

## SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF EQUIPMENTS USED IN MAPPACCI BUGINESE TRADITIONAL CEREMONY

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**Abstract:** *This paper aims to elaborate the meaning and message contained in the symbol of equipments used in the ceremony of Mappacci. Mappacci is a traditional pre-marriage the ceremony carried out from generation to generation by Bugis tribe for the purpose of cleaning or purifying the bride from bad things. This study used an analytical descriptive approach in which researcher observed and interviewed the local people and the process of ceremony in order to gain data. The result shows that in carrying out the Mappacci ceremony, nine kinds of equipment are prepared by Bugis tribe. Equipment used in Mappacci in general are pillows, silk covers, jackfruit leaves, banana shoots, pacci leaves, rice, candles, pacci containers, brown sugar, and coconut. All of them contain meaningful and important cultural symbols which become an unuttered message. The symbols generally contain hope and prayers for the welfare and happiness of the bride and groom. It is suggested that further research will conduct a deeper analysis on other cultural ceremonies performed by Bugis tribe.*

**Keywords:** *Mappacci, Buginese Culture, traditional ceremony.*

## INTRODUCTION

Culture and human are developing together since culture is a way of life owned by a group of people. It is passed down from one generation to the next. Culture covers knowledge, religion, arts, tradition, law, and many other aspects which are inseparable to human life. Geertz (1973) perceived culture as “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.

Indonesia, a diverse archipelago nation of more than 300 ethnic tribes, maintains traditional ceremony. Each tribe has its own tradition carrying their values in society that deserve to be preserved. The identity of people commonly reflected through traditional ceremony, especially regarding to marriage. Many tribal cultures in Indonesia require a long process of ceremony for marriage. The ceremony is so thick in the old tradition that it is not surprising that marriage becomes a pretty sacred moment for all the parties involved.

One of the tribes in Indonesia with an endogamous marriage system is Buginese. Buginese are the inhabitant of South Sulawesi which perform several wedding ceremonies and

one of them is *Mappacci*, a wedding ceremonial initiation, which is carried out at night before the wedding day.

*Mappacci* is a traditional marriage ceremony carried out from generation to generation by Bugis tribe with the purpose of cleaning or purifying the bride from bad things, with the belief that marriage is a good thing and it must be based on good intentions. The *Mappacci* ceremony in the Bugis tribe is believed to have a symbol of cleanliness and purity for the bride and groom (Millar, 2009). This means that both the bridegroom and the bride are still considered clean and holy.

In carrying out the *Mappacci* ceremony, nine kinds of equipment are prepared. All of them contain meaningful and important cultural symbols which become an unuttered message. The symbols generally contain hope and prayers for the welfare and happiness of the bride and groom.

This paper aims to elaborate the values contained in the symbol of equipments used in *Mappacci* ceremony. According to Peirce, a sign is something that for someone represents something in some things or certain capacities. Signs leading to someone, that is to say, create in the mind of that person a commensurate sign, or perhaps a more perfect sign. The sign created in

the mind is called the interpretant of the first sign. The sign represents something, namely the object. Peirce then introduced this with a triadic model or known as “triangle meaning semiotics”. Where these three elements of meaning interact in a person’s mind, then the meaning arises about something that is represented by the sign

### Review of Literature

Cultural diversity in Indonesia has led to different traditional practices. People still maintain their cultural values which are reflected through symbols contained in traditional ceremonies. Thus, it is important to study these values in order to preserve and maintain cultural heritage. Several studies have been conducted related to symbols and traditional ceremony.

Rahman & Masunah (2018) carried out the study on the meaning of the kris as symbol of statehood in Indonesia. They came up with the conclusion that the kris in Indonesia has a concept in which it has odd curves which are 3, 5, 7, and 9. Each curve represents meaning. The curve 3 means that the safety and prosperity of the country are the king’s responsibilities. This kris is used by the king. The kris with curve 5 signifies the maintenance of the forest and animal in the water. This kris is used by deputy king or patih.

Another study was conducted by Dewi & Budiwirman (2020). They analyzed the symbolic meaning and cultural identity of batik which represents the cultural character of Sarolangun District. They found that the symbolic meaning of a number of batik motifs are found in the theme of Mato Punai, Cik Minah edge motif, quaint bird. Mato Punai is a bird's eye motif as a symbol of prosperity. Cik Minah edge motif symbolizes the agility of a woman in life. There are 18 batik motifs that have been recognized and has been patents, hereby that Sarolangun batik arts has its own identity for Sarolangun district culture.

Studies that concern on values of Indonesian traditional ceremony are the studies conducted by Mafthuka (2018) about traditional ceremony of Ngalaksa in Baduy Tribe, Passandaran (2019) about semiotic representation analysis of wedding ceremony in west Sumatera, Muhajir, As’ad, & Gani (2019) about Tappareng Ceremony in Buginese Society. However, none of this study attempts to research about wedding traditional ceremony of Buginese society especially Mappacci ceremony. There are a lot of symbols that can be analyzed in this cultural tradition. Hence, this study aims to find out the

symbols and the meaning of the symbols used in Mappacci ceremony of Buginese traditional wedding.

### Symbol

Symbols are widespread, even universal, and are closely interwoven with human life. The word symbol derived from Greek “symbolos” means sign or feature which notified something to the man. As Martin Foss says, “everything that man produces is a symbol” whether the product comes from unconscious and spontaneous actions, or from deliberate ones. Symbols connect things, concepts and qualities together and through the resulting relationship man is able to produce coherent meanings from what he sees, thereby understanding life more fully

Symbol according to Peirce is a part of the sign. He said that the sign was made up of symbols, icons and indexes. The symbol is a sign that arises under the agreement. The icon is a sign that arises from the physical representation and the index is a sign that arises from a causal relationship.

Pierce's semiotic analysis consists of three important aspects, often referred as the triangle of meaning (Fike & Littlejohn, as cited in Kriyantono, 2006). According to Cobley & Jansz (1991) “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). 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). According to Cobley & Jansz (1999) a symbol is somewhat more complicated. A symbol is a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way (Sebeok, 2001).

### Mappacci as Traditional Ceremony of Bugis Society

*Mappacci* comes from the name of henna leaves (pacci) which can be interpreted as paccing, which means clean (in Buginese), thus the procession of *Mappacci* means cleaning (*Mappaccing*) which is done by both parties (male and female). In the past, among the aristocrats, the *Mappacci* tradition was held three nights in a row, but now it is held only one night, which is the day before the wedding ceremony. It is said that the *Mappacci* procession was only carried out by the nobility and now generally

ordinary Bugis people carry out this *Mappacci* procession.

The *Mappacci* ceremony is a series of wedding celebrations among the Bugis people who still maintain their customs. The procession of *Mappacci* involves the use of symbols that are full of meaning and value as a representation of the Buginese community, *Mappacci*, which are meant to clean everything and purify themselves from bad things, which symbolizes the purity of the bride's heart. *Mappacci* procession covers several steps and they are divided into three phases, as follow:

#### *Initial phase of Mappacci*

##### a. Mappasau Botting/Cemme Passih

Initially before *Mappacci* ceremony, Buginese people carry out Cemme Passih, or a ritual of bathing a bride prior to the wedding. During this ceremony, the bride and groom undergo traditional treatments such as a steam bath and use a black powder made from a mixture of glutinous rice, tamarind and lime. Cemme Passih aims to ask for God's protection from danger. This ceremony is generally carried out in the morning, the day before the marriage day.

##### b. Khatm Al-Qur'an

Another event carried out before *Mappacci* is Khatm Al-Qur'an. Khatammal Al-Qur'an is held for the groom and bride in separate places. It is the recitation of the Holy Qur'an which is guided by an imam (spiritual leader).

##### c. Barasanji

Barasanji or Barzanji in Bugis society is one of religious cultural practices regarded as sacred tradition. It is a sung celebration of the greatness of Prophet Muhammad. Before *Mappacci* ceremony, Barasanji is performed as prayer.

#### *Main phase of Mappacci*

*Mappacci* is carried out at night which is interpreted as a message to cleanse the body and purity of the soul before entering the household. This indicates that the bride and groom are ready with a pure and sincere heart to foster a household by cleaning everything including heart, behavior, or deeds.

According to Millar (2009), the number of people who can give pacci leaves to the bride is determined based on the social stratification level of the bride, for example, the highest aristocratic class, the number of people who can give pacci leaves is 2 x 9 (9 pairs) husband and wife, for the middle aristocratic class 2 x 7. (7 pairs) husband

and wife, while for lower aristocrats as many as 1 x 9 or 1 x 7 people without a partner *Mappacci* is carried out by family and relatives one by one in the following steps;

- a. The bride who has been dressed and made up, sits on a lamming (bridal seat) and accompanied by an indo botting (bridal make-up artist) facing a pillow with all the accessories. Both hands are placed on top, this is meant to be able to receive pacci leaves that will be given by people who will do mappaci



Figure 1: Hands of the Bride

- b. In turn, each family member takes few pacci leaves which prepared in the container
- c. The pacci leaves are put on the bride's right palm first, then on the left palm. After that, the person prays for bride's happiness
- d. The person who has given the pacci is handed over a cigarette as a symbol of respect. In the past, folded betel with all its contents was served, but now it is rare for people to eat betel so it is replaced with cigarettes.

#### *Final phase of Mappacci*

The *Mappacci* procession is closed with a handshake asking for a prayer of blessing. Prayers and blessings from the audience, friends, family and elders or cynics.

## **METHODS**

This paper used qualitative method with analytical descriptive approach. The data were collected by using interview to local people, observation in Buginese wedding ceremony and documents. There are two questions that this paper aims to answer; 1) What are the symbols used in *Mappacci* ceremony of Buginese traditional wedding? and 2) What are the

meaning of symbols used in Mappacci ceremony of Buginese traditional wedding? The writer collected the data from observation and analyzed each of them based on the result of interview with local people.

6) *Tai bani*, *patti* or candle; and 7) Pacci leaves. In addition to Millar (2009), local people said that *Mappacci* equipments also consist of metal container, brown sugar and coconut.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the implementation of the *Mappacci* culture, equipment is prepared, all of which contain certain symbolic meanings. Millar (2009) states that the equipment includes: 1) pillow or head mat placed in front of the bride; 2) silk that placed over the pillow; 3) on the pillow are placed banana leaf shoots; 4) 7 pieces of jackfruit leaves are also placed on top of banana leaves; 5) A plate of *wenno*, which is roasted rice until it expands;



Figure 2: Pillow, Leaves, and Sarong

Table 1. Meaning and Message of Symbol in *Mappacci*

Symbol	Meaning	Messages
Pacci leaves	Purity or Cleanliness	Bride and groom are expected to start their household journey with pure soul that they build harmony in family life
Pillow	Symbol of prosperity and respect	It is hoped that the life after marriage will be prosperous and bride and groom are respectful.
Silk (sarong)	self-respect and morals skill and perseverance	Bride and groom should have moral. Besides they need to be skillful so they can handle problems arise in the marriage life
Banana leaf shoots	sustainable life	It is expected that bride and groom have continuous life and they are able to bear good offsprings.
jackfruit leaves	Honesty and aspiration	Bride and groom is expected to be honest and their marriage life should be fulfilled with aspiration
Rice	Blooming	the bride and groom can develop properly and independently in fostering a household based on love, full of peace and prosperity
Candle	Light	Bride and groom will always have a sweet heart to build togetherness and harmony
Metal container	Strong bond	Bride and groom hopefully stay together, enjoying the joy of

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		love and affection in building a family.
Brown sugar and coconut	A sign of pleasure	marriage is expected to provide pleasure

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Pacci leaves are plants that have been finely ground, stored in a container as a meaning of harmony in family life and community life which is used as a complement to the *Mappacci* event, as a symbol of cleanliness or purity. It shows a message that bride and groom are hoped to start the harmony in their household with pure heart and soul.



Figure 3: Equipments in *Mappacci*

Pillows are a symbol of prosperity where the pillow is made of cotton, in the Bugis language it is called the origin of an *animalangeng*, which are collected one by one which will be used as a pillow as a head cushion. A pillow is a head cushion, where the head is the most noble and valued part of the body for humans. Thus the pillow also symbolizes honor, glory or dignity.

Silk sarong is a wrapper or body covering, which causes shame if our body is not covered or naked. In the Bugis language, it is termed *mallosu-losu*. This sarong contains a meaning as self-respect and morals. So it is hoped that the bride and groom will always maintain their self-esteem. In addition, sarong symbolizes skill and perseverance because making a sarong requires patience, persistence, diligence and skill.

Banana leaf shots that are placed on a pillow, symbolize a mutually connected or sustainable life. Just like the condition of a banana tree, where every time there is a change

of leaves, banana leaves that haven't yet dried up, have also appeared young leaves to continue their life. This is in line with the main purpose of marriage, which is to bear or develop good offspring.

Banana shoots do not have a high selling value, but they have a deep meaning for humans who are laid on the silk. One of the characteristics of the banana is that it will not die or wither before new shoots appear. Meanwhile, another characteristic of banana is that it is useful because a banana tree can be used by many people. Thus the marriage that is expected by the bride and groom is useful and brings benefits to many people

Jackfruit is a symbol of ideals, in the Bugis language it is called '*panasa*' which means *mamminasa*, jackfruit leaves symbolize determination and aspiration. It also symbolizes honesty. Thus, the marriage is expected to have aspiration and the groom and bride should put honesty in their priority.

Rice is placed close to the pacci leaf as a fixture for the *Mappacci* procession. Rice is interpreted as a message that the bride and groom can develop properly and independently in fostering a household based on love, full of peace and prosperity

Candles are torches of light to shed light on the path that the bride and groom will take in building a household. Candles are interpreted as God's guidance. The candles come from bees that are made into wax. Bees always live in harmony and peace. They are diligent and do not interfere with one another. Apart from that, bees produce a useful medicine for humans, namely honey in the Bugis language "*cani*" which is associated with the word "*cenning*" (sweet). So it is hoped that the bride and groom will always have a sweet heart to build togetherness and harmony.

The container for the pacci, which is usually made of metal, in the Bugis language it is

known as *capparu / bekkeng*, which symbolizes two people who are united in one strong bond. Pacci container is the meaning of the message where the husband and wife hopefully stay together, enjoying the joy of love and affection in building a family.

In the Bugis tradition, enjoying young coconut is incomplete without the presence of brown sugar. It seems that young coconut is synonymous with brown sugar, which symbolizes delicious taste. Therefore, marriage is expected to provide pleasure just like coconut and brown sugar.

## CONCLUSION

*Mappacci* is a pre-marriage process that is full of symbols and meanings that represent the Buginese tradition. It contains values in culture that need to be maintained and preserved.

The meaning contained in the *Mappacci* process is a form of hope and prayer, for the welfare and happiness of the bride and groom, which is linked together in one word summary from the nine kinds of equipments. Pillows, silk covers, jackfruit leaves, banana shoots, pacci leaves, rice, candles, pacci containers, brown sugar and coconut. Thus the meaning contained in these tools in the *Mappacci* ceremony which is always carried out at every wedding of the Bugis community because it contains meaning and good intentions. As this study is limited to identify symbols and meanings of equipments used in *Mappacci* ceremony of Buginese traditional wedding in one area, a deeper analysis is suggested to be carried out for the further research. Also, there are still other cultural ceremonies performed by Bugis tribe which can be explored in the next study.

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