



## The Da'wa Narration of Matchmaking in *Opor Ayam* Short Film

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The narration of women as wives in every age and culture is always conveyed using various methods. This diversity is increasingly being explored through the development of media and digital technology. Short films through the Youtube channel can also be a medium of *dawah* to narrate a matchmaking.

**Purpose:** The focus of this study is limited to how the topic of matchmaking is narrated in the short film "*Opor Ayam*" published by NU Online.

**Design and methods:** This study's method is descriptive qualitative with verbal and visual narrative research data on the short film *Opor Ayam* published by NU Online in 2021. This research uses semiotics-signification theory to obtain a narrative structure for the meaning of matchmaking.

**Results:** The results show that the *Opor Ayam* film has four stages, namely equilibrium, disruption, disequilibrium and new-equilibrium as a narrative structure. The results of the discussion also show that the topic of matchmaking is conveyed as; (1) acceptable in religion, (2) must be based on religious provisions, (3) the narrative emphasizes that marriage through matchmaking is a familiarization and must be based on religion.

**Keywords:** Narrative Structure, Matchmaking, Short Films, Signification Theory

### Introduction

Film is the advance of photo technology which was originally intended to record live motion to document important events. The figures who are considered the most influential in the development of film technology are Auguste Lumiere and Louis Lumiere. Ali mentioned that the Lumiere brothers were the pioneers of the film industry by making cinematographic shows (films) using a projector in 1895 (Ali, 2015). Films have developed since then, both industrially and technologically. This makes films no longer produced for the purpose of documenting important events but also various other needs and interests.

Ali explained that films are produced to be able to construct imagination and reality from various dimensions, as an imaginary reality of the filmmaker (Ali, 2015). Ali's statement shows that the motive of a film can be attached to the maker. Accordingly, if a social or religious organization produces a film, it can be assumed that they have their own interests and goals. In the context of socio-religious organization, one of the organizations that owns media and accommodates film development is Nahdatul Ulama (NU). NU through the NU Online Youtube channel facilitates the creation of short films. The NU Online YouTube channel is part of the official Nahdatul Ulama media which was established in July 2003.

It is stated specifically on the NU Online YouTube channel that the channel is intended to convey social and national information as well as religious services by prioritizing a moderate attitude (NUOnline, n.d.). This makes NU's YouTube channel online is not limited to conveying information in the form of reports but also other forms such as short films.

Armantono explained that short films have shorter durations and simpler stories (Armantono, 2016). Therefore, usually the stories in short films are related to everyday events. These characteristics make short films the proper medium for *dawah* messages that are light and related to everyday life.

The short films published by NU online have a light topic yet contain a strong message. One of the short films is ‘*Opor Ayam*’ which published in 2021. This film is a collaborative production of NU online and the Halte Moencrat Film Cooperative with the full support of the Public Relations, Data and Information Bureau of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion. This 9-minute short film directed by Anton Magaski has the topic of matchmaking and early married life. This light topic is interesting to be explored further regarding the narration of messages or images narrated in the film. As the film is produced by NU online which is religious based (Islam), surely there are narrative messages or images with *dawah* content.

Studies on film as a medium of *dawah* are actually not a new thing. According to Alamsyah *dawah* through film is more effective because the presentation can be arranged in diverse forms and variations so it will not be seen as patronizing (Alamsyah, 2012). Several previous studies related to film as a medium of *dawah* have been conducted, including; “Enjoying the Signs of Islamic Propagation in Docudrama-Biopic Films; The Kyai” (Ali, 2015); and “Analysis of *Dawah* Messages in Short Films of Suto’s Prayer on NU Online Youtube Content” (Sholikhan, 2022). In both of these studies the focus is on the content of *dawah* messages in the film. Ali’s research focuses on *dawah* messages in the form of signs, while Sholikhan’s research focuses on analyzing messages in films. Unlike the two previous studies, the focus of this research is the matchmaking narrative in the short film *Opor Ayam* in the context of *dawah* medium.

## Methods

The focus of this study is on the narration of women as wives in short films. The object used in this research is the short film *Opor Ayam* 2021 directed by Anton Magaski. The 9-minute film “*Opor Ayam*” is one of nine short films on the short film playlist on the NU Online Youtube channel as of April 26, 2023. The method used in this research was a descriptive qualitative method. This research method was considered appropriate, because according to Ali this method focuses on discussing qualities related to the meaning and understanding of the research object (Ali, 2018). The film *Opor Ayam* was treated as a narrative text. Anindya and Ali explained that in narrative text, there is a plot or story line that describes an event, character, and problem or conflict and the resolution of the conflict (Anindya et al., 2019). Women as wives in the short film *Opor Ayam* was interpreted in the narrative construction through an analysis process and the results was described.

The collecting data method in this study used documentation techniques. Ali explained that this technique documents records of events, writings, drawings, works of art, etc. with working procedures for identification, classification and categorization (Ali, 2018). Based on this technique, the first data collection step was to identify the narrative structure of the short film using the narrative structure of Tzetvan Todorov. The results of the identification were classified based on the verbal and visual aspects of the short film related to the topic of matchmaking. The verbal and visual text classifications become research data which was analyzed using Saussure’s theory of significance. Hall explained that text is a system of signs that contains signifier as physical expressions and signified as mental expressions (Hall, 1997). This study used the theory of significance to understand the narration in the meaning of matchmaking signs in the short film *Opor Ayam*.

## Findings & Discussion

This research focuses on the topic of matchmaking. The narration about 'matchmaking' in the short film *Opor Ayam* is shown through the narrative structure of the story. The results of the study show that the *Opor Ayam* short film has four (4) stages of narrative structure. Tzetvan Todorov, a Russian linguistic formalist, said that the narrative structure is divided into four, namely equilibrium; disruption; disequilibrium and new-equilibrium (Ali & Robingah, 2021). The narrative structure of the short film *Opor Ayam* can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Narrative structure of the short film *Opor Ayam*

Plot	Narrative Structure
Exposition	Equilibrium
Rising Conflict	Disrupsi
Climax	Disequilibrium
Resolution	New-Equilibrium

Aside from the classification of narrative structure, the results of the study also show that the topic of 'matchmaking' is conveyed through verbal aspects complemented by visual context at the beginning and end of the story.

### Narrative Structure of Matchmaking

Todorov explained that every text has a structure, because authors, whether they realize it or not, will give structure to the story (Ali & Robingah, 2021). Therefore, the narrative structure of a story is something important. In the story in the short film *Opor Ayam*, the narration begins with the background of Tadin's life. This is an equilibrium part of the narrative story. Equilibrium is a stable situation and is usually in story exposition. In the beginning, the visual significance emerges, that is happiness. Let us look at the fragment 1.



Fragment 1, Datum 1

In fragment 1, datum 1 shows a happy expression indicated by his smile. Ekman explained the fact that a smile that forms the appearance of the cheeks and raised lips indicates happy emotions (Ekman, 2004). This expression is a signifier accompanied by a verbal statement stating at minute 1.08 that Tadin considers his arranged marriage to be a blessing "...*Mungkin ini yang disebut berkah*" ("...Maybe this is called a blessing"). The signifier on datum 1 is a signified that Tadin accepts his matchmaking, that Tadin is happy with his matchmaking with Halimah.

Disruption is a disturbance in the storyline signed by conflicts. Anindya and Ali mention disruption as a phase of chaos (Anindya et al., 2019). In the film *Opor Ayam*, disruption is shown through a narrative depicting his wife who is; loving "...*Halimah yang penuh kasih*" ("...Halimah who is full of love"), a spoiled figure "...*manjanya itu lho. (Halimah) Mas, Sudah tiga malam tidak menciumku. Kan aku sudah bilang sejak menikah, sebelum tidur*

*mas harus menciumku*” (“...how spoiled she is. (Halimah) Honey, you haven’t kissed me for three nights. I’ve told you since you got married, you have to kiss me before you go to sleep”), jealous “...*cemburuannya. (Halimah) duhh fotonya yang barusan dikomentari mantan. Senang banget ya.*” (...so jealous. (Halimah) wow the recent picture was commented by your ex. It must be nice), gentle “...*yang lemah lembut*” (“...who is gentle”), and caring “...*yang semangat cintanya diekspresikan dalam perhatian*” (“...that the spirit of love is expressed in her attention”). The description of Halimah as a wife is conveyed verbally which is then reinforced visually. The verbal aspect becomes a signifier which is visually shown to be contradictory so that the disruption of the differences between the two characters, between Tadin and Halimah becomes visible.

The structure of situation then entered into a phase of disequilibrium which was signified by Halimah cooking *Opor Ayam* and Tadin tasted only two spoons of it. The third phase of disequilibrium is divided into two parts, namely recognition and repair of the damage. Anindya and Ali explained that recognition is the phase when the character in the story realizes there is a disturbance, while repair the damage is when the character in the story starts trying to find solutions so that they can immediately solve problems or disturbances that arise (Anindya et al., 2019). Face recognition is when Halimah cooks *Opor Ayam* then Tadin just tastes it, and Halimah complains to her in-law which is heard by Tadin “...*Mas Tadin benar-benar kebangetan. Saya sudah masak Opor spesial buat dia. Tapi dia ngicipin dua sendok, langsung ditinggal*” (“...Tadin is so mean. I have cooked a special *Opor* for him. But he tasted two spoons, then immediately left”). Let us look at fragment 2, datum 2.



Fragment 2, Datum 2

In datum 2 above, Halimah's face that looks sad is the signifier that strengthens the verbal as a sign of Halimah's disappointment with Tadin. This disappointment is the narrative recognition which is then followed by repair of damage. In that phase, the visual narration describes when Tadin went to buy *Opor Ayam* the next day, then the *Opor* was handed over to Halimah. On the other hand, Halimah has also cooked Tadin's favorite food. Please note the fragment 3, datum 3.



Fragment 3, Datum 3

The fragment in the datum shows Tadin giving Opor Ayam to Halimah. This is a signifier of Tadin's efforts to improve relations with Halimah which she welcomed with a smile. This fragment is a sign of improving relations and a sign of improving relations between Tadin and Halimah. The verbal remarks "...Mas minta maaf ya. Jadi sekarang sudah bisa makan opor?" ("...I'm so sorry. So now you can eat *opor*?") reinforces the mark of their good relationship.

The final phase of the *Opor Ayam* short film narrative is new-equilibrium. Eriyanto explained that this phase is the last chapter of a narration, the chaos that appeared in the previous phase is resolved so that the order in the story can be restored (Anindya et al., 2019). At this stage the visual shows both Tadin and Halimah looking happy to eat together. Thus, from the discussion it can be seen that the short film *Opor Ayam* has 4 (four) parts of the story's narrative structure.

### Matchmaking Narrative Construction

In the study, it is known that the construction of perceptions towards matchmaking is seen at least in two datums, the beginning and the end (datums 4 and 5). This shows that the topic of the film regarding matchmaking is narrated at the beginning as the opening and at the end as the closing of the film. The placement of the narration topic is assumed to be due to the limited duration and the nature of the short film which emphasizes effectiveness. Elvaretta and Ahmad explained that in terms of duration, a short film has a duration of less than 60 minutes and can even be less than 10 minutes, then the most important thing about a short film is the effective use of communication media (Elvaretta & Ahmad, 2021).

The construction of the film's narrative begins with the construction of the topic of matchmaking and ends with the construction of matchmaking, see datums 4 and 5.

#### Datums 4

*Pernikahan yang didasarkan kesepakatan orang tua = Marriage based on parental agreement (1.01)*

*Perjodohan. Satu kata yang menyatukan dua hati yang terikat menjadi satu. Atas nama Tuhan tentunya = Matchmaking. One word that unites two hearts that are bound to become one. In the name of God of course. (1.30)*

In the datum 4, the narrative of the short film begins by providing context to introduce oneself as a background. The narration of the story conveys the role of the main character "Tadin" as a teacher who is built visually after teaching and verbally confirms that "Tadin" has a bachelor's degree from an Islamic university and has taught at an Islamic school for three years. This part in the narrative of the story is referred to as the introduction, the focus of the narrative then switches to datum 4 in verbal form. This verbal form is a signifier of the concept of a signified, namely matchmaking.

In the datum 4, the construction of the definition of matchmaking in the film are; (1) marriage based on parental agreement; (2) unite two hearts that are bound together in the name of God. This construction is more specific than its etymological definition, namely; matchmaking is making two things (people, goods) as partners; seek (make) husband and wife (Language Development and Development Agency, 2016). The concept of matchmaking becomes more specific with the words "...to become one in the name of God" which means that matchmaking is something that is accepted by religion (God) and must be based on God's provisions. The construction of matchmaking is then deepened through datum 5, see datum 5.



#### Datums 5

*Itu kisahku dan Halimah diawal pernikahan. Punya semangat mencintai, tapi tidak mengenal yang dicintai. Sama seperti orang-orang yang mencintai Tuhan, tetapi tidak mengenal-Nya. Begitulah kita memperlakukan Tuhan, seperti ukuran dirinya masing-masing.*

(That was my story and Halimah at the beginning of the marriage. Having a passion to love, but not knowing the loved one. Just like people who love God, but do not know Him. That's how we treat God, like the size of each of us.)

In the verbal quotation of datum 5, it is known that the emphasis is on the religious point of view. The story of the matchmaking between Tadin and Halimah is analogous to a religious relationship. In this context, the narration also shows that matchmaking must be based on the spirit of knowing God, a relationship based on religion.

#### Conclusion

This study aims to find out the narrative structure and how the topic of matchmaking is conveyed in the short film *Opor Ayam* published by NU Online. The research discussion shows that the narration in the film is presented as a whole in four stages, namely equilibrium, disruption, disequilibrium and new-equilibrium that follow the storyline. Next, from the discussion it was also known that the topic of matchmaking was conveyed from a religious perspective. Whereas matchmaking: (1) is acceptable in religion, (2) must be based on religious provisions, (3) the narrative emphasizes that marriage through matchmaking is a process of knowing each other and must be based on religion. The three narrations are conveyed at the beginning and end through verbal aspects complemented by visuals.

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