

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## **A. The Background of the Study**

Language as a sign, a code, or a communication sound system which is agreed by a certain group of society, individually or collectively uses a language as a communication medium of delivering a message, aim, or meaning of things. Language, which is a sign or a symbol, makes human identifies themselves or other aspects to understand every aspect in life easily. So human make the other aspect in symbols in order to ease them in understand and know their meaning.

On the other hand, culture also has many symbols that can be found around us. But, we don't know that they have hidden meaning when they are explored, sometimes every symbol has its own meanings. So, we have to know the symbol in every aspect of language, by knowing the symbol, we will not misunderstand the meaning of the symbol. The meaning of symbol is not a trivial case. Therefore, semiotics as one branch of linguistics which specifically learns about signs needs to be explored and analyzed.

As Chandler (2002: 2) states that 'semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign'. Semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as 'signs' in everyday speech, but of anything which 'stands for' somethingelse. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and object. A culture can also be studied through semiotics approach because culture consists of many signs such as symbols,images, words, texts, etc.

Furthermore, there are two important theories dealing with sign. Firstly, Saussure's theory which focuses on *linguistic* signs (such as words). Saussure in Chandler (2002:14) defines a sign as being composed of a 'signifier' (*signifiant*) and a 'signified' (*signifié*). Contemporary commentators tend to describe the signifier as the form that the sign takes and the signified as the concept to which it refers. The second, Peirce's theory which has three elements of sign (triadic). He calls them as a sign itself (representamen), object, and interpretant.

For instance, symbol can be found anywhere such as on the road. There is a black-white line which is used to cross the road by people when the red light is on. Based on Saussure's theory above, the black-white line is signifier, and then signified is the meaning or the concept of the line on the mind of the people who see it can understand its conventional meaning. Meanwhile, Peirce's theory namely: representamen is the line itself. The object is people who cross the road, white and black color, some people called zebra-cross, and the meaning of the line on the mind, the place where people can across of the road as interpretant.

Especially in culture, as we know Indonesia has many kinds of culture that have to be developed and preserved by us as Indonesian people. So as young generation we must protect our culture and do it event in modern era. So, we need the language in culture to share the culture to the world. Indonesia has also many tribes as well as their languages. One of the tribes in Indonesia is Bataknese. The Batak's society consists of subtribes, such as Toba, Karo, Simalungun, PakpakDairi, Angkola/Mandailing.

In this case, the researcher wants to introduce one of tribes in Indonesia is Mandailing. One of Mandailing's traditions is *pangupa.upah-upah*. *Pangupa/upah-upah* that normally can be found on wedding ceremony. It is in the form of dishes that contains lamb, egg, salt, rice, chicken, etc. On wedding ceremony's *pangupa/upah-upah* there are symbols found on the dishes that must be explored because the symbols have hidden meanings. The meanings conveyed on the wedding ceremony's *pangupa/upah-upah* can help the readers to understand the meaning of each of symbols on *pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing.

But unfortunately, nowadays Mandailing people such as the old man, adult, especially young generation do not know well about *pangupa/upah-upah*. They just know that *pangupa/upah-upah* is one of Mandailing's traditions and in what occasion it is conducted. When the researcher asked the students who live in Mandailing area about the kinds of symbols and the meaning of *pangupa/upah-upah* that is used in wedding ceremony, they are confused to explain it.

Therefore, the researcher wants to do a study dealing with **Symbol on Wedding Ceremony's *Pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing**. The researcher as a Mandailing person wants to introduce Mandailing culture especially *pangupa/upah-upah* to people. Furthermore, as young generation, we need to protect our culture and keep preserving it in this modern era. In this case, *pangupa/upah-upah* itself is actually not only conducted on wedding ceremony, but also conducted to express a gratitude of having a new house, having birth of a

child, and escaping of the accident. But in this research, the researcher just focuses on *pangupa/upah-upah* that is conducted in Mandailing wedding ceremony.

According to Nasution (2005:174) there are various levels of *pangupa/upah-upah* such as chicken eggs, chicken, lamb and meat. *Pangupa/upah-upah* that is normally used on wedding ceremony is lamb or called as “*pangupa hambeng*” in Mandailing language. The dishes which are served on wedding ceremony’s *pangupa/upah-upah* have meanings to be explored. From this *pangupa/upah-upah*, the researcher will take the data. The researcher is interested in knowing kinds of the symbol and meaning that is used on wedding ceremony’s *pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing. “Egg” is one of example of symbol that found on wedding ceremony’s *pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing. The meaning of the symbol “egg” on wedding ceremony is the determination to build a relationship between a man and a woman in a family and without being forced and also the determination to love each other.

## **B. The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as the following:

1. What kinds of symbols are used on wedding ceremony’s *pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing?
2. What are the meanings of the symbols on wedding ceremony’s *pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing?

### **C. The Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problems of the study, the objectives of the study are:

- 1) to know the kinds of the symbols that are used on wedding ceremony's *pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing
- 2) to describe the meaning of the symbols on wedding ceremony's *pangupa/upah-upah* in Mandailing

### **D. The Scope of the Study**

To avoid an overlapping and misleading discussion, the study would be focused on one of wedding ceremony's *pangupa/upah-upah* in Labuhan Batu Selatan.

### **E. The Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study are expected to give contribution both theoretically and practically to the readers. Theoretically, this study is expected to be useful for those who concerns to study about symbols and meanings, especially for Mandailing culture who concern on wedding ceremony's *pangupa/upah-upah*, and also additional resources for the other researcher. Meanwhile, practically the findings of the study are supposed to be useful for the following people:

1. For the students and readers, especially students of English Department to explore their knowledge about semiotic field analyzing the cultural symbol and the meaning.

2. Mandailing people, expected as a study that will make them comprehended about the meaning of *pangupa/upah-upah* in wedding ceremony.
3. For the next researcher, who would like to conduct the research with similar case as additional reference especially in symbols on wedding ceremony's *pangupa/upah-upah*.