

# SYMBOLISM IN THE DANCE OF KARONESE TRADITIONAL WEDDING CEREMONY

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## ABSTRACT

*The goal of this study is to analyze the meaning of symbol from dance movements used in Karonese traditional wedding ceremony. The object of the research is the dance movements of the the bride and groom in Karonese traditional wedding ceremony. The analysis shows that the structure of the landek kerja perjabuun consists of endek (knee ups and downs movement), pengodak/odak (body movements) and ole or jole jemolah jemole ( hands and fingers movement). The functions of landek in the kerja perjabuun are to ratification social institutions, to implement norms in society, to mark the implementation of the marriage ceremony, to signify social status, to show traditional communication, and cultural continuity. The meaning of landek in kerja perjabuun is as symbolic blessing (blessing prayer) to the bride, as a connector to family relationship, respect for the presence of a person in kindship group, learning of Karo traditional norms, prestige for Karo people, an expression of excitement for the family releasing daughter who will go to other families (farewell) and show the tribal existence.*

**Keywords:** *Semiotic, Symbolism, Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony*

## ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian adalah untuk menganalisis makna simbol dari gerakan tarian yang digunakan dalam upacara pernikahan adat Karo. Gerakan tarian yang dilakukan memiliki arti dan inilah yang membuat peneliti tertarik meneliti makna simbolik yang ada dalam gerakan tarian tersebut. Objek penelitian ini adalah gerakan tari pengantin dalam acara pernikahan adat Karo. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa struktur *landek* atau tarian dalam *kerja perjabuun* pesta pernikahan mempunyai struktur terdiri dari *endek* (gerak naik- turunnya lutut), *pengodak/odak* (gerakan badan) dan *ole* atau *jemolah jemole* ( gerakan tangan dan jari ). Analisis struktur juga terdapat pada penyajian *landek* yang dilihat dari tahapan awal ( penerimaan dan penyerahan pengantin), isi (*melandek* dalam komponen rakut sitelu sesuai posisinya) dalam penutup berisi *melandek* antara anak beru dan sukut ) ( fungsi *landek* dalam kerja *perjabuun* adalah untuk pengesahan institusi sosial, untuk melaksanakan norma-norma dalam masyarakat, penanda terlaksannya suatu acara perkawinan, untuk menandakan status sosial, untuk komunikasi adat, dan untuk kesinambungan budaya. Sedangkan makna *landek* dalam acara *perjabuun* adalah sebagai simbol pemberkatan (doa restu) kepada pengantin, penyambung hubungan keluarga, penghargaan terhadap seseorang dalam kelompok kekerabatan, pembelajaran norma-norma adat karo, sebagai prestise bagi orang karo, wujud kegembiraan keluarga, melepaskan anak yang akan pergi ke keluarga lain (perpisahaan) dan menunjukkan eksistensi kesukuan.

**Kata Kunci :** *Semiotik, Symbolism, Tarian Upacara Pernikahan Adat Karo*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language and symbols share a number of characteristics, including the fact that both are systems of communication. Though there is an overlap between language and symbols, the two types of communication differ in form and function. Kottak (2006:128) adds that language is our principal of communicating, but it isn't the only one we use, we communicate when we transmit information about ourselves to others and receive such information from them, so when anybody are communicating, they involve sign as a most important part of language. Because language is verbal, it has the power to communicate information precisely and succinctly.

Therefore in society, language has a strong relationship with culture. Language and society are two things that meet at one point, it means that between language and society will not be separated. Language as an arbitrary symbol system sounds that used by members of the community as a means of communication interaction, and identify. Language so firmly attached, fused soul in each speaker in the community.

The writer intends to analyze Symbolism because symbolism explores how language shapes communication, social identity and group membership, regulating belief systems and ideological systems on a large scale and developing a general representation of the universe of social and natural science. That is why the writer used Symbolism as the theory to find the relation of language and culture especially in traditional wedding dance ceremony. Symbolism are concerned with how language influences culture. This can include how language impacts social interactions, beliefs, cultural identity, other important aspects of culture.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### A. Linguistics

Linguistics is knowledge of the languages, which enables combine words to form phrases, and phrases to form sentence. It concludes everything that speakers know about their language such as phonology, semantic, and syntax. One of the branches of linguistic study that can help us to know the meaning is semiotics. Because it is one of

the branches of linguistic that studies the nature of the meaning of individual word and the meaning words grouped in to phrase and sentences.

### B. Semiotics

A definition of semiotics given by Alex Sobur (2004:15-16), Semiotics is a science or analytical methods to assess the mark. The signs are the devices that we use in an attempt to fight their way in this world, in the midst of human and human together. Semiotics-or in terms Barthes, semiology-basically want to learn how humanity (humanity) to make sense of things (things). Interpret (to signify) in this case cannot be confused with communicating (to communicate).

### C. Symbols

Sadowski (2013) cited in Aulia (2016) states that the symbol must be item, image and icon. Those could be represent in reality and symbol is a picture could be only interpreted through mind such as language and word. The study of sign is commonly referred to as semiotics.

In short, symbols are vital due to the communicative and cultural role they play in human social life. In this chapter, we will go back in time to look at the beginning of symbols are and trace their evolution over time, before determining how symbols contributed to the birth of language for communication. Symbols is sign linked to its object by virtue of conventions, agreements or rules. Symbols are arbitrary and the meaning of symbols needs to be acquired. Symbols are a means of complex communication that often can have multiple levels of meaning. Symbols are the basis of all human understanding and serve as vehicles of conception for all human knowledge. Symbols facilitate understanding of the world in which we live, thus serving as the grounds upon which we make judgments. In this way, people use symbols not only to make sense of the world around them, but also to identify and cooperate in society through constitutive rhetoric.

#### D. Meaning of Symbols

All cultural realities are symbols. We do live in a world full of signs and we are also part of the sign itself. The Symbols are then interpreted as manifestations in understanding life. Humans through their ability to try to interact by using the sign as a tool for various purposes, one of these goals is to communicate with others as a form of adaption to the environment.

Communication is not just a process, but communication as the generation of a meaning. When we communicate with other person understands the meaning of our message, more or less precisely. In order for communication to take place, we must create messages in the form of signs (language, words). The messages we make encourage others to create meanings for themselves that are related in some way to the meanings we make in our messages. The more we share the some code, the more we use the same sign system, the closer our "meaning" to that person is for the message that comes to each of us with that other person. The following is one example of the meaning of symbols: that is meaning of the movements in karo dance, which are called one handed movements. One handed are "movements that have the communication meaning of a pair of people who want to express their hearts". So it can be concluded that each sign or symbols has a meaning.

#### E. Reason of Symbols

The reason human used symbols to express specific ideologies and social structures and to represent aspects of their specific culture. Thus, symbols carry meanings that depend upon one's culture background. In other words, the meaning of a symbol is not inherent in the symbols itself but is culturally learned. For example Symbolism in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony, it is not related to the history of dance in the Karo community clearly and with certainty when the dance tradition began to emerge. However from several activities that exist until now, namely those related to the implementation of traditional ceremonies, then the dance has been used in a traditional ceremony and also religious rituals since they existed, because of that,

this related to the beliefs they have held before. The movements that are presented when dancing are the basic movements that are taken on the implementation of these ceremonies, so that movement has a certain meaning and philosophy, which dance is presented. This is of course independent of the aesthetic or aesthetic value of the dance.

So the reason of Symbolism in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony in the presentation of the dance, ethics and aesthetics are considered applicable.

#### F. Wedding Ceremony in Karonese

The five specific culture karonese bound terms are the phases of wedding ceremony in karonese culture. *Maba belo selambar* is an initial phase of wedding party and it is attended by *kuh sanggep* of groom's party and bride's party. *Kuh sankep* means there are the attendance of *senina*, *kalimbubu*, *puang kalimbubu* and *anak beru* of each party to *maba belo selambar* party. *Nganting manok* can described as the second phase of the wedding party and it usually equipped by special menu to be served at the meal, they are usually *cipera* and *sintebu-entebu*. *Ersukat emas / ertembe-tembe / mata kerja* is the phase of negotiating of marriage payment for the bride and her relatives. *Mukul / mecah-mecah tinaruh / persadaan tendi* the phase of wedding party which is held at the groom's parent house and attended by *sangkep nggeluh* of both groom's and bride's party.

##### 1. Ngembah Belo Selambar

Before having *maba belo selambar*, a man's parent have to visit their *kalimbubu si ngalo ulu emas* in their house to inform that their son has brought a woman to be married. They usually bring chicken to cooked in their house and have meals to gether. It seems that a man's parent are unhappy for their son married another woman.

Their coming to *kalimbubu's* house is to ask for permission that their son married another woman. Their coming to *kalimbubu's* house is to ask for permission is going to have *maba belo selambar* party and also invite them to *maba belo selambar*

party. It is usually known that kalimbubu si ngalo ulu emas do not agree that their bere-bere to marry another woman, because they also have a daughter to be married. It is usually requested for bere-bere to marry a daughter of kalimbubu in karonese culture. *Maba belo selambar* is a prewedding ceremony and a time to ask for the happiness of kalimbubu and *gantang tumba* or marriage payment.

## 2. The Procession Wedding Reception

The wedding party enters the the reception hall in a long processional with the bride and groom leading the way, followed by the bride's parents, the groom's parents and then the close family members, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The groom's anak beru throw rice of the couple to symbolize fertility. The elaborate ceremonies in a traditional wedding karo are filled with the ritual and customs. These customs ensure the acceptance of the new union bby their new families, establish the intricate relationships that will govern their lives and provide the opportunity for family members to extend advice and good wishes and give gifts to happy couple.

## 3. Traditional Wedding Dress

As in traditional indonesian wedding ceremonies, the wearing of elaborate traditional clothing is required. Heavy ornamentation with the accesories and layers of various fabrics utilize colors and designers which are highly symbolic Karonese. The bride's heavy headdress is called *tudung gul*, the groom's that is called *bulang-bulang*. The bride and groom are both adorned in variety of gold accesories , called *emas sertali*. The traditional Karo textiles used in wedding dress are called *uis nipis*. They have different, special names when used in wedding dress dependent on where they are worn on the body.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher analyzes the data based on qualitative method. It is aimed to describe about types of symbolism in wedding ceremony dance in Karonese According to Mack et al (2005:1),

qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. As argued by Sugiyono (2012) qualitative research is research that positions the writer or the researcher as the key in analyzing the data. Qualitative research emphasizes the analysis on the interpretation of words, meaning, ideas, and any interactive relationship within an object or phenomenon.

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study can be formulated as follows:

1. What symbols are used in the dance of Karonese traditional wedding ceremony ?
2. What are the meaning of symbols used in the dance of Karonese traditional wedding ceremony?
3. What are the reason of symbols used in the dance of Karonese traditional wedding ceremony ?

In order to answer the problems of the study, the analysis of collecting the data were done by the following steps:

1. Underlining and analyzing the data relate to the symbolism in the dance of Karonese wedding ceremony.
2. Underlining and analyzing the data that relate to the meaning of symbolism in the dance of Karonese traditional wedding ceremony.
3. Giving the reason of using the symbolism in the dance of Karonese traditional wedding ceremony.
4. Drawing the conclusion based on the result of the study.

## 4. DATA, DATA ANALYSIS

### A. Data

Data collection is described as the process of the gathering and the measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer queries, stated research question, test information being sought, and the objective or goal of users, the method of data collection will vary, customized to suit the purpose and prevailing circumstances, without

compromising the integrity, accuracy and reliability of the data.

## B. Data Analysis

Using many symbols can help people understand the meaning of dance movement. Each dance movement has a deep meaning. Each movement has different intentions, namely representing a sense of happiness, helping each other, respecting each other. and a lot of learning or knowledge to be discovered.

### 1. The Meaning of Symbols used in Traditional Clothes in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony

The symbols used in traditional clothes in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony have different meanings. The clothes consist of tudung, abit, bulang-bulang, sertali emas-emas, kampil, uis nipes, uis ariteneng, and lange-lange.

#### A. Ose (Clothes) Woman

The traditional clothes worn by the bride in the dance of Karonese traditional wedding ceremony have different meanings. They are: *tudung*, *abit*, *sertali emas-emas*, *kampil*, and *uis nipes*.

##### 1. Tudung

*Tudung* is a characteristic position of women in Karo tradition, who is obliged to wear a hood during the traditional procession is *kalimbubu* (elderly woman in adat), *senina sipemeren* (mother and sister), who plays a role in culture usually before the traditional party a few days before it is known who should wear the hood.

##### 2. Abit (Clothes): Sungkit, Uis Julu, Uis Nipes

The abit (clothes) shrouded on Karo women means politeness in dress, where the aura of the thighs down must be covered with a cloth.

##### 3. Sertali Emas – Emas

*Sertali* or decorations that are draped and that are placed in *Tudung* and *Bulang-Bulang* is sign and meaning contained in Wedding Ceremony. Is big party (*Sintua*), a

moderate party, (*Sintengah*), or a simple party (*Singuda*). Usually who already us jewelry and are already in the category of a large party and luxury.

##### 4. Kampil

*Kampil* (small bag containing betel, lime, gambier, and tobacco): interpreted as the forms of honor to relatives who come, where we are obliged to offer betel although these relatives do not eat betel. The hood is decorated and draped with an attachment.

##### 5. Uis Nipes

The traditional clothes that the bride wear around her waist. It is interpret as luxurious (honor), *Uis Nipes* are traditional clothes used in ceremonies to show joy and sorrow. It symbolizes luxury as an identical Karo Woman with *Uis Nipes*.

#### B. Ose (Clothes) Man

The symbols used in the groom's traditional clothes in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony have different meanings. The clothes are: *bulang-bulang*, *abit*, *sertali emas-emas*, *lange-lange*, and *uis ariteneng*

##### 1. Uis Ariteneng

*Uis Ariteneng* is used in by Karo men. It signifies the man's dignity in the process of carrying out customs, and position in *Adat*.

##### 2. Bulang-Bulang (cloth on the head of men) Bekabuluh

*Uis Bekabuluh* or *Bulang-Bulang* means the duties and responsibilities that are carried and upheld must really be carried out in custom, according to their respective positions in customs such as *Kalimbubu*, *Senina*, and *Anak Beru* where that three positions are chosen. It can be changed according to the implementation of Karo custom.

##### 3. Lange – Lange

*Lange-lange* (*bekabuluh* tied around the shoulders of Karo men) interprets the burden of duties and responsibilities that must be done based on the position in Karonese culture.

#### 4. **Sertali Emas – Emas**

*Sertali* (jewelry) that are worn in the *Tudung* and in the *Bulang-Bulang*, the ones that are worn by the two bride. *Sertali* or decorations that are draped and that are placed in *Tudung* and *Bulang-Bulang* is sign and meaning contained in Wedding Ceremony. It is big party (*Sintua*), a moderate party, (*Sintengah*), or a simple party (*Singuda*). Usually, the ceremony where the people wear jewelry is already in the category of a large party and luxury.

#### 5. **Abit (Clothes) : Sungkit, Uis Julu**

The abit (clothes) shrouded in Karo man means politeness in clothes, where the aura of the thighs down must be covered with a cloth.

## 2. **The Meaning of Symbols used in the Movement in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony**

*Landek*, which is one of the Karo art forms, becomes an inseparable part of their social life. According to Sembiring, 2012:190, this becomes the basic concept for Karo people, which is a form of their daily habits, and presented in the form of a dance after first getting stylized and motion distortion.

So in this case, the *Landek* is used for the concept statement in their lives such as walking, being polite, suave, and others, in the form of dance movements. To be able to explain the meanings of the dance movements performed, the writer uses the theory of marking and symbolism that is preposed by semiotics.

### 1. **Tengah Rukur movement**

In the Karo community, that movement has an understanding weight everything before deciding to act. Mean the connotation of this movement is to so that in actions the Karo people always act prudently, wisely and not in a hurry. In make a decision they do it to the full consideration so as not to make mistakes and regrets in settlement problem encountered. Therefore the Karo always determined which one the best decision that can be taken for the common good.

The Karo people have the character to protect their good name and their family. By always considering everyting, the Karo people and also his family will be able to avoid the shame caused by mistakes in acting. Therefore, do not rush and be wise inward make a decision is the best way.

### 2. **Sisampat-sampaten Movement**

The meaning of the movement is helping each other. The meaning that can taken from this, movement is that Karo people are like help each other and also have mutual cooperation they always ready to help other who are having difficulties, and always ready to do it whenever needed. This a least visible at the time of implementation of an events which customary and requires the presence of family and also kinship which is included in the concept of *rakut sitelu* and *sangkep nggeluh*, which they will help each other to lighten the burden and costs to be borne by an insider the implementation of that event. One of the properties they have by Karo people is like to help and help each other.

### 3. **Rebu movement**

The meaning of the movement is a men can not choose a Karo woman on the condition that they have not seen their kinship clearly, in other words they haven't very familiar with genealogies and how to call them ( in Karo language it is called with the sentence is *ise pe la banci ndeher adi lenga si oraten*). The meaning of movemant this is to say that the karo people are not allowed to be arbitrary opposite clan, before he saw exactly the relationship kinship (especially in the terms of clan) it has.

The purpose is so that the karo people avoid disgrace, disgrace, or other bad things that could be arises due to the relationship that occurs, because customary sanctions can be found to have violated the applicable provisions. So with that, they are still adamant about customary law in their relationship with others. Disgrace what happens is a one-clan marital relationship indeed prohibited.

### 4. **Perarihen Enteguh movement**

The meaning of that movement is always united or together in unity, unity and deliberation to reach consensus, the meaning is the Karo people it prefers to unite and deliberate in a group for solve various problems encountered. By united and deliberation, then all problems will be resolved well, without any further problems that might arise. It is already resolved by counseling and finding the best solution. The connotation meaning of this movement is that the Karo are a people uphold a sense of unity in all things, because of their unity will be stronger and stronger, so that there will be division between them their own fellow.

#### 5. **Beren Rukur movement**

The movement in the example above means thinking before decide something (consider), the point is that the Karo people still have many considerations, before deciding something, with the aim that the decisions right and best for yourself as well as for others. The meaning of the connotation is a lot of consideration will be able to make Karo people always be aware of everything that might happen. By thinking clarity without rushing, would lead to something even better. The myth or message conveyed is that a lot of consideration or thinking in advance will allow us to avoid internal mistakes make decisions, and don't act recklessly about things. It means that everything that is good, must be considered properly and mature, so that problems do not occur after its implementation.

#### 6. **Baban Simberat ras Simenahang Ras Ibaba Movement**

This movement has the meaning of bearing the burden together, the meaning is Karo people are willing and willing to bear the burdens felt by others (especially family and kinship groups), and finish it together. The meaning of the connotation is that of feeling sad and happy felt by one Karo person, will also affect the Karo person others especially those included in his kinship group, so that the load will be divided, so that it will reduce the burden of

#### 7. **Mareha Movement**

The movement that has meaning means whoever comes if getting acquainted with each other and knowing each other's words, it will be accepted well as a family (referred to as *ise pe adi enggo ertutur ialo-alo alu mehuli* in Karo ), The meaning is that Karo people is open and receptive to anyone who wants to get acquainted with them, provided with a good cause. Of course they are too first must know the kinship relationship that is owned, because with so they won't be wrong in calling or mentioning names someone, so as not to violate or break the rules already stipulate in norms. The connotation meaning of this movement is that of Karo people is a friendly and sociable person, so anyone can close to them ( in Karo customary manner of course ), and to them think of as family. the person feel it.

#### 8. **Ertanggung jawab bas dahin Movement**

This movement has the meaning of having a sense or responsibility, that is Karo people will carry out the tasks assigned by others to him with a sense of responsibility. The meaning of the connotation, that the Karo people will always carry out the task it gets as well as possible, until the task is completed, especially if the task is related to customs, which will result in them being in certain position in the kinship system them adhere to.

#### 3. **Reason of Using Symbols in Karonese Dance Traditional Wedding Ceremony**

From the explanation above, the reason for the movements presented above, of course are very characteristic of belonging Karo people, who will be assisted in its presentation later with other characteristics, namely traditional clothes. Therefore , the people will easily be presented that the dance that is presented is a unity owned by Karo ethnic, and therefore the customary *Landek* also becomes an identity for the Karo community, which has individual characteristics.

Traditional dance or *Landek* is used as a medium to express feelings, be it for the

groom ( including the family and kinship), and also the woman (including family and kinship). Of course, at the party there will be two feelings generally it happens, namely feeling happy because there has been a marriage between 2 pairs of brides, and sad because the woman will be left by one their family members. Culture in traditional dance in Karo community, following the activities of life they do, and includes disclosures of various kinds. They also express feeling of sadness and happiness in the form of dance movements, which in essence is a prayer of blessings and hope from both parties the married life of the two brides later. So, the couples who will live married life will still feel close and still respect and appreciate the extended family and kinship

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing Symbolism in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony, the writer draws some conclusions related to the symbols in the dance of Karonese Wedding Ceremony as follows:

1. Firstly, there are eight movements considered as symbols in the dance there are: 1) *Tengah Rukur* movement, which means to consider or think before doing. 2) *Sisampat-Sampaten* movement, which means willing to help each other. 3) *Rebu* movement, which means there must no prior relationship before kinship Relationship. 4) *Perarihen Enteguh* movement, which means unity will be stronger. 5) *Beren Rukur*, which means thinking before make decisions. 6) *Simberat ras simenahang ras ibaba* movement, which means Karo people are ready for helping other people's burdens. 7) *Ertanggung jawab bas dahin* movement, which has the meaning of being responsible for assignments obtained. 8) *Mareha* movement, which means willing to consider others as a relationship already know each other and see relationship kinsip.
2. Secondly, based on the analysis, *Landek* or dance is dance that focuses

on its use in traditional events and cannot be used in other events that are not customary. In this thesis, the customary *landek* discussed is at *kerja perjabuun* or wedding ceremony, which is a series of traditional marriages contained in Karo people. In the series of wedding ceremonies, customary *landek* only performances at the implementation of the wedding Ceremony (*kerja perjabuun*), and not presented there is a series of other events. The movements of male and female dancers are the same for women, however has different characteristics in terms of the presentation technique, which movements carried out by women tend to be more gentle, in comparison male dancers who are more assertive.

3. The aim at using symbol in the Dance of Karonese Traditional Wedding Ceremony is to help the reader understanding of the value culture of the dance. The meaning of the presentation of customary *landek* in the work of virgin the customary dance/ *landek* in the work of the virgin is as symbol of blessing (blessing prayer) to the bride and groom, as a connector for family relations, respect for the existence of someone in the group kinship, learning Karo customary norms, as prestige for Karo people, the form of joy the family, relases the child who is going to another family (separation), and shows a ethnics existence.

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