to have spiritual power for the future lives of the bride and groom. While the meaning of microcosm is that Javanese people use this equipment as a symbol of prayer for the bride and groom.

## c) Free-range Chicken Egg

#### **Meanings:**

## Denotative

Chicken Egg on the top of golden tray and flowers consisting of 3 kinds, roses, jasmine flowers and kanthil flowers.

#### **Connotative**

The free-range chicken egg is a symbol of life. After being stepped on by the groom, the egg breaks and there are two colors, white and yellow. If they come together they will grow into a fetus that is a candidate for new life (child).

## Myth

Free-range chicken eggs are interpreted as a symbol of life. According to the Javanese, this chicken egg reflects new life because inside it there are two colors that have not yet merged. The egg yolk is reflected as a female egg cell and the egg white is reflected as a male cell

In this process the meaning of the macrocosm is the use of chicken eggs which is reflected as a new life. While the meaning of the microcosm is that the bride and groom are reflected as the beginning of a new life where the bride and groom, male and female, have the same energy as the elements in an egg.

#### d) Sembah Kalbu/ Respect the Groom

## **Meanings:**

#### **Denotative**

The bride doing Sembah Kalbu/ respect to the groom.

## Connotative

Sembah Kalbu/ respect to the groom means that the bride respects and obeys her husband's order.

#### Myth

*Sembah Kalbu* or respect for the groom. Javanese people think that wives must respect their husbands and obey their husband's orders. In this ceremony the bride not only respects herself but also gives permission and invites her husband to break the egg which is a symbol of new life.

The macrocosmic meaning in this process is the respect paid by the bride (wife) to the groom (husband). This has been regulated and is the nature of a wife who is obedient and obeys her husband's orders or rights. While the meaning of microcosm is the bride and groom taking part in the procession of *Sembah Kalbu* or paying respect to the groom.

#### e) Mecah Tigan/ Stepping on the Egg

#### Meanings:

#### **Denotative**

Mecah Tigan/ the groom stepping on a chicken egg until it breaks.

#### Connotative

Mecah Tigan means breaking virginity and in Javanese it is called "pecahing ponang atiga hanyarengi gumelar jagat bebrayan anyar" or "by breaking an egg you will open a new page leading to a new world, namely building a

Cultural Semiotic Anlaysis of Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi in Panggihing Temanten Javanese Wedding Ceremony (Embun Titis)

new household". The breaking of the egg is also to remove the impression that the groom and the bride are no longer virgins, because they have started a new household and have become husband and wife.

#### Myth

Mecah Tegan/breaking eggs by stepping on them by the groom. According to the Javanese view, breaking an egg means violating the wife's virginity. The egg itself is reflected as two cells, a male and a female. When an egg is broken, the egg yolk and egg white will unite and symbolize the union of husband and wife. Which will later produce a new living fetus (child)

In this process the meaning of the macrocosm is the process of stepping on an egg where Javanese people reflect this procession as a symbol of the start of a new life for the bride and groom. This new life is related to the spiritual value of stepping on or breaking an egg which has the meaning of the breaking of virginity and the union of husband and wife which contains prayers and hopes that a new offspring or fetus will become a husband and wife.

## Wijiki/ Washing the Groom's Feet

## **Meanings:**

#### **Denotative**

Wijiki/ the bride washing the groom's feet by using flower water.

#### Connotative

This means proof that the bride is always loyal and obedient to her husband's orders. In Javanese it is called "Tansah setyo tuhu lumadi mring Kakungipun" or "Faithfully serving the husband".

According to Javanese belief, washing the groom's feet with 3 types of flower water can get rid of all the negative energy in the body of the groom. While on the way to Sasana Panggih/ bridal meeting location, there is bad energy attached to the groom's body, it is hoped that this can be removed by washing and cleansing the aura. By using 3 types of flower water, namely roses, jasmine flowers and magpie flowers. The second meaning is that the bride or wife is always "mituhu" or always willing to serve her husband.

#### Myth

Wijiki/ the bride washing the groom's feet. Washing the groom's feet after stepping on the egg using flower water in a golden urn. In the Javanese view, washing the bride's feet does not mean lowering the status of the woman or wife. However, it is reflected as a sign of loyalty to the bride or wife who is obedient to the groom or husband. Because when a woman is married, she is obliged to obey and faithfully serve her husband and a wife's heaven is with her husband.

In the Wijiki procession or washing the feet it is believed to get rid of the negative energy in the groom's body. Because when you are on the way to "Sasana Panggih" or the location where the bride and groom meet, there is a big possibility that there will be bad energy attached. So it must be washed and cleansed using clear water mixed with three kinds of flowers, which are reflected in being a fragrance or bringing a family that is seen as good by the community. Wijiki by the bride is reflected as cleansing the groom's aura from bad things outside the house.

In this process the meaning of the macrocosm is Wijiki/ washing the groom's feet. Where in the process of washing the feet there is a spiritual relationship which is reflected in the use of flower water which contains prayers and hopes that it can wash away or eliminate all the bad things in the groom that he got on the way home. It is also hoped that the flowers used will be an influence in the household life of the bride and groom. While the meaning of microcosm is the bride and groom reflecting the structure of the Wijiki procession/washing the feet

#### Lantingan/ The Bride is Helped to Stand by the Groom

**Meanings:** 

**Denotative** 

Lantingan/ the bride is helped to stand by the groom.

Connotative

This means helping each other and loving each other as a couple

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews with informants who act as Pranata Adicara or Master of Ceremony at Javanese weddings. There are five steps in the Mecah Tigan/Wiji Dadi ceremony. The first is preparing the equipment, the second is Sembah Kalbu or the bride's respect for the groom, the third is Mecah Tigan or breaking eggs by the groom by stepping on them, the fourth is Wijiki or washing the groom's feet by the bride, and the fifth is Jumeneng or the groom helping the bride women to stand up to the aisle.

The meaning of each equipment and process was also obtained from interviews with the same informant. Equipment in the form of a Bokor Kencana/ gold tray, clear water, and three kinds of flowers (roses, jasmine flowers, and kanthil flowers). This equipment means bringing good fortune and bringing blessings to the family. The meaning of the Sembah Kalbu step is that the wife respects her husband. The meaning of Mecah Tigan's steps is to break his wife's virginity and start family life and produce offspring. The meaning of Wijiki or washing feet is a form of service for the wife to cleanse her husband's body of bad energy. Overall, the essence of the Mecah Tigan/ Wiji Dadi ceremony is reflected as the start of a new life after marriage and prayers are included in every step of the ceremony so that the bride and groom can build a harmonious household.

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