

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Tradition is a part of culture in society that has an important role in regulation where people's lives. Traditions have many variations from the ethnic groups, religions, and social classes. One of the ethnic groups in Indonesia that still believes in traditions and customs is Malay. Traditions and customs are still plays a role in daily life of Malay society. Malay is divided into some sub-ethnics, and one of them is Malay Tanjungbalai.

The tradition of Malay Tanjungbalai society uses various form of symbols which each of them contain the meaning for society. Each symbols on the tradition has own meaning which can not be separated from the society, because it reflects the behavior, mind, and opinion from the society itself. The creation of meaning from the symbols that used is come from the mutual agreement of society. Symbols and meaning which contain on Tanjungbalai tradition has a function that reflects social behavior of Tanjungbalai society. Tanjungbalai society is suggested to keep all of the rules, forms, and the roles of that tradition in order to keep the arrangement of the culture continue.

One of many traditions that still conduct by Tanjungbalai society is *Manyonggot*. This terms comes in the unknown place of where the first but this tradition has lasted throughout the ages. This tradition becomes unique because the terms of *Manyonggot* only used by Malay Tanjungbalai (Asahan), while the other Malay didn't because the acculturation of the culture from

Bataknese that also inhabited in Tanjungbalai long time ago. *Manyonggot* is the tradition that has a purpose to restore the spirit (*sumangat*) that has gone from the body of the person who has been sick. The spirit can be back if it is persuaded to come back through a certain tradition. Although most of Tanjungbalai society has already adhered Islam as their religion, but they still conduct the traditions came from animism that usually related to spiritual things such as *Manyonggot*. Tanjungbalai society believes that the person's illness has always being understood from two side which can affect each other. The illness in the person's body can affect his mental and the mental illness can also affect his body health. In conducting *Manyonggot*, Tanjungbalai society express their purpose, hopes, and respects through the symbols that used on *Manyonggot*, such as *balai*, *merawal*, sticky rice, and so on. Each symbol needs to be explored because it has hidden meaning.

In this case, symbols are indicated in the tradition of *Manyonggot* especially should be interpreted as any language interactions that occur in societies where there is an agreement on the use of certain symbol system as a representation of thoughts, feelings, idea, or expectations because it can be the guidance of life to Tanjungbalai society.

Unfortunately, Tanjungbalai people nowadays, especially young generation, do not know well about *Manyonggot*. They only know that *Manyonggot* is one of the tradition in Tanjungbalai and when it is conducted. When the researcher asked the young generation who live in and came from Tanjungbalai about the meaning of the symbols that used on *Manyonggot*, they are confused to explain and most of them didn't know at all.

From the case above, the problem in those of young generation is the lack of comprehension about *Manyonggot* as one of their local wisdom. The young generation of Tanjungbalai should have a well-knowledge about their tradition and also know well about *Manyonggot* symbols, and the meaning beyond it because those symbols reflects the guidance of life as a good society.

That's why, the researcher is interested to conduct a study dealing with *Semiotic Analysis on Manyonggot in Malay Tanjungbalai* which is focused on the symbols to show the meaning of all the symbols that found on *Manyonggot*. It is seen to be valuable to increase the knowledge of young generation of Tanjungbalai about *Manyonggot*.

B. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study stated as:

1. What symbols are used on *Manyonggot* tradition in Malay Tanjungbalai?
2. What are the meaning of the symbols used on *Manyonggot* tradition in Malay Tanjungbalai?

C. The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are divided into three points:

1. To find out the symbols used on *Manyonggot* tradition in Malay Tanjungbalai.
2. To find out the meaning of the symbols used on *Manyonggot* tradition in Malay Tanjungbalai.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of this study only focus on the symbols and meaning on *Manyonggot* tradition. This study identifies the symbols and the meaning on *Manyonggot* tradition. This research is conducted to describe the semiotic meaning of each symbols on *Manyonggot* tradition in Malay Tanjungbalai.

E. The Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to give contribution both theoretically and practically to the readers. Theoretically, this study is would enrich knowledge about semiotics, particularly about symbols and meaning in culture. Practically, this study is supposed to be useful for students of English Department to explore their knowledge about semiotics, and it can be a new reference for the next researcher who are interested in conducting the similar study about symbols and meaning. This study is also expected to be as a source of information about symbol and meaning in *Manyonggot* tradition for Tanjungbalai society especially the young generation in Tanjungbalai.

