

## THE NYEBUK KUKUT TRADITION IN A SEMIOTIC APPROACH: A MORAL MESSAGE FOR NEWLYWED COUPLE IN THE PEOPLE OF LAMPUNG PEPADUN

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**Abstract.** This study revealed ten findings of materials for the procession of carrying out the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition, namely, (1) rice water, (2) chicken eggs, (3) coins, (4) banana tree shoots, (5) seven kinds of flowers, (6) basin, (7) *sasou* leaves, (8) fresh water, (9) sarong, and (10) *Buang Emban*. The findings interpret the ten materials used for the ceremonial *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition. The ten ingredients have a good purpose and meaning for the people of Lampung *Pepadun*. To describe the ingredients of *Nyebuk Kukut*, the researchers use a qualitative approach to apply interactive steps in the preparation of the research design, which consists of four stages, namely data collection, data verification, data presentation, and analysis, and conclusion. Researchers found a moral message in the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition: the bride and groom bring peace and fortune to the bride's and groom's families. In addition, the bride and groom are also expected to always get along with their family/relatives. They can be the successor of the groom's descendants. Through this tradition, the bride and groom are expected to have joy in life and a good-looking impression. After marriage, it is expected that both of them will leave negative things behind. This research recommended that the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition could be well documented and transmitted from generation to generation in the people of Lampung *Pepadun*.

**Keywords:** tradition, nyebuk kukut, Pepadun custom, Semiotics.

### Introduction

The traditions of the Indonesian people signify the characteristics of the Indonesian ethnic identity that are very good for the people. Various kinds of traditions owned by the Indonesian people are in the spotlight of various countries to know and learn about them.

It may depart from various points of view, assumptions, and thoughts that tradition contains moral messages or good philosophical values. The traditions that exist in the community can reflect the hopes, passions, ideals, pride, love, and culture of the people. Thousands of cultures in all corners of the archipelago owned by the Indonesian people contributed various study materials to be researched. Many scholars and people from abroad inevitably want to learn about Indonesian culture/traditions.

For example, how foreigners sing keroncong with musical instruments (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDGkHfTNEzc>).

Indonesia is one of the nations in the world that is admired by other countries because of the many cultures, customs, traditions, and regional languages that live in the country. There are many things to ponder. The existence of ancestral traditions and customs has a sense of value for mutual respect for fellow human beings, forming a complete family, creating cultural values such as caring, togetherness, cooperation, gratitude, affirmation of identity, tolerance and harmony, responsibility, and as well as commitment, honesty, and trust. Humans should learn and understand the section on local wisdom, which is full of cultural or traditional values (Sibarani et al., 2018). The culture of the Lampung people, for example, has rules for greeting words that have a culture of rules for calling people who are older, younger, children, close relatives, and so on. All greeting words have been arranged in such a way as to make politeness and courtesy between family members and relatives markers in a greeting word (Ling Sunarti, Sumarti, 2019).

Lampung traditional clothing, for example, has a unique culture and tradition and has a particular meaning as reflected when carrying out a wedding procession, whether it is a wedding that uses traditional events or national weddings. There are two traditional clothing in the Lampung ethnic group, namely the traditional clothing of *Pepadun* and *Saibatin*. The former refers to the custom of the people of Lampung who inhabited the inner area or region of Lampung, such as in Tulangbawang, Kota Bumi, some parts of

Central Lampung while the latter refers to the custom of the people of Lampung who mainly settled in the coastal or seashore area, such as Krui, Kota Agung, Cukuhbalak, Kalianda, etc. Each custom has a unique tradition. Traditional clothing for the Lampung ethnic reveals many exciting and unique things because it has meaning, philosophy and represents good values (Roveneldo, 2018). In addition, the oral tradition in the form of a classic Lampung song accompanied by a single guitar strum is also a relic of Lampung's ancestors, which is used as a tool to express their feelings and burdensome in the life of the Tulangbawang community (Roveneldo, 2021). All cultures and traditions carried out in the owner's community make one of the maintenance and preservation of regional languages and cultures. This has been proven in Roveneldo's research (2017) that all processions in carrying out traditional wedding rituals cannot be separated from using their local language (Lampung).

One of the exciting traditions to study is the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition. The *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition is a tradition for the people of Lampung *Pepadun* when they want to marry their favorite woman and idol. On the surface structure, the tradition is only used as part of a series of one of the traditional ceremonies that will take place. However, if we look more closely with deeper structure, in the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition, there is a moral message and philosophy for a newlywed couple who will start their new life with his/her spouse. To find out the meaning of the moral messages, it is necessary to conduct scientific research related to the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition.

Based on the explanation above, it is necessary to formulate the problem in this study, namely what meanings and symbols are in the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition of the people of Lampung *Pepadun* in West Tulangbawang? From this question, therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the whole picture and philosophical values contained in the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition. The results of this study are expected to be used as beneficial research on local wisdom by placing the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition as the focus of discussion. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be an essential reference in

understanding the *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition that developed in the community of Lampung *Pepadun* in West Tulangbawang.

This study uses the study of cultural semiotics. In the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), Semiotics is the science of symbols and signs (in language, traffic, Morse code, and so on) (KBBI, 2018:1507). Meanwhile, the meaning of culture is defined as follows, namely (1) the mind; reason, (2) customs, (3) something about a culture that has developed (civilized, advanced), (4) something that has become a habit and is difficult to change, (KBBI, 2018:261). By following the thoughts of Peire and Umberto Eco in Alex Sobur, (2016: xii), Peire explains that seeing the representamen sign as an inseparable part of the object of reference and the subject's understanding of the interpretant sign. *Sign* according to Peirce's view is "something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity." It can be seen in Pierce's definition that the role of 'subject' *somebody* is an inseparable part of signification, which is the basis for the semiotics of communication. '*Semiotics of communication*,' according to Umberto Eco in *A Theory of Semiotics*, is semiotics that emphasizes the 'sign production', rather than the 'sign system'. As a 'meaning production machine,' semiotics of communication relies heavily on the 'sign work' of labor, which selects signs from the raw materials of existing signs. It combines them to produce a meaningful linguistic expression.

Two words need to be explained between these words: *semiotics* and *semiotic*. The meaning of the word *semiotics* (/se mi o ti ka/ /sémiotika/ in bahasa Indonesia) is: 1. n the science (theory) of symbols and signs (in language, traffic, Morse code, and so on); 2. semiology: the science of semiotics. The meaning of the word *semiotic* (se-mi-o-tik/ /sémiotik/ in bahasa Indonesia) is 1. n everything related to the system of signs and symbols in human life (KBBI, 2018:1507). n here refers to a noun.

The semiotic theory examines various symptoms in a culture as a sign that is interpreted by society, for example, a sign consists of a signifier (form) (which in Indonesian) is translated by the term "marker", and a signifie (meaning) which in

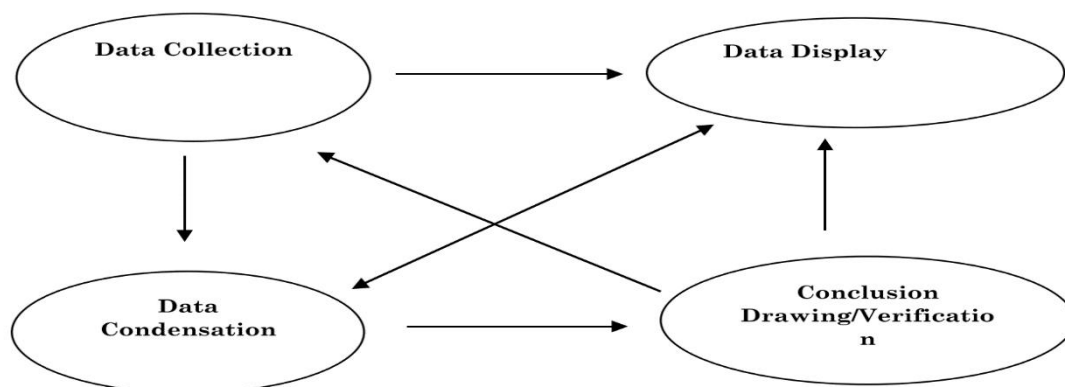
Indonesian is translated by the term "signified." However, what is meant by form is the image of the sound of a word (Benny H. Hoed, 2014: 56). Humans are "meaning-seeking creatures." The keywords in semiotics are "sign" and "meaning." In every approach that uses semiotics, the two words are unified in terms of signification. The affirmation is that semiotics makes culture the main object of study, which understands what is around us, whether in the social, family, natural, or universe environment.

There is also an approach that becomes a unified part called semiology related to the study of semiotics. One of the pioneers who popularized the semiology theory, Roland Barthes (2007:269), stated that all social objects, whatever they are, find traces of thought, collective work by thought to organize what is real in a logical system. Whether it is about a village, a dress, a dish, a party, a custom, a role, a tool, an institution, or an action, it may be a creator. So that all elements of the social material become part of the meaning and sign, both of a "primitive" society, historical, or modern. However, no less important is that there is also an approach that examines culture and language, which is still related to semiotics. Such a theory is called semiotic anthropolinguistics.

Anthropolinguistics is the study of language in the framework of anthropology, the study of culture in the framework of linguistics, and the study of other aspects of human beings in an interrelated framework of anthropology and linguistics. Culture and other aspects of human beings are two scopes of anthropolinguistics that underline the branch of anthropolinguistics based on the object of study. The number of cultural items and other aspects can start a branch of anthropolinguistics based on the object of research. However, anthropolinguistics has focused on gastronomy, tourism, naming, customs, medicine, traditions, teaching, evolution, landscapes, and gender, among cultural items and other aspects as the scope of anthropolinguistics (Sibarani, 2020).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design using four data collection methods, namely: In-depth open interviews, direct participatory observation, focus group discussions (FGD), and written documents. In-depth and open interviews were conducted to obtain data from informants who studied the relationship between language and humans and their culture. Direct and participatory observations are carried out by observing the use of language in human culture directly. FGDs were applied to several informants to obtain complete data. The written document method is specifically used to find data relating to the scope of linguistic anthropology or anthropological linguistics. The analytical method used is an interactive model of qualitative analysis procedures. After collecting data, there are three qualitative analysis activities: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion/verification (Matthew B. Miles • A. Michael Huberman • Johnny Saldaña, 2016:12). The interactive model of the qualitative paradigm is as follows.



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

*Nyebuk Kukut* is a tradition of Lampung Pepadun which is usually done when getting a son-in-law. The location of the tradition of *Nyebuk Kukut* was in the village of Penumangan, Central Tulangbawang District, West Tulangbawang Regency. This district



was formerly part of the North Lampung Regency (Roveneldo, 2015), which quite a lot holds various traditions and customs of its people. One of the traditions is called *nyebuk kukut*. Some of the results of this study are described one by one, as follows.



Keterangan: Bunga tujuh warna, batang anak pisang, telur, uang logam, air beras, air minum, daun *sasou*, sarung, dan baskom.

Foto: Pustawati dan Roveneldo (2021)

Before carrying out the *nyebuk kukut* ritual, preparing everything related to the *nyebuk kukut* ingredients is best. The picture above shows rice water, chicken eggs, fifty rupiah coins or five hundred rupiah notes, banana sticks, seven kinds of flowers, basin, fresh water, and *bulung sasou* leaves.

#### 4.1 Rice water



Foto: Pustawati (2021)

Rice is the staple food of Indonesian people. Therefore, in this ritual, the use of rice water has a significant value of being fulfilled of their needs so that the bride brings happiness and peace for the groom's family.

## 4.2 Chicken Egg



Foto: Pustawati (2021)

A chicken egg has a meaning so that the bride's heart is round like an egg. The bride will always get along and help each other. It is also expected that the bride will be easily socialized with his family and his close relatives. They will not fall apart in facing the problems but always hand in hand together. The egg is a symbol or a round symbol of all consensus.

## 4.3 Coin



Foto: Pustawati (2021)

Coin Fifty rupiahs or five hundred rupiahs means that the bride and groom cannot be separated from money every day. All activities run smoothly because the funds are always sufficient. In ancient times, fifty rupiahs were relatively high in value. It was said that fifty rupiahs could be used to buy gold, one gram or half a gram. However, currently, fifty rupiah coins are of little value due to inflation. However, the indigenous people of *Pepadun* still use fifty rupiahs of money because they think it is a prerequisite or a symbol of a series of *nyebuk kukut* traditions.



#### 4.4 The Banana Tree Shoots



Foto: Pustawati (2021)

Banana stems have a meaning that the bride's arrival brings coolness to the newly married family, and the banana plant will not die before the banana sprouts and bears fruit. The bridegroom will have many offspring like the banana stem.

#### 4.5 Seven Kinds of Flowers



Foto: Pustawati (2021)

The seven kinds of flowers will become fruit, meaning that the bridegroom will have offspring after marriage, like flowers that will become fruit. The children will make their life colorful and joyful. Their life becomes glittering and cool to the eye when families see their children. It is worth noting that the flowers must be watered to keep growing, like a family's hope. That is the meaning of the seven kinds of flowers.

#### 4.6 Basin



Foto: Pustawati (2021)

Basin is the place to mix all the materials with water. After all, materials are mixed, the bridegroom must place their feet into the basin. This ritual signifies that all dirty materials in our body will be clean and clear. The bridegroom should forgive each other and forget their past and mistake.

#### 4.7 Bulung Sasou Leaves



Foto: Pustawati (2021)



The bride's body is broomed with stemmed leaves called *sasou* leaves. The meaning of the *sasou* leaf is that in order for the new bride to come if she brings wrong or behavior when she was still a young girl, the girl is not good, then it is separated from the *sasou* leaf. *Sasou* leaves are used to release or separate negative energy. Likewise, positive energy will accompany the personality of a bride.

#### 4.8 Fresh Water



Foto: Roveneldo (2021)

The bride and groom are given water to drink because fresh water is healthy and recommended to clean our bodies. After drinking water, it is hoped that their wealth will be smoothly like flowing water. Also, drinking water quench thirst and dryness in life, and make cool the family's heart.

#### **4.9 Sarong Senjang**

After the session was over, the prospective in-laws for the bride took off the sarong. Then, he wore it with his future son-in-law. It is intended that between parents-in-law and son or daughter-in-law in the future can be of one heart, unite, cover each other's shortcomings, and understand each other.

#### **4.10 Buang Emban**



Foto: Pustawati (2021)

All the contents of the basin are discarded. This session signifies that the bridegroom has thrown away all the things that are not good. They should always keep a good personality. While throwing away the water, we say in our hearts with hope: May the new family member or bride bring peace, blessed sustenance, and unite with the family."

After knowing some of the ingredients of *Nyebuk Kukut* and their meaning, it is equally important to know how the procession of *Nyebuk Kukut* is done. In ancient times, transportation to pick up the bride and groom took a long time; for example, in the Tulangbawang or West Tulangbawang area, the means of transportation used at that time were still using simple boats (rowing boats) because the majority of the villages in the Tulangbawang and Tulangbawang Barat districts were located on the edge of the river, (Roveneldo, 2015:92). A few years later, this area began to develop, and the mobility of the population has used the Ketek boat (boats that are about six meters to seven meters long). This boat can be operated using gasoline or diesel engines. Then, due to rapid development and the implementation of regional autonomy, villages in Tulangbawang Regency or Tulangbawang Barat Regency can already be connected by land roads to facilitate access in and out of villages.

Along with the development of land transportation progress, the use of boats has begun to be abandoned and replaced by land transportation, such as motorbikes and cars so that to pick up the bride and groom can be reached quickly and does not take too long.

In the beginning, the bride and groom got out of the vehicle and were forbidden to hold and guide. This indicates that the bride came with the will of her heart, without any coercion, and was determined to have a family. After arriving at the groom's yard, the bride is sprinkled with punar rice, which contains fifty rupiahs coins, yellow rice, and sweets. The session signifies that happiness and goodness have come. Sometimes, in this procession, some do not use rice punar procession. That is to say, this procession is optional, not obligatory.

Next, the bride is swept and splashed all over with *Sasou* leaves. According to one informant, the procession of cleaning the whole body using *Sasou* leaves is intended so that the newly arrived bride will not bring disaster. However, instead, she will bring goodness and blessings and leave mistakes as a girl. By using *sasou* leaves, it is hoped that all negative energy will disappear so that only positive energy will accompany a bride's personality and life. Currently, *sasou* leaves are rarely found because the forests have now turned into settlements.

After sweeping the bride's body with *sasou* leaves, the bride performs a *Nyebuk Kukut* procession, namely the procession of dipping the right foot and left foot into a basin

containing various materials and flowers. This *Nyebuk Kukut* procession means that the bride will become a better person and clean from all the dangers in her soul or body and clean from dirty things.

Then, after the *Nyebuk Kukut* procession is complete, the bride will pass the hands of the bride-to-be-in-laws. This procession signifies that the bride has officially and legally entered the groom's family by giving her whole body and soul as the daughter-in-law in the family.

Then, the bride wears a sarong or *Tapis*—a traditional clothing from Lampung. The procession begins with the prospective mother-in-law takes off the sarong and puts it on her future daughter-in-law. It is intended that both parents-in-law and their daughter-in-law in the future can be of one heart, get along, unite, cover each other's shortcomings, understand each other, and respect each other.

Next, the bride is given water and must be drunk until it runs out. This indicates that if the bride drinks the water, it is hoped that her wealth will run smoothly like flowing water.

Then, the bride is led by the groom and brought to the room accompanied by his brothers and sisters, who were present at the reception. After that, the bride sits on the bed or the couch. Then, the groom must surround the bride seven times. This procession aims to show the public that the bride is legally and entirely owned by the groom so that he is responsible for the bride. In other words, at the end of this procession, the groom has become a priest or leader in his new life.

## CONCLUSION

The *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition is local wisdom or traditional ceremony for the people of Lampung *Pepadun* in the West Tulangbawang Regency who want to be a newlywed couple. This tradition is one representation of the treasures of cultural wealth in Indonesia. This *Nyebuk Kukut* tradition has been carried out for years and even centuries and is still practiced today. All the ingredients for the *Nyebuk Kukut* procession interpret the meaning and convey good moral messages, such as avoiding harm, being obedient and loyal to one's spouse, always getting along, and consensus when facing problems that arise in their new



life. Preservation efforts must be made to maintain this tradition, for example, by direct inheritance from one generation to the next and making digitization and documentation.

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