

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Background of the Study

Indonesia is a rich country with more than 300 ethnic groups in Indonesia, and each of these groups has its own distinct language and culture. Each ethnic group has its own language, customs, houses, dance, folk songs, traditional clothes, traditional ceremonies, cuisine, etc. It has many islands stretching from Sabang to Marauke and natural beauty.

Culture also has many signs that can be found around us. But sometimes, we do not know that signs have an implicit meaning when they are explored. So, we have to know the signs in every aspect of language. Anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as 'signifying' something-referring to or 'standing for' something other than itself. We interpret things as signs largely unconsciously by relating them to familiar systems of conversations (Chandler, 2007:13).

The sign is not always understood correctly and equally in society. Everyone has their own interpretation of the meaning and of course a variety of reasons behind it. On the street, for example, there is a traffic light which has colors as a sign of the traffic. In advertisements, there is a picture of the thing advertised by a group of people as a sign of the image of the thing. There are many signs in this world which have a single meaning. The sign is also presented at many events or ceremonies.

In addition, the meaning of sign is not a trivial case. Therefore, semiotics as one of the branches of linguistics which specifically learns about signs need to

be explored. Eco States in Chandler (2007: 2 ) 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 “sign” in everyday speech, but of anything which ‘stands for’ something else.

Several previous studies, Mutiara (2017) tried to find types of icon, index, and symbol as a semiotic approach to explore the meaning of signs on *Hempang Pintu* custom of Pesisir Malay traditional wedding ceremony and wants to find out the meaning of their linguistics symbols according to Malay custom.

Marpaung (2018) tried to find the meaning of *Tepak Sirih* traditions in Tanjungbalai Malay wedding ceremony. Either it was the meaning of offering *tepak sirih* and the meaning that found in all objects that needed to practice *tepak sirih* traditional.

Utami (2018) tried to find *tepung* the meanings displayed, how and why the meanings realized in the *tepung tawar* offer ceremony. The data were found 12 meanings were displayed on the *tepung tawar* offer, from the materials found that there were 3 icons, 1 index and 8 symbols.

Shalleh (2015) this research about *Tepak Sirih: Intrpretation and Perception In Malay Wedding Customs*. His finding was used in a Malay wedding as a symbol of the opening of a conversation, symbol of accepting, symbol of rejecting, and symbol of unity.

Indonesia has various kinds of ethnic one of them is Minang. Minang traditions in Padang Pariaman which is *Malam Bainai*. *Malam Bainai* is one of Minang traditions which still carried out in Minang societies, especially in Padang

Pariaman. This *Malam Bainai* is usually referred to as the last night for the bride of Minang to feel the freedom as a single woman. This event is intended for women. The *Malam Bainai* is used by bride to apologize to both parents and relatives and ask for blessing so that the marriage to be endow is blessed by Allah SWT.

*Malam Bainai* is reddened the bride's nails with the leaves of the crushed *inai*. *Malam Bainai* is a very sacred event with the purpose of protecting bride from the crime that is seen or not and her comfort by holding traditional events such as *sholawat*, *randai*, *saluang* and others. The procession *Malam Bainai* is very important, because in the implementation of this, the bride gives any advice and moral lesson who is delivered interchangeably by the family to the bride Navis (1986:202).

Based on an initial observation done by the researcher when seeing the video on youtube related to a tradition customs Minang, *Bainai* means attaching a fine impact red henna or henna leaves to the bride's nails.

Normally it takes place the night before the marriage contract. This tradition is an expression of love and blessings from the elders of the bride's family. Other equipment used include water containing the fragrance of seven kinds of flowers, *daun iani tumbuak*, *payuung kuning*, *kain jajakan kuning*, *kain simpain* and chairs for the bride. The bride with clothes *tokah* and low-cut *sunti* is taken out of his room flanked by peers. Shower event symbolic by splashin g fragrant water seven types of flowers by the elders and both parents. Furthermore, the prospective brides' nails are given *inai*.

From the preliminary data, there is a meaning *inai* on each finger, namely:

- 1) Thumb, symbolizes the prospective wife's appreciation, appreciation, and appreciation to the prospective husband
- 2) Index finger, symbolizes the prudence of prospective wives in their implementation, is not arbitrary in combat, and is not free in roles
- 3) Middle finger symbolizes caution in weighing the hearts of prospective mother in law, prospective *ipar*, prospective parent in law and others.
- 4) Ring finger symbolizes the couple's spirit in living a married life
- 5) Little finger that is useful. What is meant by little finger is the smallest finger and is located at the end, which symbolizes hope so, that prospective children can compete, be humble, not arrogant always *tawaddu*.

As stated by Sylvia (2014), nowadays, Minang people in Padang Pariaman such as old generation, woman, adult and student as young generation do not know well about *Malam Baianai* especially in cities. They only know that *Malam Bainai* is one of Minang traditions and in what occasion it is conducted. In the development of the era of the procession *Malam Bainai*, there have been some significant change. In the past the *Malam Bainai* presentation was only carried out in a simple way, many people do not understand and do not carry out the procession *Malam Bainai* due to limited time and costs. Even if there are people from the middle and lower classes carrying out the *Malam Bainai* procession it is only in a simple way without any supporting elements in enlivening the procession. If it is studied about the implementation of the night procession there

are various meanings and values contained in the customary procession. Among others: religion, culture, social values, and values of unity

This study was focused on the object of sign icon, index, and symbol by Peirce's theory. The preliminary data of this study will be based on the video on youtube and also obtained by taking data from key informants, namely customary actors such as: *panghulu*, *ninik mamak*, and *bundo kanduang* who understand the custom of *malam bainai* on traditional marriage ceremony in Pariaman.

### **B. The Identifications of the Problem**

Based on the background of the study, some problems were identified as follows:

1. Many women who did *Malam Bainai* ceremony did not know the message of the symbols.
2. The Minang people only know that *Malam Bainai* is one of Minang tradition, but did not know the meaning of the procession.
3. Many of Minang people who live in the city did not care anymore with their own culture.
4. Many people did not understand and did not carry out the procession *Malam Bainai* due to limited time and costs.

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

In Minang culture, Malam Bainai is an important part of the wedding ceremony, the researcher would like to analyze the semiotics on wedding ceremony *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman. Thus, the problems of study can be stated as follows:

1. What are the meanings realized behind the icon, index, symbol existed on *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman ?
2. How are the meanings realized in the *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman ?
3. Why are the meanings realized in the *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman ?

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

In relation to the problems of the study, the objectives of this study were formulated as:

1. To find out the meanings realized behind the icon, index, symbol on *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman.
2. To describe the meanings are realized in the *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman.
3. To explain the reason why the meanings realized in the *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman as they are.

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

This study was focused on the objects of sign by Peirce: icon, index, and symbol. This study specifically investigates the meaning, the realization, and reasons for realizing the *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman, in order to limit the research, this study only focused on wedding ceremony *Malam Bainai* in Padang Pariaman.

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

The findings of the study were expected to give both theoretical and practical significances:

- a. Theoretically, this study was expected to be useful for English and Literature students in order to enhance their knowledge about semiotics related to culture, especially Minang culture which is concerned on *Malam Bainai* ceremony.
- b. Practically, the findings were expected to be useful for the researchers who are interested in doing further study on semiotics in order to be a reference or comparison.

