Semiotics Analysis On Color Symbols In Tobanese Batak Ulos

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Abstract

This study is about semiotics on symbol, symbol of color in Tobanese Batak Ulos. In this study, the writer wants to identify color in ulos and its meaning. There are nine ulos to be exposed. In Tobanese Batak culture, there are three color which are most dominant, they are white symbolizes truth, red symbolizes bravery and black symbolizes mysticism. The writer have been collected the data from some books of Batak culture and Tobanese Batak ulos. It can be concluded that color is very important in Batak’s life.

Keywords: semiotics analysis, symbol color

1. Introduction

Language is something created by human being. Language is an important part in daily human being life. Without a language, one can’t interact to others wherever they are. Languages play role where the human life plays its role too. Human is also categorized as language being. Language is so important in human life, it is just like breath. Everyone needs a language and must know it, because when one wants to talk to others, it just has to use a familiar language in the world. It is used as a means of communication to others and without a language the world is empty. Language is unique because there are many kinds of language in this world and it all has a different meaning.

By considering many things that can be analyzed through semiotics, the writer specified the analysis especially color symbols in Tobanese Batak ulos. He took some data of ulos from internet, library and his family collection. The writer discusses symbols of color in ulos because the writer wants to know the meaning of colors in Tobanese Batak Ulos.

The main objective of the study is to identify the meaning of color symbols in ulos. The objective of the study is to learn kind of color symbols found there as the object of discussion because learning about traditional culture token is very interesting.

By doing this research writer hopes that some young generation of Bataknese can learn about their culture, and this is also part of Language, and as a language maintenance that should be written for Bataknese future generation, and it should be useful for further research.

Semiotics

In general definition, Semiotics is the study of signs or symbols and the meaning. Sign or symbols are various of origins. There are from humans, animals, plants and also any signs or symbols from created of human being. Semiotics is also usually frequently seen has having important anthropological dimensions and every cultural phenomenon can be studied as communication.

A Brief History of Semiotics

In development, semiotic was devided to be two of kinds, semiotics from Charles S. Pierce (semioticians anglo saxon) and semiotics from Ferdinand De Saussure (semioticians continental). the meaning of semiotics from the both is differents. Because Peirce is the expert of filsafat and logical but Saussure is expert of linguistics.

The meaning of Semiotics
But equally the different ways in which several system of signification collaborate at the transmission of meaning. (spoken and written language, gestures and facial expression during a chat or as part of theater representation or a film; that which may conveyed by new media such as the computer).

Kind of Semiotics

Based on the explanation above, there are some kinds of semiotics as follows:

1. Analytical Semiotic (Parret, 1983: 1) analyzes system of sign. Peirce (Innis, Ed, 1985: 5) Semiotics has objects and analysis to be an idea and sense.
3. Culture Semiotic (Ikegami, 1985; Lamb, 1984; Kelkar, 1984) Semiotics is just explains system of sign in society particular culture. It is known that people as social beings have a certain cultural system that has been shown and respected for the generation. Example: in Tobanese Batak Culture people usually wear ulos. People can know which party will them attend from them ulos. If one want to see it get married usually wearing Ragi Hotang ulos. If one comes to the death ceremony usually wearing Sibolang and Bolean ulos. In Tobanese Batak usually wearing black skirt when comes to the death ceremony and when one comes to the wedding ceremony it have to wearing full color.

Some Important Semioticans

The Institute for Art Research of the University of Helsinki (2009), described that semiotics is a field of study which investigate the emergence of meanings and symbolic systems that has traditionally been applied to humanities and various sciences especially for the extensive and complex phenomena and processes within art, culture, community, economics and futurology.

Semiotics also have weak arguments. Campbell and Cao (2001) sought that multiple theory models and ambiguity in definition of the similar term results to complexity and repetition of research in this theory. Some signs may have different meanings across different cultures or individual interpretations.

Current Application

In some countries, its role is limited to literary criticism and an appreciation of audio and visual media, but this narrow focus can inhibit a more general study of the social and political forces shaping how different media are used and their dynamic status within modern culture. Issues of technological determinism in the choice of media and the design of communication strategies assume new importance in this age of mass media.

Branches of Semiotics

Cultural and literary semiotics examines the literary world, the visual media, the mass media, and advertising in the work of writers such as Roland Barthes, Marcel Danesi, and Juri Lotman (e.g., Tartu–Moscow Semiotic School).

Pictoral Semiotics

Pictorial Semiotics is intimately connected to art history and theory. It has gone beyond them both in at least one fundamental way, however. While art history has limited its visual analysis to a small number of pictures which qualify as "works of art," pictorial semiotics has focused on the properties of pictures more generally. This break from traditional art history and theory—as well as from other major streams of semiotic analysis—leaves open a wide variety of possibilities for pictorial semiotics. Some influences have been drawn from phenomenological analysis, cognitive psychology, and structuralist and cognitivist linguistics, and visual anthropology/sociology.

Sign

In semiotics, a sign is something that can be interpreted as having a meaning, which is something other than itself, and which is therefore able to communicate information to the one interpreting or decoding the sign.
Signs can work through any of the senses, visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory or taste, and their meaning can be intentional such as a word uttered with a specific meaning, or unintentional such as a symptom being a sign of a particular medical condition. In this case, the writer used the Saussure’s model as follows:

**Dyadic Sign**

Sign is composed of the signifier (signifiant), and the signified (signifié). These cannot be conceptualized as separate entities but rather as a mapping from significant differences in sound to potential (correct) differential denotation. The Saussurean sign exists only at the level of the synchronic system, in which signs are defined by their relative and hierarchical privileges of co-occurrence. It is thus a common misreading of Saussure to take signifiers to be anything one could speak, and signifieds as things in the world. In fact, the relationship of language to parole (or speech-in-context) is and always has been a theoretical problem for linguistics (cf. Roman Jakobson's famous essay "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics" et al.).

**The Triadic Sign**

A sign is something which depends on an object in a way that enables (and, in a sense, determines) an interpretation, an interpretant, to depend on the object as the sign depends on the object. The interpretant, then, is a further sign of the object, and thus enables and determines still further interpretations, further interpretant signs. The process, called semiosis, is irreducibly triadic, Peirce held, and is logically structured to perpetuate itself. It is what defines sign, object, and interpretant in general. As Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990: 7) put it, "the process of referring effected by the sign is infinite." (Note also that Peirce used the word "determine" in the sense not of strict determinism, but of effectiveness that can vary like an influence).

Molino's and Nattiez's diagram:

Poietic Process  Esthesic Process

"Producer" → Trace ← Receiver

(Nattiez 1990: 17)
The Ontological Triad

The phenomena of sign or a picture is not as they manifest themselves to external perception, but as they appear to the mind while the phenomena can be divided into three categories:

First Phenomena
It is the mode of being of that which is what it is positively and without reference to anything outside itself,” a quality”, unpresentable a kind “feeling” without recognition or analysis.

Second Phenomena
It is the mode of being of that which is as it is “relative to something outside itself”, an experience, a kind of a fact, an extent.

Third Phenomena
It is the mode of being of that which puts in to relation between two entires, a triadic relation existing between a sign considered as consituting the mode of being a sign, a sense of learning.

Symbol
Symbol is the sign which show the natural relationship between signifier and signified. ”a symbol like everything else, shows a double aspect. We must distinguish, therefore between the ‘sense’ and the meaning of the symbol. It seems to me perfectly clear that all the great and little symbolical systems of the past functioned simultaneously on three levels: the corporeal of waking consciousness, the spiritual of dream, and the ineffable of the absolutely unknowable.

From this case, Eco found that to read a symbol or message we must pay attention to the symbol system which related, that are :
1. Object ( water debit )
2. Symbol/Sign ( active censor, lamp signal )
3. Respond ( dam operator )
4. Rule ( System )

Cultural Semiotics
Batak Society’s Culture is one of the famous culture which is never separated from Indonesia’s culture. There are differences that differentiate Batak Society from other society in Indonesia either in the world that are the unique of languages, kind of dances and also some of traditional clothes example like Ulos. That is very familiar in Indonesia because it has a few of unique color.

Color
In Batak Society, color is symbol of life, It is very important because without color Batak’s life is empty or no meaning. There are many colors in this world but just three colors which are dominant in Batak Culture, they are white, black, and red. It is often met in all kind of activities or things about Batak Culture.

Ulos
In Tobanese Batak Society, Ulos has a big play roles. This case can be seen when on a certain ceremony, like Wedding Ceremony, Death Ceremony and Birth Ceremony. In Batak Ceremony there is always ulos given to someone. Ulos is the important things in all of ceremony that’s why Batak people always saved ulos as the valuable things.

Kind of Ulos Color
Tobanese ulos is difference between one and with others. The difference found in the name, color, motif and user. The Toba Color and North Tapanuli includes three colors that are ; white, black and red, then in karol: old blue and in Simalungun : black to brown. So, Color is the most dominant in Batak Culture especially in Tobanese Batak is red, black and white.

According to the first Tobanese Batak the meaning of color are, as follow:
- White : Symbolizes of the highest continent or symbolize of Singasana mulajadi na bolon, it is also as a symbols of life. White color in Batak people is “Bontar”
- Red : Symbolizes of the middle continent and symbolizes of bravery and super natural power. A long time, the medicine in Batak people is black color.
Black: symbolizes of under continent and symbolizes of mysticism.
    and the meaning of colors is the color typical of the greats
    throne of the ancient Batak color.

And according to Tapanuli Selatan Batak the meaning of color are as follows;
White : as a symbols of holiness, truth and justice
Red : as a symbols of bloods, bravery and courage
Yellow : as rich or fertility
Black : as a symbols of faith, medicine and mysticism
    and the meaning of colors is the color typical of the greats throne of the ancient Batak color.

A long time ago, in making the ulos Batak people to use three color, red, black and white and to get the
    color Batak people use fruit of palm, gambier, sirih and sap of tree. In Batak culture, red color is so difficult and full
    of mysticism because Batak people use blood as substitute red color.

Kinds of Ulos
    Ulos has a few of kinds and the meaning of ulos, that are ;
1. Ragi Hidup
    This ulos is the most higher in all of Tobanese Batak Ulos. It is often to be a symbol by batak people in a
    building or home because feel as if all motif likes alive.
2. Bintang Maratur
    This Ulos is used by parents or grandma for the birth of their childs or their grandchild (Pahompu). This ulos is
    called by siatur maranak, Siatur Marboru, Siatur Hagabeon, and Siatur Amurahon
3. Ragi Hotang
    This Ulos gives to the couple that to carry out a mores ceremony or called by ulos hela.It is the best and so
    beautiful and this ulos is rich. And according to Batak people, this ulos is also used as the wrapping a corpse
    and the wrapping bones in the death ceremony.
4. Sibolang
    This Ulos is used for the symbol of sorrow or ulos saput (for the grandma who hasn’t a grandchild ) and used by
    widow and widower. It is seldom used by Batak people in all ceremonies
5. Mangiring
    This Ulos is used for as shawl ( Talitali ) and gives to the first grandchild as a symbol of wish and also this ulos
    is used as parompa ( alat gendong ) for the kids
6. Sitolu Tuho
    The special from this ulos is there are three branchs so that’s why this ulos called by sitolu tuho because three of
    branch. It is also called by kekeraban snd the mening is “Dalihan Na Tolu”. This Ulos is used for head bundle or
    shawl
7. Bolean
    This ulos is just used as shawl in a sorrow ceremony. this ulos is just used by orphans. It’s intensions to lose the
    sorrow so that the orphans can be able to endure to face it.
8. Ulos Sibunga Umbasang
    This Ulos functions and used as shawl for mothers to follow all the ceremony activities by called ( panoropi ).
9. Pinuncaan
    a. This Ulos is used for a sorrow ceremony
    b. This Ulos is used in a big ceremony or to welcome for a head of country
    c. This Ulos functions as passamot in wedding ceremony.

2.The Research Design
    This research is conducted by using descriptive design. Writer collected some data about Ulos from his
    family collection and discussed and find out the meaning of the colors as found in ulos.so he also did some
    interviews with some Bataknese elders.
Data

The data of the name are Batak Tobanese Ulos taken from the Toba Batakese, they are:
1. Ragi idup
2. Bintang Maratur
3. Ragi Hotang
4. Sibolang
5. Mangiring
6. Sitoluh Tuho
7. Bolean
8. Tali-Tali Mangiring
9. Napinursaan

1. Taking some of Ulos from traditional books of Batak Culture at library and the writer’s family’s collection
2. Finding out kind of colors in ulos
3. Choosing and take examples of Tobanese Batak Ulos.
4. And selecting out color where is often used in Tobanese Batak Ceremony.

In analyzing the data, the writer uses these following steps, writer identifying the types of ulos, interpreting the meaning of the colors of ulos, and concluding the finding.

3. Data and Data Analysis

There are nine ulos analyzed and it has 7 colors and the meaning too but there are three colors which are the most dominants in Batak’s life they are white, red and black. These colors have special meaning in Batak’s life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>ULOS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ragi Hidup Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bintang Maratur Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ragi Hotang Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sibolang Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mangiring Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sitoluh Tuho Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bolean Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sibunga Umbasang Ulos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pinuncaan Ulos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1.1 The List of Colors and The Meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Color Symbols</th>
<th>The Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1.2 The List of Colors According to Freud Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>The Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Instinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Super Ego</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

Ragi Hidup

In this chapter, the writer use the Pierce’s model as follow；
This ulos is Ragi Hidup Ulos. Ragi Hidup Ulos is the highest level ulos in all of Tobanes Batak ulos. This ulos is used by Batak people in building or their house. This ulos is seldom used because it’s just use by the virgin girls in past.

It has two colors that are red and yellow color. In arguments Batak people red is bravery and yellow is fertility. And according to Freud theory red (instinct)

From the picture above, the sign is used to explain the utility of colors in Ragi Hidup Ulos so that each of Batak people can use that ulos according to the Ceremony and the meaning.

**Ragi Hotang**

use the Pierce’s model as follow ;

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Interpretant
   ( Bravery, Truth And Mysticism )

Sign
   ( Red, Truth And White )

Object
   ( Bintang Mngatur Ulos )
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In this chapter, the writer

This ulos is Ragi Hotang ulos. Ragi Hotang Ulos is ulos gives to the couple that to arranges a Wedding Ceremony. It is also intentions to the catagories of high class and rich class.

It has three colors that are red, black and white. In arguments Batak people red is bravery, black is mysticism and white is truth. and according to Freud theory red (instinct) white (ego) and black (super ego).

And according to Batak people, this ulos is also used as the wrapping a corpse and the wrapping bones in the death ceremony.

**Bintang Maratur**

In this chapter, the writer use the Pierce’s model as follow;

```
  Interpretant
    (Brave)

  Sign
    (Color)

  Object
    (Bintang Mangatur Ulos)
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This ulos is Mangatur Ulos, according to Batak people this ulos is Siboru Habonaran (a good girl) The meaning is a wise girl. It is also as wisdom. Mangatur ulos is used by parents or grandma for the birth of their childs or their grandchilds (pahompu).

The ulos has 2 colors that are red and white, but in this ulos the most dominant color is red. According to Batak people red is bravery and white is truth and according to Freud theory red (instinct) and white (ego).
In this chapter, the writer use the Pierce’s model as follow;

This ulos is Sibolang Ulos. Sibolang ulos is used as symbol of sorrow. In the meaning of Batak people this ulos is ulos saput or for the death. This ulos is used by widow for to bundle her head when her husband died.
Mangiring

Mangiring ulos has three colors, that are red, white and green. In the meaning of Batak people red is (bravery), white (truth) and green (hope). The most dominant color in this ulos is red and according to the Freud theory is red (instinct) and white (ego).

Situlu-Tuho

This ulos is Situlu tuho Ulos, the meaning of Situlu tuho ulos is tolu (three) and tuho (branch of three). This ulos is used to present the death ceremony and bundles to the head as a symbol of solidarity in or called by paratur ni parhudolan (setting the seat).

Bolean
This ulos is Bolean Ulos. This ulos is just used by orphans. It's intentions to lose the sorrow so that the orphans can be able to endure to face it.

This ulos has just one color that is black. The meaning of Batak people, Black is mysticism and according to Freud theory black is super ego. That's why it is dominated with black color because this ulos is a symbols of sorrow.

Sibunga Umbasang

This ulos is Sibunga Umbasang Ulos. Sibunga Umbasang ulos is function or just used by Batak mothers as a shawl to follow all kinds of Batak ceremony or called by Batak people as panoropi (come together in a place).

Pinuncaan
This ulos is Pinuncaan Ulos. this ulos is divided in five part and unireable be a ulos. there are some of utility that are:

a. This Ulos is used for a sorrow ceremony
b. This Ulo is used in a big ceremony or to welcome for a head of country
c. This Ulos functions as passamot in wedding ceremony.

4. Conclusions

Every colors in ulos has a sign, expression and different meaning. The sign of Ragi Hidup ulos are red and yellow color and the expression meanings are braveness and fertility and the meaning is the most higher in all of Tobanese Batak Ulos. The sign of Ragi Hotang ulos are red black and white color. The expression meanings are braveness, mysticism and truth and the meaning is, this ulos get in to the categories of high class and rich because it has beautiful colors. The sign of Bintang Manratur ulos is just red color. The expression is brave and the meaning is as a symbols of wise. The sign of Sibolang ulos are black and gray. The expression meanings are brave and manhood and the meaning is as a symbol of sorrow. The sign of Mangiring ulos are red white and green color. The expression are brave, truth and hope and the meaning is as a symbol of wish. The sign of Sitolu-tuho ulos is just black color. The expression meaning is mysticism. The meaning is three branch of tree. The sign of Bolean ulos is just black color too. The expression is mysticism and the meaning is flatter. The sign of Sibunga Umbasang ulos are red, black and blue color. The expression are brave, mysticsm and calm and the meaning is get crowded in a party. The sign of Pinunciaan ulos is black, red and white. The expression meaning are brave, mysticsm and truth. The meaning is welcome ulos which is given to the honoured guest, loving friends, respected person. All color in ulos are meaningful. Eventhough the main dominant color are just three colors.

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