

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. The Backgrounds of the Study

Semiotics is an academic field dedicated to the study of signs and symbols for what they communicate spoken and unspoken things that all have the meanings for every single sign or symbol. Semiotics cannot be separated from human life, in daily activities so many signs can be found and it can be recognized by many forms such as forms of texts, images, performances, multimedia productions, traffic signals, fashion, action or objects, aromas, etc (Chandler 2007:21). Semiotics is the study of signs, and how these signs stand-in for anything else.

According to Mayr (2013) the term semiotics derives from the Greek word *semion* meaning 'sign'. It is the study of signs and symbols that focused on words, any communicative element from an image to a hairstyle counts as a sign. As for that, the writer believes that semiotics is the study of the meaning of signs that help people to gather more information and communicate better and efficient through the signs around. Semiotics aims to find out the meanings contained in a sign or interpret the meaning so that it is know how the communicator constructs the message. The concept of meaning is inseparable from certain ideological perspectives or values and cultural concepts that became the reality of thought in the community in which the sign created.

Signs are also found in the Batak Toba ceremony. Which happened in ceremonies and several objects. The signs or symbols found in the Batak Toba

ceremony as in their culture. (Geertz in Sobur, 2006: 178) said that culture is a pattern of meanings contained in symbols passed down through history. Culture is a system and concepts that are hereditary in symbolic forms through communication between people about culture and attitude toward life. The symbols pass down through history in Batak Toba such as in *Mangadati* (wedding), *Partangiangan* (camps prayer), *Saur Matua* (people die for burial), *Gotilon* (rice harvesting), etc. *Gotilon* ceremony in Batak Toba will be a discussion on this paper. There are several symbols found in this *Gotilon* ceremony.

*Gotilon* is an activity done by humans to take the results of rice, fish, vegetables, and others of fields from what we have a plan. This term is most commonly used in farming activities and marks the end of activities in a field. However, this term has a broader meaning because it also can be used in some of the fish farming or various types of other agricultural business objects, such as mushrooms, shrimp, algae or seaweeds, and forest products (wood or non-wood), etc. *Gotilon* is the ending of people's work on plant cultivation and the beginning of post-harvest work, which is to prepare for storage and marketing. In Batak Toba, *Gotilon* is becoming a culture. On *Gotilon* people have a habit to hold the *Gotilon* by keep ceremony for every year.

Batak Toba community is one of Batak sub-ethnic groups in Indonesia besides the Batak Simalungun, Karo, Pak-pak, and Mandailing. This sub-ethnic group is not much different from other Batak sub-ethnic groups in Indonesia. Batak Toba has characteristics for ceremony on *Gotilon*. *Gotilon* talks about rice harvesting. In Batak Toba, the function of rice is not just a staple food as embraced

in Indonesia but more than. Rice has an important symbolic function in Batak Toba culture. For example, *Boras si Pir ni Tondi* means "soul-strengthening rice". Symbolically, "strengthens the soul or spirit". *Itak Gurgur* means "rice flour" which is flaring up because of heat" (*Gurgur*). It is made the rice harvesting (*Gotilon*) is a special harvest than others. That is the meaning of symbolism to rise a weak spirit (soul) so that it gets exciting again. *Indahan na Las* "Warm Rice" is a symbol of warmth and joy. So from the statement-making, it is clear that the rice harvesting (*Gotilon*) is special or different from any other harvesting ceremony.

On *Gotilon* moment the society starts to cut the rice plants until doing the rituals which are called the *Gotilon* party at church (thanksgiving). *Gotilon* is not just as a routine activity for Batak Toba society. During the *Gotilon* work, there are many symbols or even rules that are carried out by the Batak Toba for as long as the *Gotilon* time. On *Gotilon* time something different looks like the types of the dish, words, cooperation, and special rituals performed. From the several signs people especially Batak Toba ethnic need to understand the meaning for each sign on *Gotilon*. Nowadays the meaning of signs on *Gotilon* is faded and sometimes Tobanese didn't know what is *Gotilon* and the meaning. It is very important to know our own culture.

Batak Toba society in Dolok Sanggul province Humbang Hasundutan at Sitio II- Hutasoit villageholds the culture well. In this technology era, everything is can be done quickly but to hold the culture of Batak Toba society in Dolok Sanggul, they are not influenced by machine to cut the riceplants, society no pounding rice by machine people did it by their hands to eat the first of their result rice plants and

make a ritual thanksgiving at home before at church. From the things that can realize people need to understand the signs and the meaning that is on *Gotilon*. The signs or symbols it was found in the *Gotilon* Batak Toba ceremony in Dolok Sanggul. During an activity of *Gotilon* in Batak Toba ceremony was found symbols such as the solidarity to finished their *Gotilon* work so every people are interdependent to help, there are kinds of food which is some different than others, not, as usual, there are some certain words in *Gotilon* time after the society finished *Gotilon* they have some ceremony or thanksgiving and say they're hoping to God that Batak people called *Mangamotito* consist their dish, words made ritual after *Gotilon* process that is special because it must bring their rice on church as a thanksgiving for the result of their rice.

Several studies have discussed about semiotics. The first study is from AzinNooshin(2015), KusumaPutu(2017), SudartoAnderson (2015), Yousefi, Homayoun (2017).From the previous studies, almost all the research fields are at the cultural, advertisement and film. After the writer did searching about semiotics from journals, the writer did not find the research about rice harvesting (*Gotilon*) Batak Toba ceremony. It makes the writer continue to research about this topic that this research is different object from another research. The studies of semiotics above analyze about the text, color, and object. From the issues the writer interest to observe about the meanings semiotically coded, the realizations of meanings semiotically in denotation-connotation-myth, and the meanings semiotically realize on *Gotilon* Batak Toba ceremony in Dolok Sanggul .

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

Based on the explanation of the background above, this research will answer with the following questions:

1. What meanings are semiotically coded on *Gotilon* Batak Toba ceremony in Dolok Sanggul ?
2. How are the meanings semiotically realized on the ceremony of *Gotilon*?
3. Why are the meanings semiotically realized in the ways they are ?

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

With the background of the problems of the study above, the objectives of this study are formulated:

1. To describe the meanings that semiotically coded on *Gotilon* Batak Toba ceremony in Dolok Sanggul
2. To elaborate the realizations of the meanings semiotically realized on the ceremony of *Gotilon* Batak Toba ceremony
3. To give the reason of the meanings semiotically in the ways they are

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

The scope of the study was focused on the subject matter of Semiotics on *Gotilon* Batak Toba ceremony in Dolok Sanggul Humbang Hasundutan, while the object of the study focused on the symbols and verbal utterances. This study specifically investigates the meaning, the realization, and reasons for realizing the

*Gotilon* Batak Toba ceremony in Dolok Sanggul based on Roland Barthes's semiotic theory (1915-1980).

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

#### 1. Theoretically

This research was expected to provide information and enhance knowledge about semiotics related to Batak Toba ceremony on *Gotilon*, Especially for English and Literature students.

#### 2. Practically

This research was expected to be useful for readers, students, and researchers as they can obtain some information about semiotics on *Gotilon*, And it is expected to be useful to other researchers, the result can be referenced for them to make a further study.

