

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Tradition is Part of Culture. Every culture has its own tradition. Culture and tradition are two things that can't be separated. Human being as cultural creature has tradition as their belief passed down within a group or society with special significance. Sinaga (2013:12) stated that culture and tradition is the invention of human's intelligence. The language people speak and the way people create style are all the aspects of culture

As a country that rich in culture, Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups. One of the famous ethnic groups in Indonesia that believes in traditions and customs is Malay. Malay divided into some ethnics, they are Coastal Malay include Tanjungbalai Malay.

A group of people who are Islamic, speak in Malay language and holding tight malay culture in their daily life is called as Tanjungbalai Malay. As a matter of fact Tanjungbalai is a town that dominated by the fisheries sector because the town is located in coastal area. So most of societies earn their living as being fisherman. Having a job as fisherman is supported by the port of Teluk Nibung as the second largest port in North Sumatera after Belawan port.

Besides Tanjungbalai Malay, there are Deli Malay, Riau Malay, Jambi Malay, Bengkulu Malay, Tamiang Malay, Palembang Malay, Sambas Malay, Bangka-Belitung Malay and Pontianak Malay. As the third largest ethnic group in Indonesia, Malay also has many traditions.

Tanjungbalai Malay is viscous of culture and tradition especially in marriage Custom. According to Rahmat Kartolo in his research article about “Language Meanings and Symbols in the Traditional Wedding Ceremony of Malay Deli, malay society has 24 kinds of procedure of marriage.

But, among those 24 procedures of Marriage in Malay, only merisik either it is merisik kecil or merisik besar, Asking for marriage (*meminang*) and Hempang pintu which use Tepak Sirih tradition to complete the malay wedding culture.

Tepak sirih is an item that is often used in Malay community, especially when holding wedding tradition. Generally, *tepak sirih* known as a symbol for the Malay community to deliver a purpose and desire (Delima, 2014:17). The researcher define *tepak sirih* as an object that its existing is highly required in Malay wedding tradition because tepak sirih is seen as symbol to deliver a purpose and desire for a man who want to propose a woman that he loved.

Tepak sirih plays an important role in malay marriage tradition. Malay traditional event will not perfect without bringing the tepak sirih. Malay society believe that if the marriage custom especially when doing proposing (*meminang*) does not carry out *tepak sirih*, it means that the people do not know the custom and they call this type of people as *orang yang tidak tahu adat* (people who do not follow rules).

Unfortunately nowadays, most of Malay society especially Tanjungbalai Malay, they actively use *tepak sirih* tradition but they less understand the meaning or the cultural significance behind the tradition that they do. Whereas in

fact, *tepak sirih* as malay culture heritage is rich in meaning and it has noble value that needed to be preserved because many aspect of human's regulation in life are found in *tepak sirih* tradition to achieve the perfect goal. *Tepak sirih* tradition must be introduced and inherited to young and next generation so that they know the importance of *tepak sirih* tradition for malay society and they know the meaning behind this tradition as part of life as culture society.

To get the meaning in *Tepak sirih* tradition, it is needed to review the theory about culture such as Semiotics. Because semiotic is a science that concern on production and interpretation of meaning.

As stated by Sturrock in Merianita (2012:2) Semiotic is a science of the production and interpretation of meaning. Its basic principle is meaning is made by the development of acts and objects which function as signs in relation to other signs.

There have been some previous studies that related to the *tepak sirih* tradition as malay culture heritage. But there is a previous study which become the writer's consideration in conducting this study. Siti Hajar (2016) conducted a study with the intention of identifying and examining the role of *tepak sirih* in malay marriage custom. This research concern on informing us how the *tepak sirih* plays an important role for malay society in marriage custom. This research will be different with the previous study. This research concern on describing the meaning and function of *tepak sirih* tradition itself, so in addition the malay society actively use this tradition, they also know the meaning or cultural significance behind that tradition especially for young and next generation and c

B. The Problems of the Study

In order to systematize and reflect the understanding of the background above, the problems of this study will be formulated into some questions, those are:

1. What are the meanings of offering *tepak sirih* tradition in Tanjungbalai Malay wedding ceremony?
2. How are the meanings realized as they are in practicing *tepak sirih* tradition in Tanjungbalai Malay wedding ceremony by using Roland Barthes's Semiology theory?
3. Why are the meanings realized as they are in practicing *tepak sirih* tradition in Tanjungbalai Malay wedding ceremony?

C. The Objectives of the Study

This research aims are:

1. To get the meanings of offering *tepak sirih* tradition in Tanjungbalai Malay wedding ceremony.
2. To elaborate the meanings of practicing *tepak sirih* tradition by using Roland Barthes's Semiology theory.
3. To investigate the reasons why the meanings realized as they are.

D. The Scope of the Study

To avoid an overlapping and misleading discussion, this study is focused on describing and interpreting the meaning that conveyed in offering *tepak sirih*

tradition in Tanjungbalai Malay wedding ceremony by Using Roland Barthes's Semiology theory. How and why are the meaning realized in the offering of *tepak sirih* tradition in Tanjungbalai Malay wedding ceremony are also being the focus of this study.

E. The Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are expected to give both theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically, the findings are expected to enhance the knowledge about semiotics or semiology related to culture, especially for Tanjungbalai malay who want to conduct a study which concern on *Tepak Sirih* tradition. In addition, the findings can be a reference for the other researchers.

Practically, the findings are expected to be useful for:

1. For students of language who are interesting in studying about semiotics especially by using Roland Barthes's Semiology theory, so they may understand easily.
2. For Malay society, especially Tanjungbalai malay, to make them comprehend about Malay culture. Cultural study can be analyzed in various field of discipline, such as Semiotics.
3. For teachers or lecturers who are teaching linguistics especially semiotics.