

Communication Phenomenology In The *Megengan* Ritual

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the phenomenology of communication in the *Megengan* ritual in Wonosunyo Village, Gempol District, Pasuruan Regency. *Megengan* ritual is a tradition of Javanese people that is held to welcome the month of Ramadan, involving various symbols and communication practices rich in cultural meaning. The method used in this research is qualitative with a phenomenological approach, where data is collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. The results of this study show that communication in the *Megengan* ritual plays an important role in strengthening cultural identity, building community solidarity, and teaching moral values to the younger generation. Through this ritual, the people of Wonosunyo Village can maintain their traditions amid modernization while maintaining social cohesion and local cultural sustainability.

Keywords:

Phenomenology of
Communication,
Culture,
Megengan Ritual

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami fenomenologi komunikasi dalam ritual Megengan di Desa Wonosunyo, Kecamatan Gempol, Kabupaten Pasuruan. Ritual Megengan merupakan tradisi masyarakat Jawa yang dilaksanakan untuk menyambut bulan Ramadan, yang melibatkan berbagai simbol dan praktik komunikasi yang kaya akan makna kultural. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi, dimana data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi dalam ritual Megengan berperan penting dalam memperkuat identitas budaya, membangun solidaritas masyarakat, dan mengajarkan nilai-nilai moral kepada generasi muda. Melalui ritual ini, masyarakat Desa Wonosunyo dapat mempertahankan tradisi mereka di tengah modernisasi dengan tetap menjaga kohesi sosial dan keberlanjutan budaya lokal.

Keywords:

Fenomonologi
Budaya, Ritual
Megengan

INTRODUCTION

Local culture that lives amid the community is usually born from the spiritual encouragement of the community and local rites that are spiritually and materially very important for the social life of a village community environment. Local culture has a close relationship with all-natural conditions in the environment. It is displayed in various traditional village ceremonies, one of which is Megengan (Shufya, 2022). Megengan is a Javanese cultural ritual that is rich in symbolism and meaning. Through communication ethnography, it can be understood that Megengan reflects the importance of the Javanese people's family, community, and cultural values. Each element in Megengan has a deep symbolic meaning, and this ritual is a way to convey values such as social hierarchy. (M Alfin Fatikh & Hendrik, 2023) The Megengan tradition is carried out ahead of the month of Ramadan, especially in Wonosunyo Village, Gempol District, Pasuruan Regency. Megengan comes from the word "megeng," which means to endure and refers to preparations to welcome the fasting month. This tradition teaches to refrain from desires before fasting and is an important part of Javanese people's lives, becoming an inseparable part of their culture. (Aminaturrofiqoh & Marzuki, 2024)

The Javanese people welcome the holy month of Ramadan by carrying out the Meggan tradition. In implementing Megengan, there are several stages: (1) usually pilgrimage to the grave (Nyekar). (2) making a pairing or giving an offering to welcome the deceased family. (3) (Kenduren), carried out in a mosque or one of the residents' houses. The food brought to complement the selamatan has its meaning (Wulandari et al., 2023). The Megengan tradition is a spiritual practice and a symbol and cultural identity of the Javanese people. In this tradition, the people of Wonosunyo Village carry out a series of rituals involving rich symbolism, ranging from a pilgrimage to the grave (Nyekar), offering offerings to endure, or salvation carried out in mosques or residents' houses. Each meal served in the selamatan has a deep, symbolic meaning, reflecting the community's hopes and prayers for a better life in the upcoming month of Ramadan. (Safi'i, 2024). Javanese culture is known for its steadfastness and persistent preservation despite the challenges of globalization. The rapid modernization trend often threatens the preservation of local traditions, but the people of Wonosunyo Village can maintain the Megengan tradition as part of their lives. (Hendayani, 2024) This tradition is not only a way to welcome the fasting month but also a tool to strengthen social ties and solidarity between citizens. (Rifa'i, 2017) Communication during each stage of the Megengan ritual strengthens the sense of togetherness and mutual belonging among community members (Aibak, 2010). Apart from strengthening social ties, the Megengan tradition educates the younger generation on moral values. Through involvement in

this ritual, children and adolescents are introduced to noble values such as respecting ancestors, the importance of friendship, and the meaning of sacrifice. Thus, this tradition is social cohesion and ensures that cultural values can be passed on from generation to generation.(Fatima & Fauziyah, 2024)

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, which aims to collect all information in actual and detailed terms from sources that are well aware of the phenomenology of communication in the contagion phenomenon by using a communication phenomenological theory approach, according to Alfred Schutz (Murdiyanto, 2020). This study's subject is traditional elders who have led the megengan ritual in the village. The object that is studied is the phenomenon and meaning of the megengan. This research is located in Wonosunyo Village, Gempol District, Pasuruan Regency, which is the focus of the research subject—data collection techniques through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with informants, and documentation analysis. The data was analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques to identify the main themes that emerged related to the communication phenomenology in the Megengan ritual.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The ritual of holding in Wonosunyo Village, Gempol District, Pasuruan Regency, combines Javanese culture and Islamic values. Researchers will delve deeper into the communication during this ritual with a phenomenological approach. The explanation of the data findings that the researcher has found is as follows: Logical consistency is a state in which all elements of an argument, system, or theory support each other and do not contradict each other. This means that every part of the explanation or action follows the same logical principles, ensuring the entire system or argument is reasonable and accountable (Fatima & Fauziyah, 2024). In the megengan ritual, language is used verbally and in non-verbal communication through ritual symbols and actions performed. The language here is a tool to convey the values of tradition and deep beliefs passed down from generation to generation. The meaning of the megengan ritual arises from the interaction between the participants and the ritual itself. (Salsabila, 2022) Each element of the ritual, such as food, prayer, or procession, carries a rich, layered symbolic meaning that can only be fully understood through direct experience in the social and cultural context of the village(Ahwan & Marzuki, n.d.)

Table of Symbolic Meaning of the Megengan Tradition

It	Symbolic Meaning of Megengan	Explanation	Symbol	Meaning
1	Ancestral Reverence	The belief that ancestral spirits come	Wearing piece and preparing complete meals in a bowl	Traditional elders, people who must be respected
2	Personal Safety	It affects the physical when performing process imperfections	Apem cakes are white and provide food according to the teachings of ancestors	People who have a high sense of responsibility and believe in the power of nature
3	Social Integrity	The provision of offerings occurs because of the attitude of imitating others.	Colorful patterned regions and strikingly colored apem cakes	People who love art and are educated
4	Social Harmony	The use of offerings as a symbol of mutual harmony	Clothes are always neat, providing food for kenduren in large quantities	Rich and influential people
5	Awareness of Worship	Preparation of offerings to ask God for forgiveness	Sharia clothes and often participate in religious activities. Do not burn incense in offerings	A person who obeys the rules of his Lord

Table of Symbolic Meanings of Food in the Megengan Tradition

No	Food Name	Meaning of Food
1	Blessing Rice	It contains the meaning of hope to get blessings
2	Apem Cake	Sending prayers to male and female ancestors, which means a symbol to ask for forgiveness
3	Jenang Abang	Respecting the earth occupied, the prophet Adam, Siti Eve, the earth that the family occupies and asks for blessings from the ancestors

4	Tumpeng	Expressing gratitude for the arrival of the fasting month and hoping that from the beginning of fasting to the end of Eid al-Fitr, they will always be given strength so that nothing happens.
5	Banana	Describing the friendship of Muslims

Table of Meaning Data in the Megengan Offering

No	Food Name	Meaning of Food
1	Drink	Drinks are meaningful in entertaining guests; there is a belief that the spirit returns when providing the offering and is treated like a guest.
2	Cigarettes and betel	Remembering the deceased spirit and hoping that the spirit will soon return with its Lord
3	Ublik	So that the implementation of the deceased's journey is given lighting and a straight path
4	Apem Cake	Sending prayers to ancestors as a symbol to ask for forgiveness

The collective thinking of the people of Wonosunyo Village about the megengan ritual is reflected in how they prepare, carry out, and reflect on it. It demonstrates a shared understanding of the importance of maintaining social and spiritual harmony through traditional practices. In the Aegean ritual, language goes beyond spoken words; it encompasses all forms of expression used to communicate during the ritual, including symbols, body movements, and facial expressions. The language here is a means to convey traditions and communal values. (M. Alvin Fatikh, 2020) The meaning of the megengan ritual lies not only in the visible elements but also in the broader social and spiritual context in which the ritual is performed. Meaning arises from how community members interact with each other with the spiritual aspects of the ritual. Thinking in the context of the Aegean ritual reflects individuals' collective understanding and perception of the importance of preserving traditions and strengthening community bonds. It also includes personal reflection on roles and identities in society. (Syaifuddin & Ahwan, 2024)

The language used in the meggangan ritual is adequate because it captures and conveys the complexity of the ritual experience. This includes the words used in mantras and prayers and the body language and symbols used during rituals that help convey spiritual and social messages. The meaning contained in the megengan ritual is adequate because it reflects the values of the community's beliefs. Every aspect of the ritual, from the food served to the sequence of events, carries a deep meaning and is

relevant to the cultural context of the village. The thinking involved in the meggangan ritual is quite adequate because it includes collective and individual reflection on the importance of preserving traditions and strengthening social relationships. This thinking also includes considerations about how these practices contribute to communal identity. (Rifa'i, 2017)

DISCUSSION

The meggangan ritual carried out by some Javanese people before Ramadan combines strong social and religious values. The community gathered to strengthen friendship, apologize, and prepare to welcome the holy month. The logical consistency in meggangan is seen in the togetherness and mutual cooperation pattern, where they share typical foods such as rice tumpeng, sticky rice, and traditional cakes. This food distribution strengthens social relations between citizens. It reflects the basic principles of Islam, namely sharing and caring for others, showing a harmonious relationship between local traditions and religious teachings. The element of apology in holding reflects Islamic teachings about the importance of cleansing oneself from sin before entering the month of Ramadan. People apologize to each other as a form of repentance and self-introspection, consistent with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of starting the fasting month with a clean heart and good relationships with others. Mental and spiritual preparation through the holding reflects consistent logic in welcoming the month of Ramadan. Megengan serves as a moment of reflection and inner preparation, where people prepare themselves emotionally and spiritually through joint prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, and dhikr. This helps them enter the month of Ramadan with better spiritual and mental readiness. Overall, the logical consistency in the meggangan ritual is reflected in the way this tradition combines social values and religious teachings that support each other. Megengan strengthens social ties and supports spiritual and mental preparation ahead of Ramadan by Islamic principles.

Subjective Interpretation

The integration between traditional and religious aspects of Megengan shows how local traditions can be harmonized with religious teachings, creating a harmony that enriches the community's life. The meggangan ritual, carried out by the Javanese people before the month of Ramadan, has various subjective interpretations that affect its implementation. Megengan, meaning "self-restraint," involves praying, tahlilan, and eating together. Although uniform ritual elements exist, individual experiences and

interpretations vary based on cultural background, religious understanding, and social conditions (Indah & Harlinvia. Maulithia, 2017). Some people see meka as a moment to deepen their spiritual relationship with God and prepare themselves mentally and spiritually for fasting. For others, mekengan is considered more of a social tradition that strengthens family ties and community togetherness. The level of education and religious knowledge also influences this interpretation. Those with deep religious knowledge tend to see the meka as an important part of worship with deep theological significance, while others may see it as an annual routine. The social environment and mass media also affect the interpretation of mekengan. In urban areas with broad access to information, people may have various perspectives on mekengan. Meanwhile, in villages like Wonosunyo, interpretations tend to be more homogeneous and influenced by hereditary traditions. The researcher emphasized that subjective interpretations in mekengan are very diverse and influenced by various factors such as cultural background, education, social environment, and media. Understanding this diversity is important to gain deep insights into the social and spiritual dynamics in the religious practices of Javanese society (Ali et al., 2021).

Adequacy

Research on the adequacy of the mekengan ritual in Wonosunyo Village shows that this tradition plays an important role in building solidarity and community welfare. Wonosunyo Village, known for its strong local wisdom and traditional values, uses mekengan to create a sense of material and spiritual sufficiency (Sinaga & Syaiful, 2019). Material sufficiency is achieved through the principle of cooperation, where the community jointly contributes food and energy to prepare carrying dishes. Although there are economic differences among families, the spirit of sharing makes everyone feel enough. The simple dishes served can meet the needs of all present, creating an atmosphere of familiarity. The spiritual aspect of sufficiency is achieved through joint prayer and tahlilan, which provides the inner peace and spiritual strength ahead of Ramadan. This activity strengthens individual faith and social bonds between residents, making them feel more mentally and spiritually ready to fast. The research also highlights the importance of interaction between the older and younger generations in maintaining the tradition of mekengan. The older generation transmits traditional values and mejong practices to the younger generation, ensuring that togetherness, cooperation, and sufficiency continue to live on and be respected. This maintains cultural identity and strengthens the social structure of the village. Overall, research shows that the adequacy of the mekengan ritual in Wonosunyo Village includes the fulfillment of material needs, spiritual well-being, and social cohesion. Through cooperation, joint prayer, and intergenerational learning, the people of Wonosunyo

Village create a sufficient and harmonious atmosphere, an important foundation for their social and spiritual cohesion ahead of the holy month of Ramadan.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the megengan ritual in Wonosunyo Village has a deep meaning of communication, as a tradition ahead of Ramadan and a medium to strengthen social and spiritual relationships. This ritual creates significant social interaction through symbolic communication in elements such as prayer, food, and cooperation. Community leaders play an important role in conveying the values of the ritual, ensuring the continuity of this tradition among the younger generation. Megengan also improves social cohesion by strengthening collective identity and cooperation between citizens. In addition, this ritual demonstrates its ability to adapt to changing times, ensuring its relevance to the younger generation. Overall, the phenomenology of communication in the megengan ritual shows the complexity of traditional communication and the importance of preserving and understanding culture in the modern context.

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