

MEANING OF SYMBOLS IN RUMAH ADAT BOLON BATAK TOBA: A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

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This research is to explain about various kinds of symbols, as well as the meaning of the symbols and the reasons why the use of each symbol in the Toba Batak Traditional House. The purpose of the research is to find out the types of symbols, and also the meaning of each symbols in the Toba Batak Traditional house and also the reasons of using symbols in the Toba Batak Traditional House. This research uses qualitative descriptive method. Toba Batak Traditional House in T.B Silalahi Center Balige is the source of the data obtained by the researcher was also clarified by several sources who were at the TB Silalahi Center. The result of this research is the symbols in Toba Batak Traditional House have meanings in symbolizing Tarus symbol as prosperity and mother's love, Boraspati symbol as fertility, jenggar symbol as strength, Singa-singa symbol as prestigious, Ulupaung as wisdom, Gaja Dompok symbol as truth, Santung-santung symbol as truth and law, Simeol-eol and Simeol-eol Marsialoan symbols as happiness and tolerance, Ipon-ipon symbol as beauty and harmony, Silintong symbols as warmth, and Desa Na Ualu symbol as balance

Keywords: Culture, meaning, symbols, Rumah Adat Bolon, Bata Toba

1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistics may be defined as the scientific study of of language. Linguistics is concerned with the nature of language and communication. It deals both with the study of particular languages, and the search for general properties common to all languages or large groups of languages. Linguistics is the study of human language. There are many languages in the world like Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Malay, Russian, Bengali, and others. According to Hutaeruk, (2015) in Nainggolan et al (2020) Language is one of the most important things in communication among the nations in all over the world One of them is English. Through a language, human beings can communicate their ideas to each other, can understand each other, sharing their feelings to others in their daily life (Herman, 2014).

According to Sutrisno as cited and Yastanti and Setiawati (2018) in Nguyen Van Thao et al (2020) 'Semantic is the study of meaning in language'. It is supported by Griffiths in Kurniati (2015) said that Semantics is the study of word meaning and sentence meaning abstracted away from contexts of use, is a descriptive subject Butarbutar et al (2020). Yule (2010) as cited in Purba et al (2020) explained that semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. It means that semantics is the study of meaning in language. Every language has an aim or purpose in communication because there is a message that will be delivered by the speaker to the target. The message meant in communication is the meaning and the meaning in language depends on the how the speaker speaks a language or participating in dialogue with others.

According to Halliday and Fontaine (2013) in Saragih (2017) states that every act of language is an act of meaning and "to mean is to act semiotically" For Halliday "the internal organization of language is not arbitrary but embodies a positive reflection of the functions that language has evolved to serve in the life of social man. This is unique because it means language must be explained as



expressing meanings that are created within a social system. For those of us who are interested in how language acts both socially and semiotically, this is useful because it lets us describe and explain how social reality is encoded in language, both in terms of how language is a means of reflecting on things and how it is a means of acting (symbolically) on people.

In general, semiotics is usually defined as a general philosophical theory dealing with the production of signs and symbols as part of code systems which are used to communicate information. Semiotics includes visual and verbal as well as tactile and olfactory signs (all signs or signals which are accessible to and can be perceived by all our sense) as they form code systems which systematically communicate information or messages in literary every of human behavior and enterprise

Besides communication with language, humans can communicate with symbols and signs. Words are linguistic sign, similar in certain respects to natural and conventional signs. Words 'have meanings' but rather are capable of conveying meanings to those who can perceive, identify, and interpret. Words go together to form sentences which in turn are capable of conveying meaning, the meanings of the individual words and the meaning that comes from the relation of Symbols are signs where the relation between signifier and signified is purely conventional and culturally specific most words.

Everyone often communicates by very using sign or symbols. Symbol cannot be separated from human life, it is Eco (1984:132) states that signs and symbols are messages, people often communicate by using sign. In Batak culture, it was founded so many symbols and the meaning especially in Tobanese Batak Culture. The one of rumah adat bolon, rumah bolon is a traditional Toba Batak house. Rumah bolon is symbol of identify of Batak people who live in North Sumatra. In rumah bolon many symbols have meanings differential. Some people have problems to understand a symbols or sign as found in rumah bolon. In this thesis, the writer is eager to analyze realize rumah bolon symbols and its meaning in rumah bolon. In rumah bolon, there are a few symbols with different meanings. The writer is interested to analyze rumah adat bolon Batak Toba symbols, because they have separate meanings.

In human language, the symbols are most arbitrary, and the systems has to be painstakingly transmitted from one generation to another. Symbols are signs where the relation between signifier and signified is purely conventional and culturally specific most words. Everyone often communicates by very using sign or symbols. Symbol cannot be separated from human life, it is important because it has many profit in human social life especially in Batak Culture. On the other hand, culture also has many signs that can be found around us. Historical relics are physical or intangible objects of a group or society.

But now the younger generation no longer cares about culture, because young people consider it an ancient tradition that must be abandoned and even the younger generation do not know the signs in traditional Batak Toba house and so do the its meaning. With the ignorance of the younger generation now that the meaning of each sign in traditional Batak Toba house is rarely mentioned. With the reduction of the younger generation who did not know about the meaning of each traditional Batak Toba House custom, it resulted in culture becoming less visible. In addition, historical relics that have survived from the past are usually unique and irreplaceable so that the current generation is responsible for preserving them.

Culture is necessary, but if the custom keeps us away from God, then leave the custom, because whatever we do in this world must base on the rules of God and give everything to God. For example:





Figure 1. Lizard (Boras Pati)

Image 1 is a symbol of desire, namely Boraspati. Boraspati means "lizard" in English. Ariyandini, an anthropologist from the University of Indonesia, said that the philosophy of Batak life is boraspati. One can learn from life Boraspati can adapt to any environment or location. Batak ancestors hoped that their successors could adapt to anything in an environment like Boraspati, no matter what situation they faced. This symbol no longer exists in the Toba Batak community and can be found in the Toba Batak traditional house.

The statement above is supported by one previous research namely Hutahaean (2018). There are the similarities and the differences between her researches with this research. The similarity is, both of the researchers want to find out the symbols and the meanings that consist on Traditional Batak Toba house namely Rumah Bolon. And the difference is both of researches have the different problems.

The symbols can be found in Toba Batak Rumah Bolon. Toba Batak rumah bolon is home to thirteen kings who live in North Sumatera. Additionally, the house construction requires wood with certain specification in large quantities. This particular house bolon is approximately 9,5 x 15 meters in size, almost twice the size of a normal house. The idea of development of this house was to conserve the almost extinct original houses remaining in Batak due to abandonment and or lack of proper preservation

2. METHOD

A. Research Design

This research is written as a qualitative research. Qualitative research seek to interpreted human actions, institutions, events, customs, and the like, and in so doing they construct a "reading", or portrayal, of what is being studied (Ary, 2010). According to Flick (2013) in Siahaan et al (2021), qualitative data analysis is the classification of linguistic material to make statements about structures of meaning-making in the material. The analysis of qualitative data is often one step in a series of steps throughout the research process. These interpretations would take us to the generation of theories, be guided by existing theories or concept maps, or seek to further explicate or expound upon a theory. As a qualitative research, this study was designed into a content analysis method.

Content analysis research is a research method applied to written or visual materials for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the material. The materials analyzed can be textbooks, newspapers, web pages, speeches, advertisements, or any of a host of other types of documents. In this case, the content would be analyzed was a visiting to TB Silalahi to find out Toba Batak rumah Bolon. The aim of the research was to find what symbols are contained in Toba Batak Rumah Bolon, what is the meaning of the symbols and what colors are contained in the symbols.

B. Data and Source

Data is the most important in the research, because without any data the research cannot be conducted. The data are information collected by the writer to answer research problem. Data include materials the people doing the study actively record, such as interview, transcripts, and participant



observation field notes. The qualitative data are in the form of text like newspapers, movies, sitcoms, e-mail traffic, folktales, and life histories (Bernard & Ryan, 2000) in (Zakiah, 2019). The data of this study are words, phrases or sentences from selected Toba Batak Rumah Bolon.

Data sources were sources where the data were taken from. The source of the data is very important in the research because without it, the information is unable to be obtained by the researcher. The main data sources are 7 Toba Batak traditional houses (4 Sopo and 3 Ruma) in T. B. Silalahi center and assistant data from books and the internet.

C. Instrument

Instrument is a tool to get information. In this study, researchers will conduct direct observations in the field, then interview the guides and traditional elders (Natuatua ni Huta) at that location.

D. Technique of Data Collection

Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest that qualitative researchers usually rely on statistical information methods of participation in the environment, direct observation, in-depth interviews, and cultural analysis of documents or materials.

E. Technique of Data Analysis

In order to obtain the result of analysis, this study used descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative data are often used in philosophical research and some descriptive and historical research. The systematic procedures that was done as follow:

1. Identifying
The researcher visited the location namely T.B Silalahi Center, located in Tobasa Balige.
2. Classifying
After that, the researcher asked the TB silalahi's guide about some signs in Rumah Bolon that consist of 4 sopo and 3 ruma, and ask about the meaning of the signs while take some photos.
3. Analysing
Then, the researcher analyzed the signs in Rumah bolon based on Ulman (1972) in Napitupulu (2016) and Eco (1986) in Pauzan (2018)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data, there were some findings depicted from the data analysis, namely:

1. The researcher found 12 symbols from rumah adat bolon batak toba that located in T.b Silalahi Center in Balige. The symbols are, tarus, jenggar, singa-singa, ulupaung, gajadompak, santung-santung, simeol-eol, simeol-eol marsialoan, ipon-ipon, silintong, desa na ualu. All the symbols have the different meaning, the meaning of the 12 symbols are :
 - a. Tarus is symbol which means "breast" in english.
 - b. Jenggar is a symbol that looks like a delusion or a beast.
 - c. Singa-singa is a symbol that looks like a "lion" in english.
 - d. Ulupaung is a symbol that has a meaning as the crown of the Toba Batak custom home.
 - e. Gaja dampak is a symbol which means elephant's head in english and gajah in Indonesian. Carved like an elephant's head Below, above the tarus and boraspati symbols in the Toba Batak House tradition.
 - f. Santung-santung is a symbol which means banana flower in English and banana heart in Indonesian.
 - g. Simeol-eol is a symbol, meaning in English the moss moves towards the swing. It is carved into a moss plant.
 - h. Simeol-eol marsialoan a symbol that looks like a "moss
 - i. Ipon-ipon is the symbol for teeth in english.
 - j. Silintong is a symbol of the formation of a vortex.



- k. Simataniari is defined as a giver of light and Batak people It is important for people to have a light-giving character.
- 1. Na Ualu village is a symbol, which means wind in English Directions. It is carved into an eight-point compass at the top of the facade of the Toba Batak traditional house.
- 2. The 12 symbols also have the different colours and in 12 colours the researcher found there are three colours namely black, red and white. The three colours have the different meaning:

Table 1. The meaning of symbol and the meaning colors of symbols.

No	Symbols	Meaning Symbol	Colours		
			Red	White	Black
1	Tarus	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave. Both of colours is using in tarus symbol, because mother's love is so holy and every mother is brave. That's why, using white and black colour.	-	✓	✓
2	Jenggar	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong . Both of colours is using in jenggar symbol, because jenggar the comb is described as a wild animal that has strength and courage. That's why, using white, red and black colour.	✓	✓	✓
3	Singa- Singa	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong. Both of colours is using in singa-singa symbol, because Lions are known as one of the strongest animals. King of the Jungle. He is stocky, strong, majestic and personable. That's why, using white, red and black colour.	✓	✓	✓
4	Ulu Paung	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong . Both of colours is using in ulupaung symbol, because ulupaung depicted as a crown, whose crown has traditionally represented power, legitimacy, victory, honor, and glory, and immortality, righteousness, and resurrection	✓	✓	✓
5	Gaja Dompok	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong . Both of colours is using in gaja dompok symbol, because elephant symbolizes strength, honor, stability and patience	✓	✓	✓
6	Santung- Santung	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage	✓	✓	✓

No	Symbols	Meaning Symbol	Colours		
			Red	White	Black
		and strong . The three colours made in one symbols that has meaning as a trully. That's why, using white, red and black colour.			
7	Simeol-eol	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong .Simeol-eol marsialoan described as moss a symbols that has three colours namely white, red and black. The three colour put together in one symbols namely Simeol-eol, the three of the colours have different meaning but combined has the meaning as a beautifull.	✓	✓	✓
8	Simeol-eol Marsialoan	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong .Simeol-eol marsialoan described as moss a symbols that has three colours namely white, red and black. The three colour put together in one symbols namely Simeol-eol, the three of the colours have different meaning but combined has the meaning as a beautifull.	✓	✓	✓
9	Ipon-ipon	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong . Ipon-ipon described as hard bones and small white and tols. That's why, using white, red and black colour.	✓	✓	✓
10	Silintong	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong. Because Silintong is carved like a whirlpool who has power. That's why, using white, red and black colour.	✓	✓	✓
11	Simataniari	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong. The meaning of the three colors is a symbol of life, because without the sun there is no life on this earth.	✓	✓	✓
12	Desa Na Ualu	The meaning of white colour is clean or holy, and the meaning of black colour is mysterius and brave, and the meaning of red is courage and strong. The three colours it can be concluded that the symbol is interpreted as a direction or compass	✓	✓	✓

3. From 12 data, there are 11 symbols that have 3 colours. Namely black, white and red. And only 1 symbol that have 2 colours namely black and white, the percentage is:



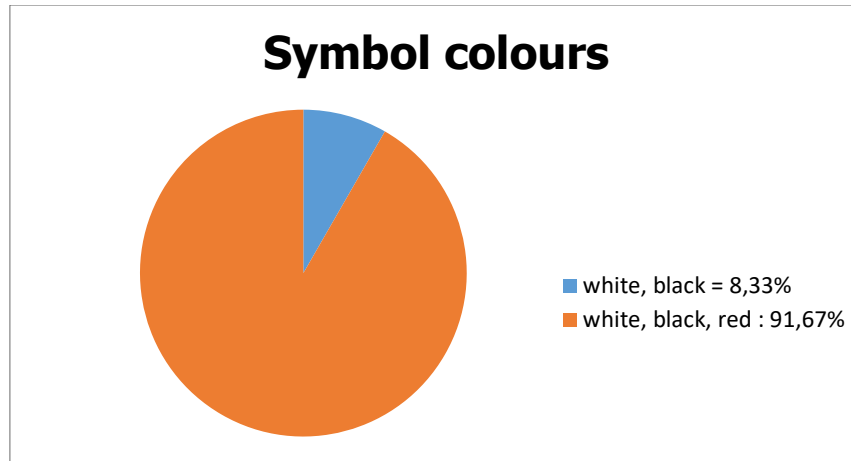


Figure 2. Display of the use color in symbols

The figured above the type of color used for the symbol. The researchers found three types of colors in the symbol, namely: white, black, red. The use of white and black in symbols only amounted to 8,33%, while the use of white, black and red colors amounted to 91.67%. each symbol does not always use these three colors there are also some symbols that do use red and there are also symbols that use those three colors too.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher conducts an interview with the guide and also for visitors who come to the T.B Silalahi location which aims to get information about symbols by asking for an understanding of the symbols found in the Bolon Batak Toba Traditional House which is located at the T.B Silalahi Center which aims as supporting data.

A. Interview with guide (informant)

After finishing interviewing the guide (informant) who was at T.B. Please Center, then the researcher has obtained information about traditional houses that have been built decades ago and have been collected in One place or village is named Huta Batak, so that visitors or tourists will easily see and understand the type and meaning of the traditional house. The dominant traditional house is Toba Batak traditional houses, totaling 7 Toba Batak Traditional Houses (4 Sopo and 3 Houses).

The researcher has also interviewed informants or traditional elders who live in the Laguboti Balige location about symbol in Toba Batak traditional house, namely Ondi Siregar and Josua Siburian who really understands very well about the Toba Batak traditional house. Therefore, the researcher has obtained information about traditional houses in the table below.

Table 2. Interviewed informants

No	Informant	Opinion
1.	Ondi Siregar	Several kinds of symbols that we can see or we find in the Batak Toba traditional house, such as Tarus, Singa-singa, and Ulupaung, Simeol-eol, Na Uual Village, Simataniari, Gajah Dompok, Silintong, Ipon-Ipon, in general are very, very typical of the traditional house itself, as for its function according to the ancestors of the Batak people in ancient times, namely being a fortress or protector from all demons or evil deeds that send mystical things directly to fill the village and also harassing a family from outside his neighborhood.



2.	Josua Siburian	So dari semua symbol that is clearly visible in the Batak Toba traditional house, it can be interpreted as a protector and also as a reminder to all residents of the Batak Toba traditional house itself that the belief in faith, belief and hope must not be lost and must always be preserved so that the Batak Toba culture being able to always be known by the next generations to come and can also be introduced to the whole country this is one of the very good cultures and also much in love.
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From the two informants, all the symbols have the great meaning that created ancestors and the meaning of the symbol, has continuity with human life. That is why the symbols must always be preserved so that they are not lost and can be recognized by the next generation. So that the Batak Toba culture can always be known by the next generation who will come and also the Batak Toba culture like this can be known throughout the country because this is a culture that many people like it.

There were similarities and differences found with previous relevant of the research that conducted by Flansius Tampubolon and Jekmen Sinulingga (2020) with the title is “ Meaning of Ornaments in Pakpak Traditional House: Semiotic Study” . The first similarities that the analysis are as to find out meaning of symbols or ornaments, the theory used theory of (Fizan, 2019) and then the similarities both of this research was the methodology which is same used descriptive qualitative research and the difference in this research the data used are symbols or ornaments found or listed in the pakpak batak traditional house. In previous research it was found that there are various kinds of symbols discussed, the next difference is that in this study the symbols found in the pakpak batak traditional house can be categorized into plants while the symbols contained in the toba batak traditional house can be categorized into animals.

So, the next thing is Flansius Tampubolon and Jekmen Sinulingga that in this study they collect data which is very different from the researcher because they collect the data from the internet and the library, while this researcher collects data by means of direct interviews at the location and conducts questions and answers between the guide and also the traditional elders at the location. Then the two objects of this research are the same that is the analyze of the symbol..

5. CONCLUSION

After the researcher analyzes some of the symbols contained in the Toba Batak traditional houses that located in T.B. Silalahi Center in the city of Balige, North Sumatra, Indonesia of the 7 Traditional Houses (Sopo 1, Sopo 2, Sopo 3, Sopo 4, Ruma 1, Ruma 2, Ruma 3) then as the main data source, it can be concluded that The researcher have found 12 symbols on the Toba Batak traditional house which is located on the facade of the Traditional House (top, middle, and bottom) of the house, the left side of the house, and the right next to the house, namely: *Tarus* Symbol, *Jenggar* Symbol, *Singa-Singa* Symbol, *Ulupaung* Symbol, *Gaja Dompok* Symbol, *Santung-Santung* Symbol, *Simeol-eol* Symbol, *Simeol-eol Marsialoan* Symbol, *Ipon-Ipon* Symbol, *Silintong* Symbol, *Simataniari* Symbol, *Desa Na Ualu* Symbol.

The symbols found in the Toba Batak traditional house in general are an identity the traditional house itself, and also some of its functions according to the ancestors of the Toba people The ancient Batak people can be protectors from demons or mystical things sent to the village or house that will disturb the family in the traditional house from outside their environment. The types of symbols found in the Toba Batak traditional house, it can be interpreted as: that the symbol is used as a protector and reminder for all residents of traditional houses. The beliefs, beliefs and expectations of the Toba Batak culture must also be preserved and maintained in its integrity so that later it can be known by generations in the future.

After analyzing the symbols that found in Toba Batak house that is located in T.B Silalahi Center in Balige , North Sumatra, Indonesia from 7 Toba Batak traditional houses (sopo 1, sopo 2, sopo 3, sopo 4, ruma 1, ruma 2, ruma 3) as the primary source of data, then the writer conclude : from the 7 traditional



houses that contain symbols of Toba Batak, the researcher has found 12 symbols in Toba Batak traditional house located on the facade (top, middle, and bottom) of the house, the left side of the house, and the right side of the house, they are : tarus symbol, jenggar symbol, singa-singa symbol, ulupaung symbol, gaja dampak symbol, santung-santung symbol, simeol-eol symbol, simeol-eol marsialoan symbol, ipon-ipon symbol, silintong symbol, simataniari symbol, desa na ualu symbol.

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