

THESIS

SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION IN RENDU TRADITIONAL WEDDING

“DHEO NGAWU”: A STUDY ON CULTURAL SEMIOTICS



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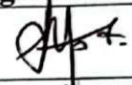
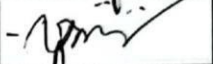
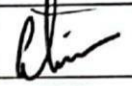


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Kupang, 21 April 2026



Bernadinus C. Geru

MOTTO

“Live for Nothing or Die For Something”

(Sylvester Stallone /Rambo, 2008)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to:

1. My father, Feliks Wegu, who always works hard to support me in my study to this stage.
2. My mother, Didiana Gowa, who always supports and prays for me every time during the study process.
3. My sisters, Yohana C. Muku and Kristina J. Pano, who always support and provide assistance for me.
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The Writer

ABSTRACT

This study discusses symbolic communication in the traditional Rendu wedding tradition in Nagekeo, East Nusa Tenggara, known as Dheo Ngawu, using a cultural semiotics approach. This tradition not only serves as a requirement for the validity of marriage according to customary law, but also as a means of cultural communication that contains deep symbolic meaning. Using Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of semiotics, this study analyzes symbolic forms (signifier) and the meanings contained within them (signified). This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design. Data was collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, spokespersons, and community members, as well as documentation in the form of photographs and field notes. The findings show that symbolic communication in the Dheo Ngawu tradition is expressed through various forms, including animals, traditional clothing, food and beverage, other objects, as well as traditional body movements and speech. Each symbol carries specific meanings related to respect, responsibility, kinship, legitimacy, blessings, and social harmony. This study concludes that Dheo Ngawu is not merely a dowry tradition, but a complex symbolic communication system that reflects the cultural values, social structure, and collective identity of the Rendu community. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of cultural semiotics and supports the preservation of local wisdom, especially among the younger generation.

Keywords: Symbolic communication; Cultural semiotics; Dheo Ngawu; Rendu traditional wedding; Ferdinand de Saussure; Symbolic meaning.

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