SIGN ANALYSIS IN PANTUN OF MALAY TRADITIONAL WEDDING CEREMONY IN KOTA TANJUNGBALAI (SEMIOTIC APPROACH)

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ABSTRACT


The study in this paper concerns with the way where the author finds the types of icon, index and symbol as semiotic approach to explores the meaning of signs on Hempang Pintu custom of Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony and wants to find out the meaning of their linguistic symbols according to Malay custom. There were found 19 stanzas of the pantun of Hempang Pintu custom from video recording transcription as the subject of this research. The total numbers of sign classification were 99. There were 29 proverbs include to icon found in 13 stanzas, 51 proverbs include to index found in 16 stanzas, and 19 proverbs include to symbol found in 11 stanzas. The method used in this paper is descriptive qualitative analysis where the writer firstly identifies the sign types then describes the meaning of all signs found in Hempang Pintu custom. The writer used a semiotic theory especially in Pierce’s theory of sign and focuses on the aspect of the three sign classification: icon, index and symbol. Data collection technique is by using literature study, observation and interview. Data analysis technique used to prepare the object of study, classifying and describing the pantun, verification, analyzing and make conclusion. From the analysis, the writer concludes that pantun of Hempang Pintu custom used Pesisir Malay proverbs to deliver their aim and politeness in speech that has been formed in signs. The results will determine and interpret the icons, indexes, symbols in the pantun of Hempang Pintu custom.

Keywords: Semiotic, Sign, Pantun, Malay Traditional Wedding Ceremony

* Graduated Status

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Human being as cultural creature has a tradition as their belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Every society respects and follows their tradition where it has an important and sacred value or it can be guidance for human life.

Indonesia is a rich country with more than 300 ethnic groups. Each of them has its own traditions and customs that is a wealth of the nation. One of the famous ethnic groups in Indonesia that believes in traditions and customs is Malay. In Indonesia Malay divided into some ethnics, such as Pesisir Malay (Asahan Malay), Deli Malay, Riau Malay, and etc. As the third largest ethnic group in Indonesia, Malay also has many traditions were to be continued for example like wedding ceremony.

As the writer’s observation in field, Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony is split into some customs namely hempang pintu custom (doorway barrier). Hempang pintu custom is a process where the groom and his entourage arrive at the bride’s yard, their comings were blocked by a stretching cloth held by two guards (formerly the road was used to block ones way). In this custom, each telangkai will convey the pantun as a communication to show their politeness in speech. According to Winarni, (2010:6) “pantun is one of traditional poetry were very widely known languages of the archipelago.” The use of pantun in Malay is identical as their tradition. It is used in daily to the specific moment of Malay ceremony.

The pantun in hempang pintu custom can be investigated by semiotic. Semiotics is a study of signs, but it is not merely about what we refer to signs in daily communication, but also anything which stands for something else. Charles Sanders Peirce classified the signs into three classifications. According to Cobley
(2001:31) “the most basic classes of signs in Peirce’s menagerie are icon, index, and symbol.” Here are the examples of some pantun in wedding ceremony cited in Nadia (2016) as the following:

**Batang buluh dibelah-belah**

**Bunga pagar bunga kemuning**

**Raja dan ratu jangan mau kalah**

**Cabut bunga warna kuning**

According to Nadia in her study, Icon, index and symbol on the pantun above is **batang buluh** (reed stem) is a symbol means a bamboo rod which has the meaning strong and powerful, **bunga kemuning** (kemuning flower) is an icon means the beauty, **raja dan ratu** (the king and queen) is an index means a leader who lived in palace, similarly to the groom and bride are king and queen in household life. The meaning of the pantun above is not to give up in fight over something (trying), the bridal must show that they can and do not forget to share especially in household life.

In the Pesisir Malay, wedding ceremony get a lot of high places in the customs especially berpantun is very prominent in Malay culture but not for nowadays. In this era although pantun is still known and used by people, but it is no longer culminating with the worth values of its original culture, such as it is a joking or just a mimicking of the young to their idols. As a consequence, the pantun has become the plaything, have lost the function and meaning of its essentials, such as a teaching and the media to give the inheritance of the worth values of the nation.

In this case, signs were indicated in the pantun of Malay traditional wedding ceremony especially in hem pang pintu custom should be interpreted as any language interactions that occur in societies where there is an agreement on the use of certain sign system as a representation of thoughts, feelings, ideas, or expectations because the signs can be made guidance of life to Pesisir Malay.
Every society has their own perspective to interpret the sign meanings in the pantun without knowing its purposes where most of Pesisir Malay especially in Kota Tanjungbalai use the pantun in hempang pintu custom without understanding the meaning of the pantun whereas there are many signs (icon, index and symbol) delivering in the pantun, on the contrary most of them did not know what the meaning at all.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested to analyze the signs in pantun of Malay traditional wedding ceremony in Kota Tanjungbalai (semiotic approach) especially in hempang pintu custom using Pierce’s theory of signs: icons and index and symbol to show the meaning of all signs are found in the pantun used in hempang pintu custom of Malay traditional wedding ceremony.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**A. Semiotic**

The theory used in this study is semiotics. Etymologically, the term of Semiotic (or semiology, as it better known in Europe) originates from the Greek semi on, which mean sign. Semiotics is a general study about the signs as an essential part of cultural life and communication. According to semiotics, we can only know culture and reality by means of the sign, through the process of signification. Beside it, much of semioticians said that semiotic is a theory related to the lie, fake or generally as a theory of the lie. Semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie.

Eco, (1979:7) write in his book A Theory of Semiotic, said:

“Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessary substituting for something else. This something else does not necessary have to exist or to
actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stand in for it. Thus semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth. It cannot in fact be used “to tell” at all. I think that the definition of a “theory of lie” should be taken as a pretty comprehensive program for a general semiotics.”

According to the definition by Eco, semiotics is the theory of lie but implicitly this definition is as the theory of the truth because if the sign could not show its reality, the lie will not appear. Finally, even Eco define a semiotic as the theory of the lie, implicitly he defines semiotic as the theory of the truth.

B. Sign

According to oxford dictionary, sign is an object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the probable presence or occurrence of something else. In semiotics, a sign is something that can be interpreted as having a meaning, which is something other than itself, and which is therefore able to communicate information to the one interpreting or decoding the sign. According to Sebeok (2001:3) “sign is any physical form that has been imagine or made externally (through some physical medium) to stand for an object, event, feeling, etc., known as a referent, or for a class of similar (or related) objects, events, feelings, etc., known as a referential domain.” Signs serve any function in human life. The signs allow people to recognize patterns in things which act as predictive guides or plan for taking actions and serve as things of specific kinds of phenomena.

According to Coble (2001:31) “the most basic classes of signs in Peirce’s menagerie are icons, indices, and symbols.” An icon is a sign that is made to resemble, simulate, or reproduce its referent in some way (Sebeok, 2001:10). An index is a sign that refers to something or someone in terms of its existence or location in time or space, or in relation to something or someone else (Sebeok,

C. Pantun

The pantun is an Indonesian poetic form. The pantun originated as a traditional oral form of expression. The Pantun is an old form of poetry that has unique characteristics. The pantun is very widely known in languages of the archipelago. According to Rizkia (2014:9) there are several characteristics to know whether the lines could be called as a pantun or not:

1. It has four baits.
2. The first two baits called “sampiran” or foundation. It usually talks about animals, places or any playful illustrations. The last two baits called “isi” or meaning which contains the message of the pantun.
3. A pantun has similar syllables that long 8 to 12 syllables and also rhymes ab-ab or aa-aa (Setyawan and friends, 2011:5-6).

Pantun can be found in many places as the result of Sriwijaya’s existence in the 8th century and maritime trading from an island to another. The pantun is very attached to Malay. Malay pantun is a part of Malay people throughout the decades. The pantun was created anonymously just like other works of Malay oral tradition such as Gurindam (setyawan and friends, 2011:5-6).

D. Malay Traditional Wedding Ceremony

Marriage or wedding is one of many phases experienced by human during his/her living in the world. It has an important and sacred value for human life; it changes human’s status from single to married status. It forms new family kinship system and it can also replace a person’s right and responsibility in the family environment. Human beings as cultural creatures know and follow married
tradition as well as obey it in relation to married process. Malay people especially Pesisir Malay considers the marriage special.

The wedding process of Pesisir Malay consists of 26 steps (Damanik, 2002:1). In the previous era, all activities were done step by step, but now concerning with time and fund, not all Malay people are able to afford carrying out all activities except they choose some to maintain their culture and show it to the public. Commonly, the activities which are mostly brought in pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony in Tanjungbalai about merisik (to investigate/spying), melamar, meminang and bertunangan (proposing and engagement customs), hantaran belanja (gifts and money gift), akad nikah’ (solemnisation), malam berinai (henna painting ceremony), khatam qur’an (completion of Qur'an reciting), and menyambut pengantin (welcoming the groom) which consist of three customs: hempang batang, hempang pintu and hempang kipas, continued by bersanding (sitting together), and makan nasi hadap-hadapan (spreading meals). In this study, the writer is interested to analyze the signs in pantun of malay traditional wedding ceremony in kota tanjungbalai (semiotic aproach) especially in hempang pintu custom as one of the process of menyambut pengantin (welcoming the groom).

In today's Pesisir Malay customs, there are a series of procedures which should be passed through by the groom before sitting on the couch beside the bride. According to Damanik (2002:11) some procedures which are performed are hempang batang, hempang pintu, and hempang kipas. In Hempang Pintu custom, the groom and his party are about to arrive at the house of the bride, they stop at about 100 or 200 yards from the house to wait for the welcoming ceremony. According to Damanik (2002:13) when the groom and his entourage arrive at the bride’s yard, their comings were blocked by a stretching cloth held by two guards (formerly the rod was used to block ones way). This stretching cloth is used to prevent the guests entering the gateway until they tell the brides party their goal of coming and they give a token called uncang emas or kunci emas (a packet filled with coins) as a kind of requirement to pass the entrance. If they have given this
token, the guards remove the block away and the guests are welcome by conveying pantun.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

*Methodology*

This research will be conducted by using descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive method is a method in describing in situation or characteristic of sample for every variable of study in a one way, so the method has an intention to accumulate the basic data. Moleong (2003:3) defined qualitative research as the research procedure that produces descriptive data in written or spoken word from the attitude that can be observed. Accordingly, a qualitative research deals with words and pictures, not numbers (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Meanwhile, a descriptive method is an investigation focusing on relations that exist, uttered opinions, processes that are going on, evident or trends concerned with the current condition (Best and Kahn, 1989). Thus, descriptive qualitative was used to analyze the data.

The data for this research are the pantun used in Hempang Pintu custom of Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony especially in Kecamatan Tanjungbalai Selatan as the first source of the data, collected by video recording in the direct observation, and will be supported by some informants as cultural observer who present the pantun of Malay traditional wedding ceremony along with the audio recording of interviewing in order to get the meaning.

**DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS**

The study examined the analysis of signs classification as the data were collected from the Pantun in Hempang Pintu Custom of Malay Traditional Wedding Ceremony in Kota Tanjungbalai. There were 19 stanzas found. The total numbers of sign classification were 99. There were 29 proverbs include to icon
found in 13 stanzas, 51 proverbs include to index found in 16 stanzas, and 19 proverbs include to symbol found in 11 stanzas. The use of index became the most dominant types of sign classification found in the pantun of hempang pintu custom after the use of icon and symbol. The data found in the pantun of hempang pintu custom presented in the table below:

**Table 4.1 The Total of Sign Types**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sign Types in Pantun of Hempang Pintu Custom in 19 Stanza</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Icon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data showed that all types of signs (icon, index and symbol) found in the pantun has its own meaning according to Pierce’s theory of sign: icon, index and symbol. The meaning of the signs will be presented as follows:

**a. Icon**

As it is already describe in chapter II, an icon is a sign that is made to resemble, simulate, or reproduce its referent in some way (Sebeok, 2001:10). From the pantun of Hempang Pintu custom of Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony in Kecamatan Tanjungbalai Selatan, there were 29 proverbs include to icon found in 13 stanzas. The explanations for sign include to icon can be seen in the following data.

1) *Lain lubuk lain ikannya* (Stanza 12)

From the pantun sentence above, it can be seen that the word “lubuk” includes to icon as a sign because its existence describes the meaning of the word
“lubuk” itself without refers to another meaning of sign even in the pantun context. It can be seen in the complete pantun (stanza 12) below:

*Lain lubuk lain ikannya*

*Lain padang lain pulak belalangnya*

*Jadi kami perlu banyak belajar tuan hamba*

From the pantun above, the word “lubuk” means a habitat in swamp for fishes to hide in order to safe their life from the preyed and it is also supported by the second sentence “lain padang lain pulak belalangnya” with has the similar meaning to the first sentence but the second sentences describes a habitat for grasshoppers as its meaning. The sign as an icon in this part of pantun sentence is as sampiran of the pantun used as complement (same like the second sentence is as sampiran too) to convey the content of its pantun (the last sentences) that describes another thing out of the pantun context.

**b. Index**

As it is already describe in chapter II, an index is a sign that refers to something or someone in terms of its existence or location in time or space, or in relation to something or someone else (Sebeok, 2001:10-11). From the pantun of Hempang Pintu custom of Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony in Kecamatan Tanjungbalai Selatan, there were 51 proverbs include to index found in 16 stanzas. The explanations for sign include to index can be seen in the following data.

1) *Dihuni insan pula makhluk melata* (Stanza 1)

From the pantun sentence above, it can be seen that the word “makhluk melata” includes to index as a sign because its existence describes the meaning of the word “Tuan Telangkai” which refers to someone (human being) and it can be said as someone or something that carry out the function as a signifier which gives
a signal to the signified or the causal relation is occurred between signifier and signified. It can be seen in the complete pantun (stanza 1) below:

_Baiklah untuk tuan hamba yang budiman_

_Bismillah kalam dimula_

_Mengharap ridho Allah ta’ala_

_Pencipta seluruh alam semesta_

_Dihuni insan pula makhluk melata_

_Untuk itu mari kita sama tingkatkan takwa_

_Agar menjadi orang mulia disisinya_

From the pantun above, the word “makhluk melata” means crawled creature as a call for humbling the human being to the God who lives in this universe. The sign as an index in this part of pantun sentence is as the pantun content which is delivered after the sampiran used as the complement to complete the pantun in order to convey the pantun purpose. The word “makhluk melata” used in the pantun to shows their politeness in speech where in the pantun Malay always use proverbs to express their politeness. This meaning can be seen in the pantun sentence “dihuni insan pula makhluk melata” where the word “insan” means the human being too and it has the casual relation to the word “makhluk melata” and has the same meaning because the habitants of the universe are consist of human being. It is only different at the designation, insan (human being) for usual and makhluk melata (crawled creature) is to humble the dignity to God.

c. Symbol

A symbol is somewhat more complicated (Coblely, 2001:31). A symbol is a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way (Sebeok, 2001:11). From the pantun of Hempang Pintu custom of Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony in Kecamatan Tanjungbalai Selatan, there were 19 proverbs
include to symbol found in 11 stanzas. The explanations for sign include to index can be seen in the following data.

1) *Disongsong tepak penuh berisi* (Stanza 4)

From the pantun sentence above, it can be seen that the word “tepak” includes to symbol as a sign because its existence describes the meaning of the word “tepak” which refers to an ethnic representation which considers as a sign or symbol that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way. It can be seen in the complete pantun (stanza 4) below:

*Senanglah rasa di hati kami*  
*Disambut baik dirumah ini*  
*Disongsong tepak penuh terisi*  
*Membuat takjub pula didalam hati*  
*Untuk itu kami ucapkan banyak banyak terima kasih*

From the pantun above, the word “tepak” means as box of betel and arranged as betel chewing, the sign as an index in this part of pantun sentence is as sampiran used as a complement to convey the content of the pantun used as the opening pantun to deliver the aim of the pantun. The symbol in this pantun used as a representative of Malay characteristic in Hempang Pintu custom as a tradition in welcoming the groom and his entourages where tepak also reflects the life and value of the Malay community especially on traditional customs and codes of conduct. It is obvious that tepak sirih plays an important role in the everyday life of the Malays. However, as time passes, the importance of Tepak sirih is now only confined to ceremonial and traditional events and activities like Hempang Pintu custom. The meaning of this pantun explains Malay politeness as their characteristic in welcoming the guest which used tepak and to express their thankful for welcome the guest politely.
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

Based on the research finding found after analyzing the data for the pantun of hempang pintu custom (doorway barrier) of Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony in Kota Tanjungbalai, the conclusion drew as follows:

1. Semiotic is a general study about the signs as an essential part of cultural life and communication. Sign classification: icon, index and symbol are the part of semiotic which has the correlation to the culture or tradition. In fact, the Hempang Pintu custom of Pesisir Malay traditional Wedding Ceremony in Kecamatan Tanjungbalai Selatan used many signs delivering in pantun proverbs. Pesisir Malay delivers all the signs in form of the pantun proverbs with the total number were 99 proverbs in 19 stanzas.

2. The used of icon and index mostly found in the sampiran (complement) of the pantun stanza where the symbol mostly found in the content of the pantun stanza. All signs as an icon means to show the parable form of Malay confession symbolize something or someone referent in some way. The signs partly use especially as an index to praise someone or something on the contrary to humble something invaluable. The signs as a symbol are used to indicate an object which consider as Malay sign and has been approved by Malay ethnics.

Suggestion

After doing the research in the field, then obtained the data and information in accordance with the required to research purpose, the researcher would like to give suggestions and hopefully can be useful for the development of
thinking for the continuity of a process of unity and the nation. The suggestions are as follows:

1. For the future research, the writer suggests to other researchers to expand the numbers of Malay pantun used in the custom of hailing the groom which consist of hempang batang, hempang pintu and hempang kipas custom, so the result of the analysis would be more comprehensive. Furthermore, to make the research more challenging, further research can be applied not only in direct pantun used in the field of Malay traditional wedding ceremony, but also in printed pantun or from Malay pantun book wrote by Author as Malay cultural observer. Then, further researcher can try to compare the representation of the sign of hempang pintu pantun from Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony in different pantun of another custom from another Malay traditional wedding ceremony such as Deli Malay, Riau Malay and etc. It may be beneficial to be conducted because it may gain broader comprehension about the sign of the pantun which is presented in the pantun of Malay custom.

2. The readers and the audiences especially Pesisir Malay societies in Tanjungbalai should be understood of the message by the pantun proverbs containing the sign found in the pantun. The message may be positive, but the core intention in presenting the pantun is to show Malay politeness in speech as their characteristic in a custom.
REFERENCES


