

# *Ba'usung* Tradition in Wedding Ceremonies of Banjar Ethnic Group in Indragiri Hilir District

1<sup>st</sup> Tassya Nopitalia

Faculty of Social Science Education  
Department of Cultural Arts Education  
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia  
[Tassyanopitalia17@gmail.com](mailto:Tassyanopitalia17@gmail.com)

2<sup>nd</sup> Agusti Efi\*

Faculty of Social Science Education,  
Department of Cultural Arts Education  
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia,  
[gustti@yahoo.co.id](mailto:gustti@yahoo.co.id)

**Abstract**—Many cultures and traditions are endangered and have been extinct. One of them is the *Ba'usung* tradition. The *Ba'usung* tradition is one of the traditions in the marriage ceremony of the Banjar tribe that is no longer much done by the younger generation. This research is aimed to elucidate the procession of *Ba'usung* tradition in the Banjar tribe marriage ceremony in sub-district of Tembilahan Hulu of Indragiri Hilir District. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. In-depth observation and interviews with informants was used to collect the data. The result of the research can be concluded as follows: *Ba'usung* tradition is held when the groom arrives at the bride's house, precisely before the bride and the groom sit side by

side at the wedding dais, which, in the Banjar tribe, is called *batatai*. When the groom arrives at the bride's house, the bride and the groom are carried over the shoulder (*Usung* means carry) by two people who are trusted as the carrier. While carrying the bride and the groom over their shoulder, these two carriers perform *silat* (traditional martial art forms). After this procession, the bride and the groom are welcome to the wedding dais. The meaning of *Ba'usung* traditional ceremony is as a test for the groom before facing household affairs and his responsibilities towards his family, wife and children in the future.

**Keywords**—*Tradition, Banjar, Procession, Meaning, Wedding Ceremonies*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indragiri Hilir district is one part of Riau province. According to Asmawati Abza(2002:8), the society of Indragiri Hilir district is a community of mixed ethnic groups, dominated by Melayu, Banjar and Bugis. However, this does not mean that other ethnic groups do not exist in Indragiri Hilir. Other ethnic groups also live there, but not so many. It can be seen from the various art forms found in Indragiri Hilir. Tembilahan as the capital of the district is part of Riau Province, 60% of their population consists of Banjar people. Banjar community migrated from South Kalimantan, which in general are traders spreading to various territories (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei). In Indragiri Hilir,

Banjar people firmly keep the Banjar art and cultures their ancestors brought from the land of South Kalimantan. Generally, cultural life in Tembilahan especially Indragiri Hilir is strongly influenced by the Banjar culture.

Tembilahan Hulu is one of the 21 sub-districts in Indragiri Hilir District. In this sub-district area, there is a tradition called *Ba'usung* in wedding ceremonies of Banjar ethnic groups. According to UU. [1] a traditional ceremony is an act of revitalizing the existing values in a society, in order to prove validation of various forms of relationships as the sign of each steps of human's life journey.

*Ba'usung* tradition is held when the groom arrives at the bride's house. Before sitting side by side at the wedding dais, the groom and

bride are carried over the shoulder (*Usung* means carry) by two respected and trusted men as the carriers. While carrying the groom and bride over their shoulders using a long fabric, these two carriers perform Silat (a form of traditional martial art).

Many people do not know and no longer understand the *Ba'usung* tradition in the Banjar community wedding ceremony in Indragiri Hilir district, both in terms of form or meaning. According to [2] meaning is definition given to a form. Meaning in each form is a sign of everything that is seen, depending on the one's perception and view of life. The subject of this research is the tradition of *Ba'usung*. Specifically, the subject of this research is the procession and the meaning contained in *Ba'usung* tradition. Based on the explanation before, the following formulations of problems were obtained: a) how is the form of *Ba'usung* tradition procession? b) what is the meaning contained in the *Ba'usung* tradition? With the aim of this research, the public can get to know the traditions that develop around completely. How does the shape and meaning of the tradition is *bausung* tradition.

## II. METHOD

To get accurate and correct data in this case the researcher employed descriptive analysis using qualitative data. According to [3] descriptive research is a research directed at providing systematic and accurate symptoms, facts, or events concerning the characteristics of a particular population or region. Thus, it can be concluded that for a qualitative research providing descriptive data, the study needs to observe, consider, and collect information and depict them appropriately. In this study, the researcher observed the procession and explored the meaning of the *Ba'usung* tradition.

The location of the study is Indragiri Hilir District, specifically in sub-district of Tembilahan Hulu. This location was chosen for the study based on the following consideration: the sub-district of Tembilahan Hulu is one of the sub-districts in Indragiri Hilir in which the majority of the Banjar people

still strongly hold to to the customs and traditions of the Banjar tribe especially *Ba'usung* tradition. Several techniques were used in collecting the data for the study to be conducted objectively and precisely, including observation, interview, and documentation. In this study, observation were carried out by observing each form of the *Ba'usung* tradition from the beginning to end. In particular, this research involved observation on key informants, the *tukang usung* (carrier men). In-depth interview conducted with descriptive interview, structural and contrast specifically aimed at key informants who were considered to have understanding of the important parts of the subject being studied. The documentation collected was in the form of photos and videos related to the *Ba'usung* tradition.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The habits of a group of people also known as tradition which are the customs that have been carried down by generations of certain groups such as family, ethnic group, even a nation. One of the ethnic groups which hold fast to the ancestral tradition is the Banjar people. Banjar is a native ethnic group of South Kalimantan. The People of Banjar still maintains their traditions as part of their identity and to distinguish themselves from other groups. As explained by Sal Murgiyanto (2004:2), tradition is a product of human's creation and innovation; material objects, beliefs, fictions, events and institutions passed down from generation to generation.

Sedyawati (1991: 4) adds, "tradition is an activity given or passed down from the past to the present that has a ritualistic nature". Every society needs tradition as Rendra said (2004: 2). Without a tradition, societal interaction will be chaotic, and human life will be barbaric. However, its value as a guide will degrade when the tradition started to be absolute. In such circumstance, it is no longer a guide but rather a barrier for personal growth and societal creativity.

From this perspective, it is concluded that tradition is a pattern in human life which is passed down to the next generations by the

ancestors. This includes the *Ba'usung* tradition of Banjar people's wedding ceremony. The existence of this tradition in people's life in Indragiri Hilir district, especially in Tembilahan Hulu sub-district is undeniable. Based on the researcher's [4], Abdul Aziz', a respected figure of the ethnic group said that this tradition is a heritage from ancestors that have been passed down from generation to generation until present days. *Ba'usung* is a tradition in the Banjar community wedding ceremony. This tradition serves as a ceremony to welcome the groom to the bride's house. Thus, the Tembilahan Hulu society, especially Banjar people believes that this tradition is one of the requirements that must be performed at the wedding ceremony. If it is not conducted, the wedding ceremony will not run smoothly.

Ceremonials in marriage are considered very important for Banjar people, because the customs can be a differentiator between tribes. In addition, ceremonials are legacies from ancestors, a cultural heritage that must be preserved as an identity of Banjar people. Furthermore, [5] define the procession of Banjar wedding ceremony from the beginning until the end as follows; a) *Basasuluh*, b) *Badatang* (proposal), c) *Bapapayuan/Bapatut Jujuran*, d) *Maantar Jujuran*, e) *Akad Nikah* (marriage vow), f) *Menurunakan and Mararak* of the groom, g) *Ba'usung*, h) *Batatai* (sitting on dais)

#### *Basasuluh*

The word *Basasuluh* come from the word *suluh*, is the process of finding information about the woman to be married, this is done secretly by the groom side. This process is the first orientation in order to find a bride for the son; this is done before making an official marriage proposal. The basic information required is whether the woman is betrothed to someone; if not, then the procession will continue to official marriage proposal to the family.

*Badatang* (marriage proposal)

*Badatang* is an event of marriage proposal officially done by the groom's family. This is done by bringing the closest family members of the groom to the bride's residence. Among

these family members, one representative who was chosen and giving mandate during the *basasuluh* must come in order to continue the previous talks between the two families. In this procession, dialogues in Banjar language occur and some were filled with exchanges of *pantun* (traditional poems) between two families, such as "*apa dicari bayan manari, katutut bajalan malam, apa dicari datang kamari, kami manuntut janji sumalam.*" The essence of the verses is related to what had been the talk about during the *basasuluh* as well as some family hospitality. Basically *badatang* or marriage proposal is a meeting between the two families of the future groom and bride as a sign that a wedding reception is going to be held.

#### *Bapapayuan/Bapatut Jujuran*

If the marriage proposal is accepted, it will proceed with deciding *jujukan* or dowry, this part of the procession is usually done at night and attended by both side's main family, relatives, and religious figures. After that as sign of agreement, "*patalian*" is given as a tie, usually in the form of money or wedding rings.

#### *Maantar Jujuran*

After getting an agreement between the two families in *badatang* and *bapapayuan*, about the amount of dowry and other betrothal gifts such as the future wife's dress, shoes, bags, toiletries and cosmetics, it proceeds to the procession of *maantar* (bringing) the *jujukan* (dowry). This is usually carried by the family members of the groom; each item is carried by one family member. The dowry usually is in the form of money or jewelry with an amount agreed by both families.

#### *Promise of marriage*

As in marriage in general, Banjar people also follow the provisions according to their religious belief. Usually, the marriage vow is taken a day before the wedding ceremony, or in Banjar tradition is called *Batati*.

*Manurunakan and Maarak* (sending off) the groom

*Manurunakan Pengantin*, is a procession conducted in the house of the groom before

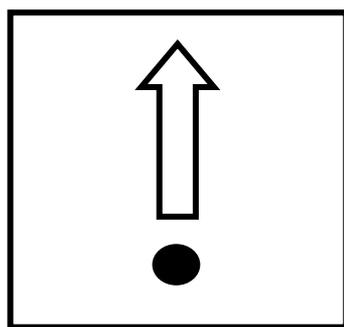
setting off for the bride’s house for the wedding ceremony. This step usually begins with prayers, and then the groom and his whole family set off while reciting prayers and shalawat for the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Furthermore, when they arrive at the bride’s residence, the procession of *Mararak* is done. Men, women and children walk down the groom together from a few meters from the bride’s house.

*Ba’usung*

1. Form of the *Ba’usung* tradition procession

The *Ba’usung* tradition procession begins with the arrival of the groom to the the bride’s residence. Upon arriving in the bride’s house yard, the bride’s family is already standing waiting in the home yard where the wedding is taking place. Then the groom and bride meet and were invited to sit in a chair that has been provided—this is to facilitate the *tukang usung* (two men who will carry the bride and groom on their shoulder), who have stand by the bride and groom. The groom and bride are ready to proceed the *Ba’usung* tradition. All relatives, families and invited guests have gathered in the house yard to watch them being lifted up.

First, the groom is lifted up by one of the *tukang usung*. The groom is placed on the shoulders of a man who is trusted to be a *tukang usung*. His feet are placed at a long



Picture 1. Image used by permission ©Tassya Nopitalia. 2019. *Ba’usung* Tradition in Wedding Ceremonies of Banjar Ethnic Group in Indragiri Hilir District

Furthermore, the three steps backward movement has the meaning that the marriafe will form a household that is blessed by Allah SWT until the end of their life. As the previous movement, this movement is also a core

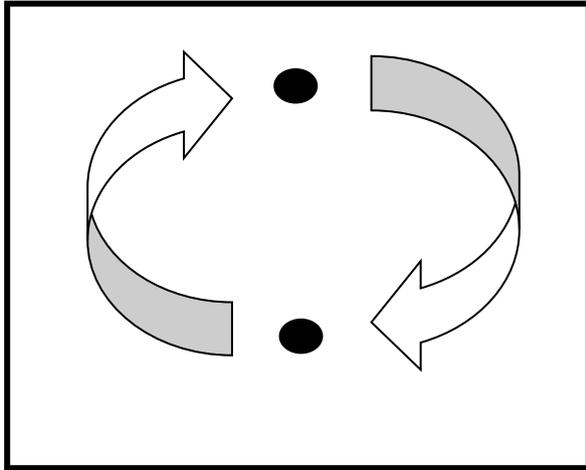
fabric tied up around the *tukang usung’s* waist. At the same time, the bride is also carried on one of the *tukang usung’s* sholders. Unlike the groom, the bride only sits on one shoulder of the *tukang usung*, which is seemly hard to do as the *tukang usung* needs to balance his body. But this is not a problem for *tukang usung*, as long as the bride’s family meets the conditions set by *tukang usung*. These conditions are not always the same, but in the general the requirements that must be met are in the form of sticky rice and eggs that must be given to the *tukang usung*. If these requirements are met, it is believed that the procession will go smoothly.

These two *tukang usung* perform silat, a form of traditional martial art. They begin to do silat movements called *silat kuntuau*. The movement in the *Ba’usung* tradition are divided into 3 (three) types, which are three steps forward, three steps backward, and closing moves of which each of them has meanings. This movement is the core movement of the *Ba’usung* tradition.

The beginning is the three steps forward movement with the meaning that the groom and the bride pray for the wedding to be blessed by Allah SWT. This move has a rule in which it cannot be facing back the bride and groom to avoid undesirable things. The floor design of this movement is described as follows:



movement of the *Ba’usung* tradition which also has a rule of not facing back the bride or the groom to avoid undesirable things. The floor design of this movement is described as follows:

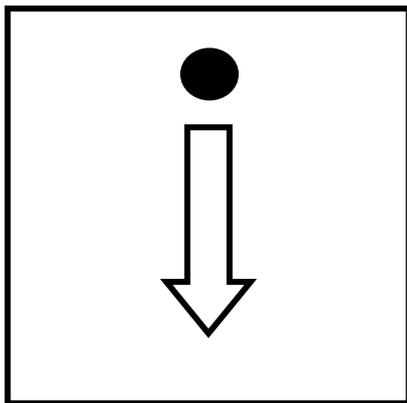


Picture 2. Image used by permission ©Tassya Nopitalia. 2019. *Ba'usung* Tradition in Wedding Ceremonies of Banjar Ethnic Group in Indragiri Hilir District



After the groom and bride are done being carried, they are seated back in chair. To end the procession of this tradition, *Tukang Usung* (carrier) perform a worship movement in front of the groom and bride as a final tribute and

congratulations to the groom and bride before sitting side by side at the wedding dais. The floor design of this movement is described as follows:



Picture 3. Image used by permission ©Tassya Nopitalia. 2019. *Ba'usung* Tradition in Wedding Ceremonies of Banjar Ethnic Group in Indragiri Hilir District



With this last movement, this is a sign that the *Ba'usung* tradition has been completed. After finishing, the groom and bride are invited to go together to the wedding dais.

*Batatai* (sit side by side)

After a series of traditional ceremony, the groom and bride arrived at the final stage, *Batatai*, where the groom and bride sit side by side on the wedding dais.

2. The meaning contained in the *Ba'usung* tradition

The series of ceremony performed by the Banjar tribe community in marriage certainly have meaning including the *Ba'usung* tradition, which has meaning in each set of activities.

According to Geertz in Triyanto (2001: 20) a symbol is anything (objects, materials, events, actions, words, human movements) that marks or represents something else or everything that has been given a certain meaning. According to Iskandar [6] meaning is 'intention' or 'definition', 'meaningful' means having deep meaning, and 'to interpret' means to give meaning or to explain a definition or intention. According to Daryusti [2], meaning is underlying intention given to an object. The meaning in each form is a sign of everything that is seen, depending on the perception and view of life of the subject. Therefore, it can be concluded that meaning is a view of an object which has been an agreement of a certain group of people to convey information that can

be understood together by a group of people or society.

The understanding of the meaning of *Ba'usung* tradition in Banjar wedding ceremony in Indragiri Hilir district could be seen from the term *Ba'usung* which means being carried. Then, the three types of *Ba'usung* movements are also meaningful. The three steps forward movement with the meaning that the groom and bride pray for God's blessings. Furthermore, the three steps backward movement has the meaning that the household will be blessed by Allah SWT until the end of life. After they are done being carried, they are seated again on the chair. To end this procession, the *tukang usung* perform courtesy movement in front of the groom and bride as a final tribute and congratulation.

The *Ba'usung* tradition as a whole has a meaning of a test for the groom to face the marriage life, in which the journey will not be easy. There will be many or deals, twists and turns. Furthermore, the *Ba'usung* tradition also means his responsibility towards the family, wife and his children in the future. In the *silat* movements, the first move of the *tukang usung* lifting the groom indicates that a husband will lead in the household. The meaning is in dealing with problems in household, a man as the head of the family must be able to take a stand to find solutions so the household will stay harmonious. The last movement is also ended by *tukang usung* lifting the groom. The meaning in this case is if there is a problem between husband and wife then the husband should yield and apologize first.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

From this research, it can be concluded, *Ba'usung* tradition is a ceremony that is commonly performed by the Banjar community in Tembilahan Hulu sub-district of Indragiri Hilir in welcoming the groom who comes to the bride's house. Where the majority of the practitioners is Banjar ethnic group. This tradition is one of the requirements that must be performed in the Banjar people wedding ceremony. If it is not performed, Banjar people believe that the wedding ceremony will not run smoothly. They even believe that one of

the family member will be possessed by a kind of supernatural existence.

The existence of *Ba'usung* tradition is still preserved in Indragiri Hilir, especially in Tembilahan Hulu sub-district. There are still many people found performing this tradition. The *Ba'usung* tradition is a heritage passed down from the ancestors to the Banjar people, especially to the *Tukang Usung*, which can be seen from the ability of *Tukang Usung* when carrying the groom and bride. Only using a property of a long fabric, a *Tukang Usung* is able to carry the groom and bride on his shoulder and then perform *silat* movements which are called *silat kuntuau*. The most important matter in the procession of *Ba'usung* tradition is the belief of Banjar people in this tradition and the belief of the bride and groom towards the *Tukang Usung* who will carry them.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Authors acknowledge to the *tukang usung*, bride and groom as the informants and anyone who has helped during the research.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Hamidy. (2009). *Jagad Melayu dalam Lintasan Budaya di Riau*. Pekanbaru: Bilik Kreatif Press.
- [2] Daryusti. (2010). *Lingkaran Lokal Genius dan Pemikiran Seni Budaya*. Yogyakarta: Multi Grafindo.
- [3] Zuriyah, Nurul. (2006). *Metodologi Penelitian Sosial dan Pendidikan*. Malang: Bumi Aksara.
- [4] Interview on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- [5] Saleh, M. Idwar, dkk. (1991). *Adat Istiadat dan Upacara Perkawinan Daerah Kalimantan*.
- [6] Saleh, M. Idwar dkk. (1977-1978). *Adat Istiadat Daerah Kalimantan Selatan*. Proyek Penelitian dan Pencatatan Kebudayaan Daerah.
- [7] Arikunto, Suharsimi. (2006). *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- [8] Daryusti. (2001). *Kajian Dari Berbagai Segi*. Bukit Tinggi: Pustaka Indonesia.

- [9] Daryusti. (2011). *Hegemoni Penghulu Dalam Perspektif Budaya*. Yogyakarta: Cipta Media.
- [10] Hidayat, Rahmat. (2014). Analisis Semiotika Makna Motivasi Pada Lirik Lagu “Laskar pelangi” Karya Nidji. *eJournal Ilmu Komunikasi*. Samarinda: Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik. Universitas Mulawarman.