

# Naming Food in Cio Tao Traditional Wedding Ceremony of Cina Benteng Tangerang : Semiotics Studies

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## Abstract

The Cio Tou ceremony is a traditional wedding ceremony that is deeply meaningful because it honors God, ancestors, nature, and parents. The main objective of this research is to discover the semiotic processes at work and to identify the various types of meaning embodied within the 12 bowls used in the Cio Tou ceremony. A semiotic approach is used to look into the multitude of meanings associated with this ceremony. This study employs a descriptive methodology and a qualitative research design. Interviews were used to collect data, allowing researchers to examine the 12 different types of food served in different bowls. The findings from this study reveal the existence of 12 distinct food bowls, each presenting a unique flavor profile. The significance lies in the fact that every taste of these diverse culinary creations carries a profound symbolism for the soon-to-be wedded couple, signifying their future journey in establishing a harmonious household. The inclusion of bitter, sweet, and salty flavors serves as a metaphor for the inevitable ups and downs that await them, illustrating that life may not always unfold according to their desires. The researcher desires that this study will be useful to students studying semiotics. It is further suggested that subsequent researchers evaluate the factors to be regarded when selecting the twelve types of food essential to the Cio Tou ceremony. All aspects of this study were carefully witnessed by the researchers.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is frequently regarded as a social or cultural product, even as an inseparable part of that culture. Language, as a specific social or cultural product, serves as a conduit for social aspirations, activities, and people's behavior. Language provides a variety of functions for both individual and group interests, from small to large groups. These functions are linked to the role of language in the lives of those who use it. Language is mainly a means of communication, but it additionally functions as a means of naming. The cio tou ceremony involves 12 bowls of food, each with a different meaning.

In Chinese culture, the wedding ceremony is highly significant. The bride and groom subsequently followed religious rules during their local wedding ceremony, which was sealed in

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a traditional ceremony called Cio Tou. The Cio Tou ceremony originates from China. This ceremony was then brought and carried out by the Chinese-Benteng ethnic in Indonesia. Marriage is a form of Xiao (devotion to parents and ancestors) for the Chinese community, specifically to continue the lineage and adoration of the ancestors. The goal of marriage is not only to bring happiness to the bride and groom, but also to assist the two families who become one in marriage. Aside from that, the older relatives of the bride and groom are supposed to give advice and blessings to the bride and groom during this ceremony.

Along with the times, this ceremony is increasingly losing its existence. In Indonesia, only Chinese-Benteng who live in the Tangerang area, continue to carry out this ceremony. This is incredibly unfortunate, given the numerous moral messages passed down from generation to generation through this ceremonial procession. Because of this misunderstanding, the positive aspects of the Cio Tou ceremony get drowned out by the negative assumption that it is too difficult and unnecessary to perform. The younger generation considers this tradition is too old-fashioned, and it also wastes a lot of time and money. However, this tradition is becoming more popular because the local community regards the Cio Tou tradition as a one-of-a-kind tradition.

The Cio Tou tradition in traditional Chinese marriages in Tangerang exemplifies the cultural diversity of the Chinese community in Indonesia. This custom combines Betawi, Sundanese, and Chinese traditions. The bride and groom dressed in traditional Chinese attire, specifically the Pao shirt, for the ceremony. Every procession in the Cio Tou ceremony is full of sacredness, as can be seen from the meaning of every symbol that exists. The Cio Tao ceremony usually takes place in the morning of the wedding day, but some people do it at midnight the night before. Several items prepared for the Cio Tao ceremony have symbolic meanings, such as a red worship table with three levels, with seven types of fruit underneath and twelve bowls of food.

There is a tradition in the Cio Tou traditional ceremony of eating twelve different types of vegetables or dishes. This tradition is carried out at each bride's dinner table. There are twelve different types of dishes on the table, each placed in twelve bowls. Sweet, salty, tart, bitter, sour, bland, spicy, savory, and a combination of these flavors characterize these dishes. The 12 bowls are then arranged in four rows to the side and three rows to the front. This position represents four seasons, each lasting three months.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in examining the meanings contained in the 12 bowls of food. To investigate these various meaning, the writer used Semiotic analysis. Semiotic analysis involves the examination and interpretation of signs and their meanings within specific contexts. It explores how signs function, how they create meaning, and how they shape cultural and social practices. By uncovering the underlying structures and processes of signification, semiotics provides valuable insight into the ways in which meaning is constructed and shared.

Semiotics, according to Leech & Onwuegbuzie., (2008), is a science that investigates the relationships between signs, including talk and text, and their intended specific meanings. Semiotics is the study of "signs" and anything that stands for or represents something else. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), a Swiss linguist who studied the meaning of signs within a specific group or society, and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), an American philosopher and logician who studied how signs shape our individual understanding of physical reality, were the main proponents of this theory.

A semiotician is a semiotics expert or student. Semioticians investigate how signs convey meaning and shape our perceptions of life and reality. They pay close attention to how signs are used to convey meaning to their intended recipients and seek ways to ensure that their meaning is

effectively communicated. Their work has real-world applications, such as designing more intuitive road signs and easier-to-navigate marketing surveys. Semioticians also investigate how messages are used to influence people's behavior, such as when providing educational content in the classroom and managing one's emotions during a crisis.

To complete this research, the writer finds some other study related in Cio Tou Tradition from the previous researcher, they are: The first previous research finding come from Feby Yoana Siregar from Universitas Sumatera Utara. In her research entitled "*Tradisi Cio Tou Pada Masyarakat Peranakan Tionghoa di TelukNaga Tangerang; Kajian Multimodal.*" This research discussed more about the multimodal text metafunction of Cio Tou ceremony. The similarity of research between previous researcher and current research is the first in topic raise namely Cio Tou wedding ceremony, the second refers to the research method used is qualitative method, and the third leads to the instrument for collecting data is interview. The difference is that the previous research focused on the structure of the Cio Tou wedding ceremony while the current research focused on the meaning that contains in the twelve bowls of food in Cio Tou tradition.

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The second previous research finding was conducted by Azizah, Sudjarwo, and Pujiati from Universitas Lampung with their research entitled "*The Marriage Tradition in Tionghoa Ethnic at Kampung Pecinan Bandar Lampung City.*" The researcher highlight the point of the procession in Cio Tou ceremony. The similarity is first the researcher present about the Cio Tou Tradition, the second is to analyze the message in the tradition, and the last is the method they used is qualitative. The differences between the previous study and current study is the object. Previous study focused on the message of each procession and current study focused on meaning contains in twelve bowls of food. In previous study they used Fenomelogy approach and Semiotic approach for current study. And the last is the design of the research used, current study used interview to collecting the data, meanwhile previous study did the observation.

The researcher used semiotics approach to examines the meaning in the Cio Tou Ceremony. Semiotics, also known as semiotic analysis or semiotics theory, is theoretical framework that studies signs and symbols and how they create meaning in various contexts. Understanding how meaning is constructed, communicated, and interpreted through the processes of communication is a framework of Semiotics. It is derived from the Greek word "semeion," meaning sign. Semiotics examines how signs are used to communicate, represent, and construct meaning in different systems, such as language, art, culture, and social interactions. Compare to those previous studies, this current research has similiarities and also differences at the same time. However this research fill the gap on analysis of symbol as being applied in the name of the food.

The study of signs and symbols, as well as their interpretation, is known as semiotics. It is a field of study that investigates how meaning is created, communicated, and understood through

various signs and symbols. Words, images, sounds, gestures, objects, and other forms of communication can all be used as signs and symbols. Semiotics studies the interaction of signs, their users, and the contexts in which they are used. It aims to uncover the underlying structures and processes that shape meaning creation and interpretation.

Signs are classified into two types in semiotics: verbal signs and nonverbal signs. Verbal signs are signs that use language as their signifiers, specifically words or linguistic expressions, such as words, speech, and writing. These symbols are based on the conventions and rules of a specific language system. Nonverbal signs, on the other hand, do not rely on language to convey meaning but instead use other sensory modalities. They can take many different forms, including visual, auditory, tactile, and gustatory cues.

Images, colors, shapes, gestures, facial expressions, and body language are all examples of visual signs. A red traffic light, for example, is a visual signal that tells drivers to stop. Auditory signs use sound to communicate and include spoken language, music, tones, and alarms. A siren's sound is an auditory signal. Tactile signs use the sense of touch and can take the form of gestures, touch-based communication systems, Braille, and other symbols. Gustatory signs are signs or symbols associated with the sense of taste. Gustatory signs include food product labels, menu descriptions in restaurants or cafés, branding, and logos.

In the course in General Linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) defined semiotics as "the science of the role of signs in social life." Implied by The definition is a relationship that exists if the sign is a dominant part of social life. There is a sign system and a social system, and the two are interconnected. In this case, Saussure discusses social conventions that govern the social use of signs, specifically the selection of combinations and the use of signs in a specific manner so that they have meaning and social value (Sobur, 2016).

The primary discussion on Saussure's most important theory is the principle that language is a system sign and that each sign is composed of two parts, namely the signifier (marker) and the signified (signified). The sign is a unit consisting of a signifier and an idea or sign (signified). A signifier is a "meaningful sound" or "meaningful doodles" in other words. As a result, the signifier is the material aspect of language: what is said or heard, as well as what is written or read. The signifier is a mental image, thought, or concept (Bertens, 2001); (Sobur, 2013).

Someone uses the sign to send meanings about objects in communication, and others interpret the sign. The sign is made up of two sign elements: signifier and signified. The signifier (marker) is a physical component of Signs can take the form of words, images, or sounds. While the signified (signified) represents an absolute concept that is similar to existing physical signs. Meanwhile, the signification process demonstrates the relationship between the sign and the external reality known as the referent. Saussure interprets "object" as a referent and mentions it as a marking process element. For example, when people say the word "dog" (signifier) in a swearing tone, it is a sign of bad luck.

Signs of language, according to Saussure, have at least two primordial characteristics, namely linear and arbitrary (Budiman, 1999). Signs, according to Saussure's approach, are a concrete manifestation of the sound image and are frequently associated with a sound image as a marker. As a result, the signifier and signified (signified) are mentalistic elements. In other words, a sign reveals a sound image or concept as two inseparable components. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, either by chance or design. Arbitrators, as signifiers, do not have a natural relationship with a sign.

Semiology, according to Barthes, will discover how humanity makes sense of things. Meaning cannot be equated in this case by communicating. When objects are interpreted, they not only

carry information, in which case they want to communicate, but they also construct the structure of the sign. Thus, for Barthes, significance is a total process with a structured arrangement. Language is not the only thing that has significance; there are other things as well. Barthes regards social life, in whatever form it takes, as a distinct sign system (Kurniawan, 2001).

In line with Saussure, Barthes believes that the relationship between the signifier and the sign is arbitrary rather than natural. When Saussure emphasizes marking only at the denotative level, Roland Barthes perfected Saussure's semiology by developing a marking system at the connotative level. Another aspect of marking that Barthes sees is the "myth" that marks a society.

The connotation is synonymous with surgery ideology in Barthes' framework, which is referred to as a "myth" and serves to reveal and provide the prevailing dominant values in a given period. There are also patterns, three-dimensional signs, omens, and signs in myth. However, myth is a second-order system of meaning because its unique system is built on a chain of meanings that existed before it. A sign can have multiple signifiers in myth as well (Budiman, 2001). In Barthes' opinion, the concept of myth in general. According to Barthes, myth is language, then myth is a communication system, and myth is a message. He claims in his description that the deep myth. This unique meaning evolved from connotation. The societal connotation that has existed for a long time is a myth. Barthes also stated that myth is a system semiology, or a system of signs that humans interpret (Hoed, 2008). The myth of Barthes is not the same as myths that we consider superstitious, absurd, ahistorical, and so on, but rather myth as a type of speech (speech style) someone (Vera, 2014).

Moreover Charles Sanders Peirce, another semioticians, was born in 1890 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Peirce was born into an intellectual family, attended Harvard University, and lectured on logic and philosophy at John Hopskin University and Harvard. Peirce, a pragmatic philosopher, coined the term "semiotic" at the end of the nineteenth century to refer to the "formal doctrine of signs." The concept of signs is the foundation of semiotics; not only are language and communication systems composed of signs, but the world itself is related to the human mind—consisting entirely of signs (Sobur, 2009).

Signs and their meanings, according to Peirce, are not structures but rather cognitive functions known as semiosis. Semiosis is a three-stage process of meaning and sign interpretation. The first stage is absorption of 15 aspects of sign representation (first through the five senses), the second connects spontaneously representamen with human cognitive experience that interprets the object, and the third interprets the object according to his wish. This third stage is known as the interpretant. (Hoed, 2014).

The sequence of comprehension will keep on to grow in line with the never-ending series semiosis. The chain level semiosis follows. The interpretant in the first layer semiosis circuit will be the basis for referring to a new object; at this point, a second layer semiosis occurs. So, what is the status of a sign in the first layer that serves as a marker in the second layer, and so on (Wibowo, 2011). The fundamental principle of sign nature, according to Peirce, is the representative and interpretive nature of signs. A sign's representative nature means that it is "something that other," whereas a sign's interpretive nature means that it allows for different interpretations depending on the user and recipient.

Peirce's theory for experts is regarded as a deep grand theory semiotics, with the assumption that the concept is exhaustive, namely the description structure of all marking systems. (Sobur, 2001). Peirce was a philosopher and logician who believed that human reasoning has always been done through signs. In this case, this means that humans can only think through signs. In his

mind, logic is synonymous with semiotics, and semiotics can be applied to any type of sign. In the field of semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce is well-known for his theory of signs.

Peirce is well-known for developing the three-sided triadic model. Representamen, Object, and Interpretant are the three components. Something is called a representamen if it meets two criteria: first, it can be perceived (either with senses or thoughts/feelings) and both function as signs; it means it represents something else. An object is another component. According to Peirce, the object is the component represented by the sign; it can be described as "something else." It can be material that is caught by the senses, or it can be characteristic mental or imaginary. The interpretant is the third component. Peirce explains that the interpretant is the meaning/interpretation. Peirce also uses the terms "signifance," "signification," and "interpretation" to describe the interpretant. The interpreter, according to Peirce, is also a sign.

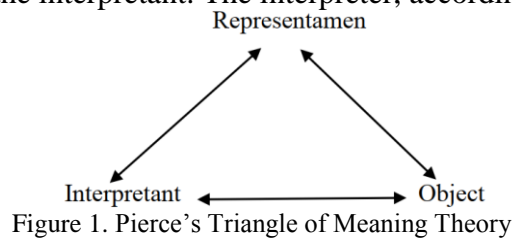


Figure 1. Peirce's Triangle of Meaning Theory

Source: Alex Sobur, Text Media Analysis. (2001: 114-115)

Representamen (Sign) is a physical form or anything that can be perceived by the five senses and refers to something. They are qualisign, sinsign, and legisign, respectively. Qualisign, by definition, is a sign. Red is an example because it can denote love, danger, or prohibition. A sinsign is a real-world sign based on shape or form. A scream, for example, can express surprise, joy, or pain. A legisign is a sign that is based on a commonly accepted regulation, convention, or code. Consider traffic signs.

Objects are divided into three types. The Icon (icon) is a sign that resembles what it represents or something that uses similarities or the same characteristics as what is intended. A sign is intended to represent a reference source via simulation or equation. Danesi., (2004). For instance, signs at the entrance toilet for women's and men's restrooms. An index is a sign whose nature depends on the existence of a denotation (true meaning). A symbol is a sign that is determined by a widely accepted rule or by mutual agreement. The symbol is a type of arbitrary and conventional sign. Budiman., (2004). Roses, for example, are a symbol of love. Dove as a blessing symbol or as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in Christianity.

There are three interpreters. Rheme is a sign that is still being developed because it can be interpreted in various ways. People with red eyes may be sleepy, have sick eyes, be irritated, have just woken up, or be drunk. Dicsign (Dicent Sign) is a sign whose interpretation is a true relationship or signs that are in accordance with facts and in fact. For example, if a road is prone to accidents, then posted signs stating caution prone to accidents. An argument is a sign that contains a reason about something or a sign whose interpretation is widely accepted. For example, a prohibition sign prohibiting smoking at a gas station because the gas station is a high-risk location for fire.

The writer chooses to use Roland Barthes' semiotic theory after considering each explanation. since the writer will examine the 12 bowls of food at the traditional Cio Tou wedding ceremony performed by the Chinese-Benteng people of Tangerang, the writer believes it will be easier to examine the meaning using Roland Barthes' theory of denotative and connotative meaning. The true meaning, which is socially agreed upon and has a reference to reality, is denotation. In the

meantime, the signifier is the connotative sign, which has open meaning or implicit meaning, no direct and uncertain meaning, and is open to new interpretations.

## II. METHODS

This research is descriptive and employs a qualitative research design. Interview techniques were used to collect data for this study. Bogdan & Taylor., (1992) explain that qualitative research is one of the research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of speech or writing and behavior observed people. The data comes from 12 bowls of food used in the cio tou ceremony. This study's procedure was divided into three stages: preparation, research or implementation, and completion. The research was conducted in Curug District, Tangerang Regency. Researchers focus on the area, because in that area most of the population is Peranakan Chinese.

Qualitative research requires In this case, the researcher becomes the research instrument because qualitative research needs the researcher to be directly involved as an instrument in research. Qualitative researchers serve as human instruments, determining research focus, selecting informants as data sources, collecting data, assessing data quality, analyzing data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions based on the findings. Thus, it is clear that this research is a qualitative research. Furthermore, the data examined in this study were the results of informant interviews. The information was obtained from the marriage of Anto and Merlin on May 11, 2022, at Curug Tangerang.

## III. RESULTS

The findings of the study reveal the applicability of semiotic analysis using Roland Barthes' theory in deciphering the profound meaning embedded within the 12 bowls of dishes featured in the Cio Tou wedding ceremony. Barthes' influential work on analyzing cultural signs and symbols continues to shape critical perspectives in fields such as literature, art, and popular culture. Each dish in this ceremonial feast is thoughtfully selected to convey positive blessings and well-wishes for the couple's future life together. While the specific assortment of dishes may differ based on regional customs and personal preferences, there are common symbolic meanings associated with the 12 bowl dishes in a Cio Tou wedding ceremony. This insightful exploration of symbolic significance enriches our understanding of the cultural and emotional tapestry woven into this cherished marital celebration.



Figure 2. *Ayam Keluak* (Chicken with Keluak)

*Ayam Keluak*, originating from Indonesian cuisine, may not have a direct association with Chinese tradition. However, owing to cultural exchanges and influences, *Ayam Keluak* has found its place in certain regions or among individuals who appreciate the flavors and ingredients of both cultures. The denotative meaning of *Ayam Keluak* lies in its basic composition of chicken and Keluak nuts, which are indigenous black nuts from Southeast Asia.

In Chinese culture, peanuts symbolize a wish for a long-lasting and harmonious marriage, aligning with the connotative meaning of Ayam Keluak. As a result, Ayam Keluak often finds its place among the 12 dishes served during the Cio Tou wedding tradition. This fusion of flavors represents the beauty of cultural integration, where culinary traditions intertwine and create a harmonious celebration of diverse influences.



Figure 3. *Tumis Sayur* (Stir-fried Vegetables)

Stir-fried vegetables hold a significant place in the cherished Cio Tou wedding ceremony. This delightful dish embraces an array of vegetables, including carrots, broccoli, peas, cauliflower, mushrooms, and more. To craft this vibrant medley, the vegetables are thinly sliced and skillfully sautéed with an aromatic blend of spices like garlic, ginger, or Chinese special sauce. Beyond its literal interpretation, the symbolic meaning of stir-fried vegetables reflects the essence of harmony and balance in life. Each vegetable brings its unique denotative qualities, boasting distinct flavors, textures, and colors. When artfully combined in a stir-fry, these elements harmonize, resulting in a visually stunning amalgamation of beautiful hues. The stir-fried vegetables not only please the palate but also serve as a reminder of the importance of blending diverse elements together, both in culinary creations and in life's journey towards harmony and balance.



Figure 4. *Bakut* (Pork Meat with vegetables)

Bakut is predominantly used to describe pork ribs that are braised or boiled, signifying a denotative meaning associated with these cooking methods. During traditional Chinese gatherings, bakut undergoes a delightful transformation, transitioning into a savory soup that seamlessly melds with the vibrant flavors of fresh salted mustard greens. This combination not only tantalizes the taste buds but also carries a deeper symbolic meaning. The generous serving of bakut, representing an abundance of good fortune, becomes a powerful symbol of prosperity and opulence in these gatherings. Within the realm of Chinese tradition, meat dishes like bakut carry a connotative meaning that goes beyond their culinary appeal. They serve as auspicious representations of wealth and success, infusing each delectable bite with a touch of good fortune. Thus, as the savory soup of bakut and salted mustard greens is savored and relished, it not only



satisfies the palate but also serves as a reminder of the blessings and aspirations for a prosperous and prosperous life.



Figure 5. *Babi Cin* (Pork Meat with sweet and salty sauce)

Babi Cin, short for Babi Cincang, is a popular dish consisting of succulent pork cooked with a delightful touch of sweetness from soy sauce. The name itself, "Babi cin," carries a denotative meaning, indicating its essence and preparation method. With its roots in China, this dish has gained popularity in Indonesia, where it is savored in various preparations. To enhance its flavors, Babi Cin is seasoned with an aromatic blend of garlic, shallots, chilies, sweet soy sauce, and other spices. These vibrant spices are added after the pork undergoes meticulous processing and crushing, allowing them to infuse the meat with their tantalizing essence. Intriguingly, pork holds significant cultural symbolism in Chinese traditions, often representing fertility and the desire for abundant progeny. Not only does the sweet taste of Babi cin symbolize a literal flavor profile, but it also carries a connotative meaning that represents the anticipated sweetness believed to manifest within the household in the future.



Figure 6. *Ikan Cengcuan* (Ceng Cuan Fish)

Ceng Cuan Fish is an immensely popular dish in Chinese cuisine, known for its exquisite flavors and culinary artistry. The term "Ceng Cuan" originates from the Hokkien dialect and embodies the denotative meaning of stir-fried or quickly fried food. This delightful dish showcases the perfect harmony of textures and tastes. It features succulent pieces of fried fish, such as snapper or pomfret, coated in a delectable flour batter that crisps up to perfection. The fish is then accompanied by a velvety sauce, be it the savory richness of oyster sauce, the tangy notes of tomato sauce, or the delightful balance of a sweet and spicy blend. Adding to its appeal, this dish is generously stuffed with an array of vibrant vegetables, including bell peppers, onions, and carrots, imparting both freshness and nutritional value. Ceng Cuan Fish is often savored as a main course in Chinese restaurants and eateries, where it stands as a testament to the culinary expertise of Chinese cuisine. Intriguingly, in Chinese culture, the word for "fish" sounds akin to the word for "sustenance" (yu), thus imparting a heartfelt connotation to this dish. It symbolizes the auspicious hope that the union of flavors and ingredients in Ceng Cuan Fish will provide abundant sustenance and fulfillment for all who indulge in its gastronomic delights.



Figure 7. *Pindang Bandeng* (Milkfish Pindang)

Pindang bandeng is a delightful soupy dish that tantalizes the taste buds with a harmonious blend of sweet, savory, sour, spicy, and fresh flavors. It goes beyond its deliciousness, carrying a connotative meaning believed to bring good luck and an abundance of fortune. To prepare this flavorful dish, begin by sautéing shallots, garlic, turmeric, ginger, bay leaves, and galangal in fragrant olive oil, creating a rich aroma that fills the kitchen. Next, add the succulent milkfish and water, allowing them to simmer together, infusing the broth with their natural goodness. To enhance the complexity of flavors, a combination of soy sauce, chili, cayenne pepper, tomatoes, salt, pepper, and tamarind water is mixed together in a bowl. This sauce adds a delightful tanginess and a gentle kick of spiciness to the pindang bandeng. As the dish simmers and the flavors meld together, the result is a truly delightful culinary experience that brings joy and auspiciousness to every bite.



Figure 8. *Lumpia* (Spring Rolls)

Spring rolls are a popular type of Cantonese dim sum. They are delicately made with thin, crispy skin that encases a flavorful filling of meat, vegetables, or sweet ingredients, which is then carefully rolled into a cylinder shape. These delectable rolls are then fried until they achieve a delightful golden-brown color and are cooked to perfection. For the Chinese, spring rolls hold significant symbolism, representing luck, wealth, and a positive outlook for the future. The elongated and slender shape of the spring rolls resembles a golden stick, which is traditionally associated with prosperity and abundance. Furthermore, the diverse fillings of vegetables, meat, or a harmonious blend of both symbolize the importance of harmony and diversity in life. In certain Chinese cultures, spring rolls are cherished as a customary delicacy served during momentous occasions such as weddings or festivals, carrying profound symbolic meanings. Lumpia, as it is known in some regions, is regarded as a dish that brings good fortune and fosters hope for a prosperous future, both for newlyweds embarking on their journey together and for families celebrating joyous festivities. These connotative meanings associated with spring rolls highlight its cultural significance and the positive wishes it embodies.



Figure 9. *Agar Merah* (Red Jelly)

During Chinese celebrations like weddings, Chinese New Year, and various festivals, it is common to find the serving of red jelly. The jelly is typically cut into square shapes and presented to the guests. Interestingly, in the Cio Tao ceremony, the color red holds significant meaning for the marrying couple. Red jelly is widely regarded as a symbol of good fortune, happiness, and pure joy. In Chinese culture, the color red carries profound symbolic implications, representing positive energy and auspiciousness. Moreover, red is associated with warmth, delight, and an enthusiastic approach to life. Hence, the inclusion of red jelly in such important occasions signifies the collective desire for a blissful, prosperous, and vibrant life. The symbolic meaning of red itself embodies these connotations, signifying the hopes and well-wishes expressed through the presence of red jelly in the celebration.



Figure 10. *Gohyong* (Rolled Meat)

Gohyong, also known as hekung, is a flavorful dish originating from Fujian Province, commonly enjoyed by the Hokkien and Teochew people. It consists of rolled tofu skin filled with a delectable mixture of minced meat, usually pork or chicken, combined with aromatic spices and vegetables. The dish is then cooked by frying, resulting in a crispy and savory treat. The denotative meaning of gohyong or Ngo Hiong/Ngo Hiang lies in its diverse seasoning, encompassing the five flavors of sourness, sweetness, spiciness, bitterness, and saltiness. These flavors are derived from a combination of herbs and spices, including star anise, cloves, cinnamon, fennel seeds, and Sichuan pepper. Pork, which is a key ingredient in gohyong, holds significant symbolism in Chinese culture. Pigs are regarded as productive animals, known for their prolific nature and association with fertility. As a result, pork is considered a symbol of wealth and abundance. Therefore, the presence of gohyong babi in wedding ceremonies reflects the heartfelt aspiration for a prosperous and bountiful life for the newlywed couple. In essence, the connotative meaning embedded in gohyong encompasses the wishes for prosperity, good fortune, and abundance. This dish represents not only the culinary delight of combining diverse flavors but also serves as a cultural expression of hopes and dreams for a blissful and prosperous journey in married life.



Figure 11. *Bakso Lo Hoa* (Meatballs Lo Hoa)

Bakso Lo Hoa, whether made from pork (non-halal) or chicken (halal), is a delightful dish that can also incorporate shrimp as an additional complement to the meat. The meat is finely minced and shaped into round meatballs, mixed with sago, egg whites, grated carrots, and ear mushrooms. Each meatball contains a filling of carrots, ear mushrooms, and vermicelli, giving them the appearance of rambutan fruit with glass noodles dangling from it. This distinct characteristic is the denotative meaning of Lo Hoa meatballs itself. In the context of Chinese culture, Bakso Lo Hoa holds connotative meanings associated with togetherness, family unity, and joy. This dish is often shared among family members and friends, creating moments of warmth and camaraderie. The act of enjoying Bakso Lo Hoa together reflects the desire for the soon-to-be-married couple to foster a harmonious and loving atmosphere within their household. The symbolic representation of Lo Hoa meatballs signifies the hope for a future filled with shared happiness and strong family bonds.



Figure 12. *Mie Goreng* (Fried Noodles)

Fried noodles, have gained immense popularity in Chinese cuisine. This delectable dish features stir-fried noodles combined with a medley of ingredients including meat, vegetables, and aromatic spices. The noodles used in Chinese fried noodles are typically egg noodles or yellow noodles, renowned for their chewy texture and ability to impart a rich flavor profile. The additional ingredients in this dish can vary, often encompassing thinly sliced meats like chicken, shrimp, or pork, alongside an array of vegetables such as carrots, cabbage, and scallions. Various spices and sauces such as soy sauce, hoisin sauce, and sesame oil are utilized to enhance the overall taste. Noodles hold a profound symbolic meaning in Chinese culture. They are frequently associated with longevity, luck, and happiness. The elongated and unbroken shape of the noodles symbolizes the desire for a long and prosperous life. Moreover, within the context of the cio tao wedding ceremony, the connotative meaning of noodles represent prosperity and abundance. Noodles are considered an enriching dish, symbolizing an ample food supply and prosperity.



Figure 13. *Roti Baso* (Meatball Bread)

Baso bread holds a significant role in Chinese-Benteng wedding ceremonies, where it is considered a staple food. The term baso is derived from the Hokkien language, meaning minced meat. The filling of baso bread traditionally consists of minced pork, although there are now various other options available, such as chicken and beef. Symbolically, baso bread represents the value of high tolerance and mutual respect within a marriage. It signifies the importance of the couple's ability to honor and accept each other's differences and to appreciate the uniqueness of their union. The delicate balance of flavors and textures in baso bread mirrors the harmony and understanding that should exist between partners. As the couple partakes in the consumption of baso bread during their wedding ceremony, it symbolizes their commitment to maintaining a strong bond and a deep sense of respect for one another. The act of sharing and enjoying this symbolic food together signifies their willingness to embrace each other's strengths and weaknesses, fostering a harmonious and lasting relationship. Through the connotative meaning of baso bread, it is evident that this culinary tradition holds profound cultural significance in Chinese-Fortress wedding ceremonies. It serves as a reminder of the values of tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding that are vital in building a successful and enduring marriage.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the findings of this study, the researcher will highlight the key points discovered from the data that was assembled. It can be seen that the Chinese-Benteng people believe that the cio tou wedding ceremony functions a very deep purpose for the bride and groom who will later build a household. Above all, researchers in this study examined 12 different types of food served in different bowls. Ayam keluak, stir-fried vegetables, Baikut, Babi cin, fish ceng cuan, Pindang bandeng, Bakso lo hoa, Fried noodles, Spring rolls, Red jelly, Gohyong, and Roti baso are among the 12 types of food. It should be noted that each type of food or dish in each bowl represents a different meaning. The researcher applies a semiotic approach to look into each meaning contained throughout the theory of Roland Barthes, particularly denotative and connotative meanings. The denotative meaning of the food can be determined by the name and texture of the food, yet the connotative meaning can be perceived in the substances that are used, the appearance and form of each food, and the cooking process. Furthermore, the researcher is looking for a topic because the Chinese-Benteng culture is distinctive and full of beautiful meanings. The researcher desires that this study may act as a guide for other students in the semantic class. In addition, the researcher suggests that subsequent researchers explore the factors that need to be considered when selecting the twelve types of food that must be present at the cio tou ceremony. The researchers themselves observed everything considered in this study.

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