

## **Symbolic Meaning in the Traditional Dance of Bugis Makassar, Pakarena Dance (*A Semiotic Study*)**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to find the function and symbolic meaning of Pakarena Dance in Bugis Makassar society which is the dance movements represented the principal life. The research was conducted in South Sulawesi, Makassar. The data were collected from Library Research. The researcher used descriptive qualitative methods. The research showed the four functions of Pakarena Dance; (1) King's accompaniment (2) The means of Da'wah through its movements (3) The form of Gratitude (4). Entertainment Facilities. And Pakarena Dance has 13 parts symbolic meaning; (1). "Samboritta" (making friends) (2). Jangang leak-leak (rooster crows) (3). Ma'biring kassi(4). Bisei ri lau '(rowing to the east) (5). Angingkamalino (wind without blowing) (6). Anni-anni (spinning yarn) (7). Dalle tabbua (enduring fate patiently) (8). Nigandang (repeatedly) (9) So'nayya (dreaming) (10). Iyolle ', (looking for the truth) (11). Lambassari (disappointment) (12). Leko 'bo'dong(13). Sanro beja '(birth shaman). In this case, sign, idea and object have relation to show the symbolic meaning of Pakarena Dance.

**Keywords:** Symbolic Meaning, Sign, Culture, Pakarena Dance

### **INTRODUCTION**

In life, the word culture is no longer strange to our ears because it is so attached to every activity that humans live in. Culture is a certain group of people, which includes language, religion, cuisine, social habit, music and art in one area. Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn:1952).

There are many cultures contain symbol which is formed based on their respective patterns. this certainly makes culture has a unique and distinctive character to interpret. in this case, society plays an important role in the creation and development of culture in life indirectly. culture is an invaluable heritage that should be preserved so it does not become extinct by time. (Banks & McGee:1989).

Most social scientists today have a culture view as consisting primarily of the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies. The essence of a culture is not its artefacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them. It is the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one person from another in modernized societies; it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. People within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artefacts, and behaviours in the same or in similar ways.

Culture is something that can be inherited biologically, but can be obtained from the process of education and formation. This means that the cultural heir must grow in the community group where the culture lives. Without these two factors, it will be difficult for a person to inherit the cultural features of

his tribe. This is in line with what was stated by Kottak (2006:63) in his book entitled *Cultural Anthropology*: “Culture is something that is not acquired through biological heritage but by growing up in a particular society where they are exposed to certain cultural traditions”.

Pi-Sunyer et al in *Humanity and Culture; An Introduction to Anthropology* (1978:9) emphasizes to the reader to distinguish culture (a culture) and culture in general (culture). According to him, a culture is a complex thing that surrounds a certain group of people with regard to their behavior and environment. Whereas culture is general, in all human habits, whether in urban or rural areas.

Indonesia is a country that is rich in culture, like dance, music, customs, language, and so on. Indonesian people should be proud of local cultures can attract foreign tourists. It cannot be doubted, starting from language, customs, dance to music and so on. Our nation also has approximately 742 regional languages, 33 traditional clothes and hundreds of traditional dances. Cultural diversity in Indonesia is something that should be grateful and preserve. With its cultural diversity, Indonesia can be said has advantages over other countries. Indonesia has a complete and varied cultural portrait.

However, what is developing today is that the majority of people have started to ignore and even forget about national culture such as traditional dances. Not a few young people even prefer to modern dance than traditional dance. From time to time, traditional dances have begun to be covered by the existence of modern dances, although not all of them, traditional dances are now no longer glimpsed, even children to young people have now more familiar with modern dance than traditional dance.

Indonesian traditional dance reflects the rich diversity of Indonesian society. There are many traditional dances; like the traditional dance of Bali, Java, Sunda, Minangkabau, Palembang, Malay, Aceh, Sulawesi and many more, which are ancient, vibrant and dynamic traditions. The traditional dances may be centuries old, while some others may have been created less than a decade ago. The creation of new dance choreography but still within the framework of respected dance traditions and disciplines are still possible without reducing or adding excessively to the content of the dance. As a result, several new dance creations have been created to rediscover and revive old traditions that were lost or new interpretations resulting in inspiration and exploration of traditional dances.

In this research, the researcher would like to analyze the function and symbolic meaning in the one of traditional dance in Bugis Makassar namely *Pakarena Dance* with the study of semiotics which is contained in some dance movements, it will be very detailed in terms of meaning. The researcher tries to know more deeply by studying it through the semiotic theory to find the symbolic meaning of the dance.

Previous researchers have studied about symbolic meaning in one way to another. Pauzan (2018) conducted a research with a title “A Semiotic Analysis of the John Wick 1 Film Using Charles Sanders Peirce’s Semiotic Theory.” This research was descriptive qualitative method using a semiotic theory who advocated by Peirce as its theoretical framework. He purposely selected a number of sign including five icons, three indexes, and three symbols. The result of the analysis revealed that the meaning of these three elements of signs could indeed be interpreted using Peirce’s semiotics theory, especially the relationship between their object, representamen, and interpretant.

Another previous study is the research by Eriana (2015) entitled “Peirce’s Semiotics Analysis of Icon and Symbol on Perfume Advertisement.” The objective of her study is to find out the meaning of signs on perfume advertisements and to explain its semiosis processes. Her study applied descriptive analysis method. Through this method, she tried to describe, explain, and analyze the meaning of the signs and investigate its semiosis process using Charles Sanders Peirce’s theory. On her research, it is found 29 icons and 23 symbols from the 29 advertisement. She found 29 meaning of advertisement. Besides, she found that the picture or icon could be the first aspect that give the direction to the meaning, then the language which is used in the advertisement or symbol.

Hamid (2019) “Symbolic Meaning in Traditional Clothes of Makassar: Semiotic Study”. The objective of this research is to describe the symbolic elements in traditional clothes of Makassar. From the results of the research conducted, then revealed in traditional clothes of Makassar has certain symbolic elements that were very dependent on the social status and age of the wearers, namely in terms of types, shapes, materials, accessories, color and the use of sarong to describe the symbolic meaning in

traditional clothes of Makassar. The similarities between this research and the previous findings above is using signs of Peirce's semiotics theory. The differences is the object of the research.

## METHOD

In collecting data, the researcher is writing based on Literary research method. In library research, the researcher searches for some references about semiotic analysis based on Peirce's theory. The result would be a previous study or reference such as books, journals, and articles which is related to the research. In this research, the researcher uses a semiotic analysis in the technique of analyzing data which aimed to determine the function and symbolic meaning that contained in the traditional dance of Makassar (Pakarena Dance). In this research, the analysis used semiotic by Charles Sanders Peirce about *icon, index, and symbol*.

The researcher using some steps of data analysis by Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2015: 337-345), which are: (1). Data Reduction; Data reduction means enclosing, choosing the principal things, focusing on important things, finding the theme and model, and throwing away the unnecessary things. Then, the data which has been reduced would give a clearer imagination, and make easy the researcher to collect and find another data if it is needed. (2). Data Display; After the data being reduced, the next step is displaying the data. Data Display is intended to compile a set of information which gives the possibility of conclusions and taking action. Data has been compiled and presented and it makes easier for researcher to understand what is happening and what must be done based on the understanding of the researcher gained on the display. (3). Drawing Conclusion /Verification; The last step is making conclusion and verification. The initial conclusion which being proposed is still temporary and would be change if there are no strong evidences which support the next step of collecting data. But, if the data concluded in initial step being supported by valid and consistent evidences when the researcher back to the field to collect data, then the conclusion being proposed is a credible conclusion.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Pakarena comes from the Makassar traditional language 'karena' which means play. There is affix 'pa' which signifies the subject. So, the meaning of "Pakarena" is the player or in this case the dancer. Bahrum (2012) states that the origin of the Pakarena dance originates from a palace dance called "sere jaga" which has functions as part of ritual ceremonies, especially in rituals before planting rice and after planting rice (harvesting). In performing the dance movement, the dancer holds a bunch of rice seeds that have been selected through a ritual ceremony. Dance has also has developed in the form of presentation and tools. The rice replaced by the current fan right now. This dance was previously only for royal palace of Gowa by noble king, it is complementary and must be performed at traditional ceremonies or royal parties. Performing the *pakarena dance* accompanied by a "ganrang" (drum) wasp by the people of Gowa is a symbol of respect for ancestors, so this dance should not be neglected because it is feared that there will be interference from the ancestral spirits who feel they do not get the respect of what they deserve. This dance has the meaning of lessons about how to survive which is delivered by gods or angels from heaven. The movements carried out by the dancers as a symbol of gratitude to "To Manurung" (humans who came from the sky).

*Pakarena dance* does not only develops in Gowa but also in Takalar, Jeneponto, and Bulukumba. And the costumes are also increasingly diverse with motifs those are adapted by times. The tops worn by dancers are called "bodo clothes". This typical Bugis clothes is characterized by loose and short sleeves. Meanwhile, the subordinate is "lipa 'sa'be", a silk sarong with a distinctive motif from South Sulawesi which is worn loosely. For properties there is a fan which is generally red. However, regarding the color there are actually no definite provisions, the important thing that the color is bright. Then there is a yellow gold necklace with colorful pearl decorations to enhance the dancer's appearance. In addition, there is a gold bracelet with a long shape that covers the forearm. This gold bracelet also has beautiful carvings.

Like traditional dances in general, the *Pakarena Dance* also has a specific purpose. This dance performance has several uses and purposes as; (1) *King's accompaniment*, it is a dance that is still accompanies the King of Gowa today, (2) *The means of Da'wah* through its movements, this dance teaches about life that humans must be patient and do not give up easily. (3) *The form of Gratitude*, which was originally performed as an expression of gratitude for agriculture was running well and harvests were bountiful, (4). *Entertainment Facilities*, namely by performing *pakarena dance* as a means of entertainment for residents and tourists who come to Gowa.

Peirce's theory explained the signs of language, this theory states that thought relies on the use of signs. According to Peirce, every thought is a sign, and every act of reasoning consists of interpretation signs. Sign serves as a mediator between the external world and the internal world of objects ideas. He says, 'the sign stands for something', its object and it also called the ground of the representamen. Note here that the sign stands for the object in the world, the class of things (extension) via the ground of representamen, a sort of idea (Peirce, 1931:444).

There are 13 kinds of part *Pakarena Dance* that contained symbolic meaning based on situation and condition; (1). *Samboritta* (making friends), the icon in *samboritta* also called paulu jaga, its an activity or the act of staying up all night. The index here represented the first movement in a performance which produced a symbolic meaning pay respect to visitors who watch the *pakarena dance*, (2). *Jangang leak-leak* (rooster crows), the icon of the leak-leak is a rooster as a sign of an action issued with a crowing sound. The *pakarena dance* has an index that was performed all night long, so that the closing part of the dance usually takes place around 04.00am in the morning, the symbolic meaning of this activity was the rooster as a sign that human activity has stopped and started again in the morning or in this case means finding a way back to its origins, (3). *Ma'biring kassi*, the icon of *Ma'biring Kassi* is a dance that performed at the weddings. This sign has index to the lands ashore and its presented in the second movement of dance. The symbolic meaning of this sign has a request for prayers to be granted, for example prayers in marriage is like a beach that always flows even though hit by the waves. here are the wishes of good prayers for the marriage, (4). *Bisei ri lau'* (rowing to the east), this activity indicates the rowing movement as an icon and it has an index also presented in the second movement of the dance. The symbolic meaning of moving to the east is the direction of the rising sun as a new spirit to start life on earth, (5). *Angingkamalino* (wind without blowing), the icon of dance in the second half which has a sign, namely the wind without blowing, as the wind that does not blow here represented an index that it does not bring coolness, here it raises the symbolic meaning which is depicting in life phases not everything goes as planned, sometime there is a sense of disappointment. (6). *Anni-anni* (spinning yarn), the icon of this section is the activity of spinning yarn which is also presented in the second half. This section represented the index of persistence in life and it has a symbolic meaning that a job well done consistently will produce maximum results. This type of *pakarena dance* is usually held in wedding ceremonies. (7). *Dalle tabbua* (enduring fate patiently), the danced in the second half and having an index every human being should be patient, the sign of patience indexes the philosophical sign of patience itself. It contains a symbolic meaning lived with patience. (8). *Nigandang* (repeatedly), it also danced in the second half where the icon is the drum and the index of the drum refers to what we start must be finished until the end without feeling hopeless to get good results. In this case, humans are invited not to give up in life. (9) *So'nayya* (dreaming), the danced in the second half with an icon of someone's dreaming activity. In dreaming is producing an index, humans should not only dream but try to make the dream comes true (action). Therefore, the symbolic meaning is as human beings we should not expect something too high without the effort. (10). *Iyolle'* (looking for the truth), the icon of *iyolle'* is an act of searching for the truth which represented the index of sign that there is an attempt to find positive things. So the symbolic meaning is the truth must be continuously sought to have calm life and the heart becomes peaceful. (11). *Lambassari* (disappointment), in this section has same icon, index and symbolic meaning of Angingkamalino (wind without blowing), which means that life often ends in disappointment. (12). *Leko 'bo'dong* (perfectly round), the icon for *Leko' Bo'dong* is the full moon. This index refers to a moon sign which is round in shape and the symbolic meaning is considered to have a perfectly round shape and

shine brightly. (13). *Sanro beja'* (birth shaman), its presented in the second half of the dance with a shaman icon, the index of this shaman is a sign that represents in welcoming the birth so that the symbolic meaning showed how to care for a woman who has just given birth. As the name implies, this dance is generally performed in a birth ceremony.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is *Pakarena dance* usually has parts tailored based on the needs of the ceremony which is being carried out. Because the length of each part in this dance makes *Sipinangka* (a group of expert dancers) not mastering the whole type of this dance. Each group has different dancing skills and it really depends on the type of skill mastered. This is also marked by the development of *Pakarena Dance* is not only in Gowa but also in Jeneponto, Takalar, Bulukumba and others area. Even *Pakarena* groups are in the same district but it may has different variation of movements. However, in general they mastered two types of *pakarena dance*, namely *Paulu Jaga* or *Samboritta* for opening the dance and *Jangang Leak-leak* as the closing of the dance. These two parts are the main parts used as the core of *Pakarena Dance*.

After giving some conclusions, the researcher also needs to convey suggestions for a generation of millennials do not easily accepted foreign cultures and must be proud of our traditional culture. And also, still maintain and preserve the culture that still exist in our country of Indonesia. As a young generation we should be able socialize the indigenous culture. The researcher hopefully there would be many researches about traditional culture.

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