

THE FORM, MEANING, AND FUNCTION OF THE HARVESTING CEREMONY (*NEH-ANEH*) AS A LOCAL WISDOM HERITAGE OF THE MADURESE ETHNICS IN GRESIK.

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Abstract

The *neh-aneh* ceremony (Madurese language: harvesting rice) is a form of gratitude by the villagers for the rice grains that have begun to turn yellow and for the rice in the fields. It is the time to be picked or harvested. The *neh-aneh* ceremony is one of the stages in the process that previously preceded by the *keleman* ritual. This research was taken because the process of preserving local wisdom in the village community. This tradition has gradually begun to be displaced due to the decreasing agricultural land, and one of the causes of the reduction of agricultural land. The field was changed into housing development in village areas, which impacts the narrowness of rice fields. The purpose of this study is to describe the forms, meanings, and functions of the lexicon *neh-aneh*. This research used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and interviews with traditional leaders and local communities. The study used semiotic theory to examine the form, meaning and forms that emerge from preparation until the completion of the implementation of *neh-aneh* ritual. The research results show that the lexical forms of *neh-aneh* ceremonies using media from nature and offerings passed down through generations have different forms, meanings, and functions as a heritage of the ancestors' local wisdom that must be properly maintained and preserved.

Keywords: *harvest, culture, form, meaning, and function.*

Introduction

The Cultural, art, and ceremonial traditions exist as an inseparable unity with the role and position of regional languages. One of these regional languages is the Madurese language. Madurese is one of the regional languages used by the farming community in the village of Bongso Wetan, Menganti, Gresik. The people in this area mostly make a living by working the land. They cultivate and plant crops such as rice, corn, vegetables, and tubers. According to Dewanto (2015) The Madurese language is a regional language used by the community as a means of daily communication on Madura¹. The Madurese language is used as a medium in rice harvest ceremonies by the Madurese ethnic community in Gresik. The majority of the local community are farmers. They cultivate rice fields, plant, and harvest the yields in the fields during certain seasons. The harvesting method here uses a rain-fed system or waiting for the rainy season, they begin to plant rice and harvest it. The rainy season usually starts in early November or December each year. After three months, the rice that has ripened is ready to be harvested.

Harvesting is an important cultural and economic activity in many village communities. Beyond its function as an agricultural practice, harvesting also carries symbolic meanings related to gratitude, social solidarity, and cultural identity. This article aims to explore the meaning of harvesting in village life by examining its social, cultural, and symbolic aspects. The study uses a qualitative descriptive approach through literature review and cultural observation. The findings show that harvesting is not only an activity of collecting crops but

¹ Monto Bauto Laode, "PERSPEKTIF AGAMA DAN KEBUDAYAAN DALAM KEHIDUPAN MASYARAKAT INDONESIA (Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologi Agama)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial*, 23.2 (2014), hal. 11–25.

also a cultural event that strengthens community relationships, expresses gratitude for nature's abundance, and maintains traditional values passed down through generations. Therefore, harvesting plays a significant role in preserving social harmony and cultural heritage in rural communities.

The lexicon of *neh-aneh* ceremonies or rice harvesting used as a medium to understand the universe, which is partially starting to disappear. However, in this study, it discusses the forms, meaning, and functions of the *neh-aneh* ceremony lexicon in the tradition of the Madurese ethnic community. These lexicons hold a position as a medium used to connect prayers of gratitude to God and Dewi Sri, who is believed by the community as the symbol of the rice goddess or goddess of prosperity. The Madurese ethnic community in Gresik practices Javanese traditions even though they are of Madurese descent. Because they live on the island of Java, they adopt and follow Javanese community traditions. The traditions are embraced and carried out as a part of gratitude to God. These traditions prove that the local community's culture shapes the community to always be thankful.

The Culture and tradition are the heritage of the ancestors of the Madurese ethnic community in Gresik up to the present. This is evidenced by the continued practice of the *neh-aneh* ceremony in the local community. The culture that develops within a nation itself is called local culture, because local culture itself is a result of creation, intention, and feeling that grows and develops within the ethnic group in that region². There are several definitions of culture according to cultural experts; in this study, only three of the existing experts are cited, among them: 1) E.B. Tylor dalam, in his book of "Primitif Culture", that culture is a complex whole, which contains other knowledge as well as habits acquired by humans as members of society 2) R. Linton in his book of "The Cultural Background of Personality", that culture is a configuration of behavior and the results of actions, whose forming elements are supported and transmitted by members of a particular society, and 3) C. Klukhohn dan W.H. Kelly state that culture is the result of questions and answers from experts in anthropology, history, law, psychology, both implicit and explicit, rational, irrational, present at all times as a potential guideline for human behavior.

This research describes the problems regarding; 1) what forms of lexicon are used in the *neh-aneh* ceremony, 2) what the meaning and function of the lexicon used in the *neh-aneh* ceremony are for the local community as prerequisites for carrying out the ceremony. With these problems, it is hoped that the researcher can find out how far the community's understanding is in recognizing the lexicon used in the *neh-aneh* ceremony for the local community.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the form, meaning, and function of the lexicon used in harvesting activities in Gresik. Specifically, the study aims to identify the linguistic forms of the lexicon, such as words, phrases, and expressions, those are commonly used by local farmers during the harvesting process. These lexicons such as, *tumpeng*, shrimp paste, chili, flour, milkfish, and *neh-aneh* (a tool to cut rice stalk). In addition, it seeks to interpret the meanings of these lexical items within their cultural and social contexts, revealing how language reflects local knowledge and traditions. Furthermore, the research intends to examine the functions of the lexicon, including its role in communication, cultural preservation, and the transmission of agricultural practices across generations. Through this analysis, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and traditional farming practices in the Gresik community.

This research uses the semiotic theory proposed by Ferdinand De Saussure. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, semiotic theory views language as a sign system consisting of two main

² Laode, "PERSPEKTIF AGAMA DAN KEBUDAYAAN DALAM KEHIDUPAN MASYARAKAT INDONESIA (Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologi Agama)."

elements: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the physical form of a sign, such as sound or writing, while the signified is the concept or meaning represented by the signifier. In the context of meaning and symbols, Saussure asserts that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, meaning there is no natural relationship between the two, but rather is formed through social agreements within a society.

Thus, Saussure's semiotic approach enables researchers to understand how a lexicon does not merely function as a tool and ceremonial medium in the *neh-aneh* ritual carried out by the local Madurese ethnic community, but also as a symbolic representation that reflects the system of meaning in the life of the community.

In linguistics, the rational approach and historical linguistics (especially, synchronic) have a special relationship. The language is understood as the reality name label³. This theoretical approach, used in naming a language label, can help analysing the form, meaning, and function of the *neh-aneh* ceremony lexicon in the Gresik community. Thus, it is hoped that the linguistics concept of local language and culture can deepen the community's knowledge of the lexicon used in rice-picking ritual ceremonies.

This research provides significant benefits for both the researcher and other researchers in the field of linguistics and cultural studies. For the researcher, it enhances a deeper understanding of the form, meaning, and function of the lexicon used in harvesting activities, while also developing analytical skills in examining language within its cultural context. For other researchers, this study serves as a valuable reference and supporting material for further research, particularly in areas such as ethnolinguistics, semantics, and sociolinguistics. It also contributes to the documentation and preservation of local linguistic expressions related to traditional agricultural practices, which may otherwise be at risk of disappearing. Moreover, the findings of this research can inspire future studies to explore similar topics in different regions or cultural settings, thereby enriching the body of knowledge on the relationship between language, culture, and community practices.

Literature review is used as a reference and reference in this research, namely research conducted in the context of activities harvesting in Gresik. Literature review is based on linguistics, specifically morphology, semantics, and ethno linguistics. From the perspective of form, the harvesting lexicon not only has lexical meaning but also connotative and symbolic meaning. Meanwhile, from the aspect of function, the harvesting lexicon plays a vital role in the social and cultural life of the Gresik community. Besides being a means of communication, this lexicon serves as a means of preserving traditions and cultural identity, as well as a medium for transmitting values from generation to generation.

The researcher used two literature reviews on the form, meaning, and function of the lexicon of the *neh-aneh* or rice harvest ceremony in Gresik as a form of ethno linguistic and semiotic perspective. The first literature review is a study entitled 'Form, Meaning, and Function in the Meditation Mantra of Shamans in Lamongan Regency (Ethno linguistic Study)' written by Syarif from the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School Institute Paciran Lamongan East Java.

The research data is in the form of a poem structure, the theory used is the theory of function, the approach method uses a technique of direct involvement during the implementation of treatment, while the analysis uses ethno linguistic analysis in this article's research focused on the process of language dimensions in cultural dimensions in the ritual of giving shaman spells to patients. The research has similarities with this research regarding the techniques and data obtained directly while the objects are different.

The study used poetry, while this study uses a lexicon with semantic theory. Meanwhile, the bibliography serves as a reference for previous research on the socio-cultural values in the

³ Dadan Rusmana dan M Ag, "Evano.com_SEMIOTIKA KONTEMPORER."

film Tilik. (semiotic Charles Sanders Peirce preview study) written by Puspita Sari. This research had published in *Semiotika Journal* Volume 15 (number 1): no. 10-18 in 2021 Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.

The object of the research was taken from film clips. While the theory used was Peirce's semiotic theory regarding signs which divides symbols into symbols, objects, and interpret ants known as the triadic triangle. The results of this study state that these socio-cultural values include language systems, family attitudes, social organizations, technological advancements, livelihood systems, religious systems, greetings, myths that develop in society, social status, mutual cooperation, and polite values⁴.

In terms of meaning, the harvesting lexicon not only has lexical meaning but also connotative and symbolic connotations. Many terms used in rice harvesting are related to beliefs, cultural values, and local knowledge systems. For example, certain terms are used to describe tools, processes, or harvesting stages, reflecting humanity's relationship with nature and belief in spiritual powers. Therefore, semantic and semiotic approaches are highly relevant in uncovering the meanings contained within this lexicon.

Meanwhile, from a functional aspect, the harvesting lexicon plays a significant role in the social and cultural life of the Gresik people. Besides being a means of communication, this lexicon serves as a means of preserving traditions and cultural identity, as well as a medium for passing on values from generation to generation. In the context of harvest ceremonies or rituals, the use of certain lexicons also serves to strengthen social solidarity and maintain harmonious relationships between humans, nature, and religious beliefs. Thus, this literature review shows that the harvesting lexicon is not merely a collection of words, but rather a complex representation of the cultural system and local wisdom of the Gresik people.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the form, meaning, and function of the lexicon used in harvesting activities in the Madurese language. The design is chosen to allow an in-depth exploration of linguistic phenomena within their natural cultural context. The subjects of the research are native Madurese speakers, particularly farmers and community elders who actively participate in or have knowledge of traditional harvesting practices. Data are collected through observation, interviews, and documentation of naturally occurring speech during harvesting activities. Through this approach, the study aims to systematically identify the linguistic forms of the lexicon, interpret their meanings based on local cultural perspectives, and analyze their communicative and social functions within the Madurese-speaking community.

The data collection procedures in this research involve several qualitative techniques to obtain rich and authentic linguistic data related to the lexicon of harvesting in the Madurese language. The researcher conducts direct observations of harvesting activities to capture the natural use of language in context, complemented by in-depth interviews with native speakers, particularly farmers and community elders. In addition, documentation techniques such as audio recordings, field notes, and photographs are used to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data. The main research instruments include the researcher as the primary instrument, supported by interview guides, observation checklists, and recording devices to systematically gather and organize the data.

The data analysis techniques follow a descriptive qualitative approach. First, the collected data are transcribed and categorized based on their linguistic forms, such as words, phrases, or expressions. Next, the meanings of the lexicon are interpreted using semantic and

⁴ Dwi Ratih Puspitasari, "Social-Cultural Values In Tilik Film (Semiotic Study of Charles Sanders Peirce)," *Jurnal SEMIOTIKA*, 15.1 (2021), hal. 2579–8146 <<http://journal.ubm.ac.id/>>.

ethnolinguistic perspectives to understand their cultural significance. The functions of the lexicon are then analysed in terms of their roles in communication, social interaction, and cultural practices during harvesting activities. The research procedure includes several stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Through these steps, the study aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of the form, meaning, and function of harvesting lexicon in the Madurese-speaking community.

The data found were analysed based on the theory of meaning, signifiers, and symbols. According to Ferdinand De Saussure, a signifier is a meaningful sound or a meaningful stroke. Signified (signed) as the second reference in getting a sign or as the characteristics of semiotics⁵. These markers and symbols are found in the form of lexicons in *neh-aneh* ceremonies such as; *tumpeng* (form rice in which form as a mountain), shrimp paste, chili, flour, milkfish, rice grains and other. Data in the form of a lexicon of ritual ceremonies or rice harvest seasons will be discussed in the following findings and discussion sections:

Finding and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the lexicon used in harvesting activities in the Madurese language consists of various linguistic forms, including single words, phrases, and fixed expressions that are closely related to traditional agricultural practices. In terms of meaning, these lexical items reflect not only their literal definitions but also cultural values, beliefs, and local wisdom embedded in the farming community. In this research, the researcher only focuss on form, meaning, and function the lexicon in *neh-aneh* ceremony in Madura ethnics. They used to do the ceremony to show the thanks to the God and the ancestors. The discussion shows that many terms carry symbolic and contextual meanings that can only be fully understood within the socio-cultural setting of Madurese society in which happen in Menganti Gresik. In on of this part district, there are Madura ethnics. The have been lived in this place for the ancestor built the village. Furthermore, the functions of the lexicon are identified as communicative tools for coordinating activities, markers of social identity, and mediums for preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge across generations. Overall, the analysis highlights the strong relationship between language, culture, and traditional harvesting practices in the Madurese-speaking community.

Based on the findings regarding the lexicon of the *neh-aneh* ceremony performed by the people of Bongso Wetan village, several lexicons are found. These lexicons take the form of words and phrases. The data were analysed based on the theory of meaning, signifiers, and symbols according to Ferdinand De Saussure, such as *tumpeng*, leaves, pot, knife, incense, resin, matches, fire, milks fish, chilli, flour, rice grains, brain, various items, salt, water glass, banana, and *neh-aneh*.

⁵ S. Tanti, "METAMORFOSIS Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra Indonesia, dan Pengajarannya Jurnal Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia FKIP Universitas Bale Bandung," *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra Indonesia dan Pengajarannya*, , 15.April (2022), hal. 19–25 <<http://ejournal.unibba.ac.id/index.php/metamorfosis>>.

Table1. Data of forms, meaning, and function of lexicon Harvesting Ceremony

Lexicons	Forms	Meaning	Function
/tumpeng/	rice, in form a mountain	thanks	to give the thank to the God
/leaves/	closing of thank giving	protection	give protection to the worship
/pot/	equipment	balancing	as balancing between the people and universe
/knife/	starting to ceremony	life	respect for working tools
/incense/	giving eternity	connected	respecting or connecting to the God
/resin/	beginning ceremony	to rebuilt the life	giving fertility
/matches/	to burn	eliminate the evil	as intermediary between human being and the god
/fires/	glory	deliver victory	giving glory
/milkfish/	thanks expression	welfare	giving welfare
/chilli/	equipment of fire	ward off disaster	protection
/flour/	mixing incense	holly	eternity and holly
/rice grains/	started symbols	the beginning of life	respecting to the God
/brain/	fire	ancestors and God	forming of the thanks
/various items/	cutting	thank expression	the beginning of harvesting and welfare
/salt/	give smell	the original	Protecting from the pest and other illness
/water/	purify	purifying of ritual	purifying of universe
/glass/	place for water	clam atmosphere	purity and sincerity

Data 1 /tumpeng/

Tumpeng is as the one of requirement in the neh-aneh ceremony in Bongso Wetan village. It is as tradition as the thanks to the God. The harvesting ceremony in Javanese culture can be understood through the lexicon of *tumpeng* using a functionalist semiotics perspective, where each form, meaning, and function is interconnected within a social system. The conical shape of the *tumpeng*, often made from rice, signifies a symbolic relationship between humans and the divine, reflecting gratitude for agricultural abundance, while its surrounding side dishes represent harmony between nature and community. In terms of meaning, the lexicon embedded in *tumpeng* elements such as specific foods and their arrangement communicates moral values, social hierarchy, and collective identity shared during the harvest ritual. Functionally, *tumpeng*

operates not only as a ceremonial food but also as a semiotics tool that reinforces social cohesion, expresses spiritual devotion, and maintains cultural continuity, aligning with functionalism's view that cultural symbols serve to sustain the stability and integration of society.

Data 2. /leaves/

In *neh-aneh* ceremony, of course the village always use leaves of banana as the media in this ceremony. It is as the part of worship in *neh-aneh* ceremony. The researcher still find the media as the importing part in this tradition. Within a functionalist semiotics framework, the lexicon of leaves in the harvesting ceremony can be interpreted through the interplay of form, meaning, and function as an integrated cultural sign system. In terms of form, leaves are physically positioned as a covering or closing element of the offerings, marking the completion of gratitude expressed by the community. This material form signifies a symbolic closure of thanksgiving, where the act of covering reflects the idea of safeguarding what has been received.

The meaning attributed to leaves is thus associated with protection, as they are culturally understood to shield both the offerings and the spiritual intentions behind them from negative forces. Functionally, leaves operate as a protective medium within the ceremony, believed to provide spiritual security for the participants or worshippers involved. From a functionalist semiotics perspective, this triadic relationship demonstrates how the lexicon of leaves sustains social and spiritual stability: the form embodies closure, the meaning encodes protection, and the function ensures the well-being of the community. In conclusion, the use of leaves in the harvesting ceremony is not merely decorative but serves as a culturally embedded sign that reinforces collective beliefs, fulfils ritual needs, and maintains the continuity of symbolic protection within the social structure.

Data 3. /pot/

The next data in which used in this ceremony is a pot. It is as the place for putting *tumpeng* in this ceremony. It is made from bamboo or wood. It is used as the one of the media in this ceremony. The pot has form as the equipment, and it also as the balancing the world or universe. This item has function as the balancing between people or farmers with the universe. From a functionalist semiotics perspective, the lexicon of pans or pots in the harvesting ceremony reflects an integrated relationship between form, meaning, and function within the cultural system.

In terms of form, pans or pots serve as the final container or vessel used to hold and present the harvested products, symbolizing the completion of the ceremonial process. This form signifies closure and readiness, marking the end of ritual activities and the fulfilment of communal efforts. The meaning attached to pans or pots is associated with the idea of balance, as these objects metaphorically represent the harmony between human being or farmers and natural forces that sustain agricultural life. The Functionally, pans or pots act as mediating tools that embody and reinforce the balance between farmers and the universe or the field, ensuring that the relationship remains reciprocal and stable.

Within functionalist semiotics, this triadic connection shows that the lexicon of pans or pots is not merely utilitarian but plays a vital symbolic role in maintaining equilibrium in both social and ecological dimensions. In conclusion, the presence of pans or pots in the harvesting ceremony illustrates how material objects function as meaningful signs that complete the ritual, convey cosmological balance, and sustain harmonious relations between humans and their environments.

Data 4. /knife/

Every activity in the field, the farmers always used this tool to cut and to start the harvesting. In this case, especially for the tool is used only for cutting the rice straw on the top of tree. It cannot be used for cutting the other. The people in this village called *neh aneh*. The term *neh-aneh* is also familiar to then ceremony in the village. From a functionalist semiotics perspective, the lexicon of the knife used to cut rice in the harvesting ceremony reveals a close relationship between form, meaning, and function within the cultural system.

In terms of form, the knife appears as the initial tool employed at the beginning of the harvest, symbolizing the starting point of the ceremony and marking the transition from growth to collection. This form signifies the opening of ritual action, where the first cut becomes a culturally significant gesture. The meaning attributed to the knife is that of a symbol of life, as it enables the transformation of ripened crops into sustenance, reflecting the cycle of life sustained through agriculture. Functionally, the knife operates as a representation of respect for working tools in the field, emphasizing the farmers' acknowledgment of the instruments that support their livelihood and their connection to nature.

Within the framework of functionalist semiotics, this triadic relationship demonstrates how the knife is not merely a practical object but also a meaningful sign that reinforces values of respect, life continuity, and ritual order. In conclusion, the lexicon of the knife in the harvesting ceremony embodies the beginning of the ritual process, symbolizes life itself, and functions to maintain respect for agricultural tools, thereby contributing to the preservation of cultural meaning and social harmony.

Conclusion

Based on the finding data and discussion above, the researcher had concluded that the lexicons associated with the harvesting ceremony (*neh-aneh*) of the Madurese ethnic community in Gresik, such as tumpeng, leaves, pot, knife, incense, resin, matches, fire, milkfish, chilli, flour, rice grains, brain, various items, salt, water glass, and banana demonstrate a coherent semiotic system when analysed through functionalism. Each element reveals a triadic relationship between form, meaning, and function that sustains cultural values and social order. The forms of these objects, whether as tools, offerings, or ritual complements, mark different stages of the ceremony from beginning to completion; their meanings encode philosophical concepts such as life, protection, balance, gratitude, and harmony with the universe; and their functions reinforce communal beliefs, spiritual devotion, and respect for both nature and human being or farmers. Altogether, these lexicons are not merely material components but symbolic representations of local wisdom that preserve the identity, continuity, and ecological awareness of the Madurese community.

In completing this research, the researcher has some weakness in doing this research so that why he needs suggestion. Based on the conclusion can be said that it is important for future generations, researchers, and local stakeholders to actively document, preserve, and reinterpret these lexicons within both academic and community contexts so that their meanings are not lost over time. Integrating this local wisdom into educational practices, cultural programs, and sustainable agricultural discourse can strengthen cultural resilience while maintaining relevance in modern society, especially in Bongso Wetan Village Menganti Gresik East Java. Furthermore, deeper interdisciplinary studies combining semiotics, anthropology, and environmental studies are recommended to expand understanding of how such traditional symbols continue to function in contemporary life, ensuring that the harvesting ceremony and its rich lexicon remain a living heritage rather than a static tradition.

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