



Death Ceremony in Batak Toba: Saur Matua Oral Tradition, Verbal and Non-Verbal Semiotic Meanings

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ABSTRACT

Semiotics studies how a sign functions in an object, even if it is not the thing itself. Observe that everything around us or in our society has a hidden meaning. Learn how semiotic science interprets signs and objects so that each person's interpretation of them yields a complete meaning, regardless of how they are interpreted or seen. In the Batak Toba culture, daily communication involves using multiple signs. This research investigates the role of semiotics in verbal and nonverbal objects during the Batak Toba Death Ceremony. This research investigates the role of semiotics in verbal and nonverbal objects during the Batak Toba Death Ceremony. Specifically, the study aims to understand the significance of these signs in an activity, particularly during the Toba Batak Death Ceremony. The author of this study used an ethnomethodological technique to perform a descriptive qualitative investigation focused on social community connections within the Batak Toba Community.

Keywords: *Semiotics, Batak Toba Culture, Signs, Verbal and Non-Verbal Objects, Death Ceremony*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Batak community is one of the tribes identified in Indonesia, having originated in Tapanuli, North Sumatra. The Batak Toba tribe is also known as the tribe that has held its citizens with its own law and tradition cultures in all aspects of society, beginning with birth, marriage, and death traditions. Batak Toba people generally identify their way of life; this culture is meaningful and treasured by Batak people. Various subcultures are often celebrated, including marriage, birth, entering a new house, the seventh month of pregnancy, and many others. However, the author focuses on the death rites of the Batak Toba way of life in this research. Mate pupur, Mate Punu, Tilahon, Mate Mangkar, Ponggol Ulu, Matompas Tatarang, Sarimatua, Saurmatua, Saurmatua Gabe, and Maulibulung are the ten (10) disappearing Batak Toba cultural forms. Out of ten (10) different death ceremonies, the writer is mainly interested in one, particularly Saurmatua.

The purpose writer selected this 1 form because the writer would love to dig up and recognize more about Batak ceremonies, particularly death ones. The writer chose this topic for various reasons. The first is that the author wants to learn more about the Batak Toba death ritual. Second, the writer is curious about how much the younger generation appreciates or loves Batak Toba, the dying ceremony. The author wants to introduce the Batak Toba death ceremony to other ethnic groups inside and outside Indonesia. However, the author wants to clarify that the ceremony involves certain expectations and expenses.

It is important to note that the price range in Batak Toba celebrations can vary, which may result in unexpected expenses. Consider making it a commonplace occurrence. As a result, Batak Toba people are hesitant to organize an event involving Batak cultures.

A few verbal and nonverbal exchanges always appear in the cultural Batak Toba ceremony. In this case, verbal interaction refers to an interest shown using proverbs (umpasa). Nonverbal verbal interaction refers to communication indicated by signals, often using objects. For example, consider a coffin, a long field used to bury a dead corpse. The writer is interested in researching the semiotic sign language within the Toba Batak tribe since they live in Indonesia, notably in North Sumatra, where there are various tribes, including the Toba Batak tribe. Language retention is also one of the factors that researchers consider in this study. Many young people nowadays are unaware of their tribes' languages, for example, the Toba Batak language. The symptoms employed or used in a traditional Batak tribal traditions ritual are a heritage from the previous ancestors.

The younger generation of Toba Batak people seem less interested in participating in the traditional death rituals and ceremonies. This could be due to various reasons, such as lack of time, inability to engage directly in Toba Batak's lifestyle, or living in areas where such ceremonies are not expected. This has caused the younger generation of Batak to become disinterested in how the Toba Batak way of life is carried out, particularly during the time of death. This has caused the younger generation of Batak to become disinterested in how the Toba Batak way of life is carried out, particularly during the time of death. As a result, this page should be completed to enlighten and aid the younger generation in understanding the significance of verbal and non-verbal in Batak Toba death rites. This research will help young people maintain the Batak Toba tradition.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research method uses a method of collecting data from various journal sources that are accurate and factual. It focuses on solutions to current and actual problems. This data is collected, organized, explained, and then analyzed. This research analyzes semiotic interpretation through symbols that appear at Toba Batak's death ceremonies. Therefore, this research applies several steps: formulating research problems, compiling research instruments, collecting data, copying data, and analyzing and interpreting data. Data collection was carried out by collecting various accurate data from several international and national journals. The next step is to determine the instruments used in this research. In this case, the instrument uses images from journal sources as references. Next, analyze the activities of the Toba Batak tribe at the time of their death using journal sources as references. After the data analysis is obtained, the researcher interprets the data analysis and concludes all the data obtained by the researcher.

III FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

1. Nonverbal and Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is communication that is both written and spoken. Its goal is to communicate ideas or thoughts between the listener and the speaker. Nonverbal communication, on the other hand, is communication using sign forms. To allow the listener or speaker to interpret the communication. At the same time, nonverbal communication is a system composed of various aspects that are frequently utilized to enhance expression, ranging from gestures and facial expressions to tone of voice and use of space to clothes and posture. The combination of these characteristics is frequently a subconscious choice by native speakers. However, for the learner, it can be a barrier to natural communication and a source of frustration. The combination of these characteristics is frequently a subconscious decision by native speakers. However, it can be a barrier to natural communication and a source of confusion for the learner.

Spontaneous communication is defined as direct communication that someone expresses, and symbolic communication is learned from something in our surroundings (Buck & VanLear, 2002). Guerrero, LK's writing on nonverbal communication might brighten someone's life.

2. Semiotic

Semiotics is the process by which a sign acquires meaning or plays a function in a language. As a result, semiotics is the study of the sign that has meaning for an action or event or by employing the sign as the implicit language. A sign raised or shown at an event or activity aims to ensure that the sign's meaning or language is not lost or extinct. As a result, the sign contains the meaning or language itself. How does the sign communicate with people, especially in public areas? Of course, that sign has a code and message, similar to a street banner (Lestari et al., 2021). It has also been proven (Hartmann & Vosseveld, 2013) that semiotics refers to how the content conveys meaning and how the visual conveys meaning. Semiotics may also be used to deduce all of the meanings, such as how to transmit information, but also to obtain the meaning in the political context of a cartoon (Shah et al., 2020). Isfandiyary also mentions signs, objects, and significance (Isfandiyary, 2017).

Semiotics is about how anything produces meaning, as Saussure said more explicitly in (Yakin & Totu, 2014), that there is a signified and signifier to make things more obvious. Isfandiyary also mentions signs, objects, and significance (Isfandiyary, 2017). To express it more precisely, semiotics is the study of pictures, gestures, musical sounds, and objects with a message embedded in them, according to Barthes' Theory in Isfandiyary, FH. To summarize semiotics, (Chandler, 2007) defines semiotics as "anything that people can interpret in their way and also have meaning about what they interpreted." To summarize semiotics, (Chandler, 2007) defines semiotics as "anything that people can interpret in their way and also have meaning about what they interpreted." That is the significance of semiotics as a study of signs. As stated by YJ (2014), semiotics is about signals and meanings found in humans, plants, and animals, as well as those created by humans.

3. Umpasa

Umpasa or umpama is a phrase or speech spoken by the parents of the Batak Toba community during every rite, such as birth, marriage, and death. Umpasa itself signifies to demonstrate the concern of Batak Toba's parents. Furthermore, (1964) said that Umpasa symbolizes increased attention to particular norms in society or law. For example, it may be carried out as a legal proverb (*adat*), which may operate as a regulator of livelihoods. According to Mahadi (Sitanggang, 1996), various customary laws, including the Toba Batak example, were raised in proverbs, covering marriage, family, inheritance, links, land, civil, and legal—the administration of the state.

4. Batak Tobaness Death Ceremony

Death is one thing or requirement that all living creatures, including humans, must accept. The only death that can be decisive is the death of the Almighty God. In this scenario, each tribe or area has its style of dealing with death and culture. Toba Batak tribe refers to remain, that three categories occur in Toba Batak tribe death that separates it from other tribes.

a. *Mate Mangkar*

Mate Makkar is a death that occurred by someone, particularly a member of the Batak Toba tribe, in which the person who died, either his father or mother, did not have married kids. In other words, neither their sons nor their unmarried daughters have offspring. However, only prayers for the departed are held. This is done because no family member or descendant has ever married (*marhasohottan*).

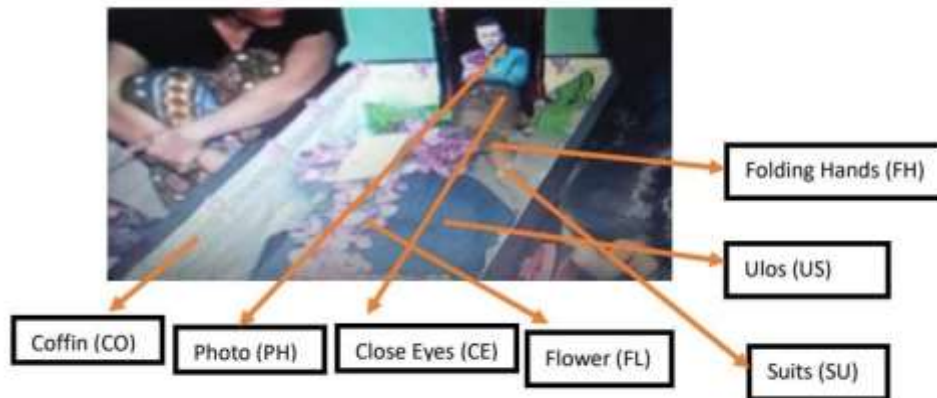


Table 1 Signs of Mate Mangkar

No.	Data	Meanings	Analysis
1.	Coffin	A chest was a place where a person who has died or who has died was placed.	For the Batak Toba tribe, the coffin was a symbol used to place the bodies of people who had died; this was done as their last houses or final resting place.
2.	Photo	The photo was an image or object that was very similar to a person. Photos were taken using a camera. The photo was done to save someone's memories.	A photo on the death custom of the Toba Batak tribe was a picture placed on a corpse or person who has died. This was done if the corpse had died and was not in a good condition or if the coffin had been closed, then people who visit to see know who died through the photo.
3.	Close Eyes	Closed eyes were a sign that the person was asleep.	For the Toba Batak tribe, closed eyes were a sign that the person had died.
4.	Flower	Flowers symbolize affection, love, or happiness; for example, at a graduation ceremony, someone would give flowers.	The flower at the death of the Toba Batak tribe was a symbol of death. Sometimes, the flower was in the form of a cross or an ordinary wreath.
5.	Ulos	Ulos was a typical weaving of the Toba Batak tribe. This ulos itself meant warming one's body in ancient times.	Ulos was a symbol given to cover the bodies of people who died in the Toba Batak tribe.
6.	Folding Hands	Folding hands was an action that is done when praying or hoping for something that makes us fold our hands.	For the Toba Batak tribe, folding hands is a sign that the person has died. For the death of a makar, it was to fold hands with the aim that the person who died would still pray for the family he left behind so that he would be blessed and happy after his death.
7.	Suits	A suit was an outfit that was worn at a formal event in a particular event.	A suit was a garment that was worn by someone who had died.

b. Sarimatua

Sari Matua's death is an example of a death in the Batak Toba tribe where the father or mother who died and had children or descendants were married, but not all were. For example, in the Toba Batak tribe, a father died with four children, two of whom were already married. Outside his family, the significance of the father is already a custom (Marhalaman). This is referred to as Sari Matua's death.

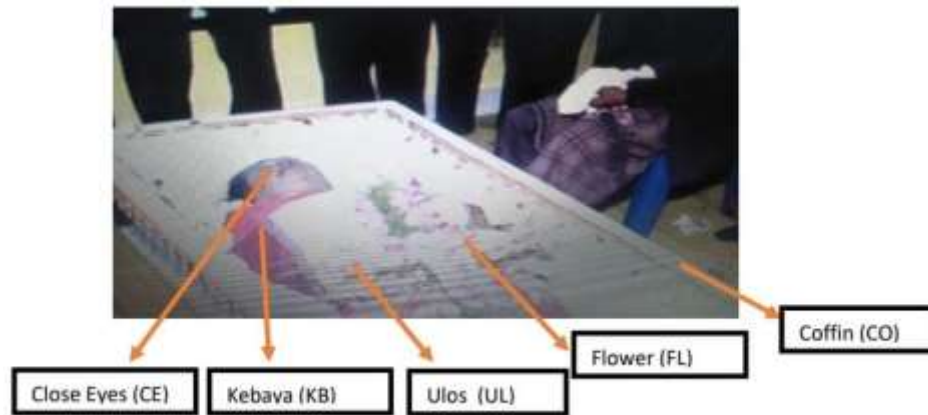


Table 2 Signs of Mate Sarimatua

No.	Data	Meanings	Analysis
1.	Close Eyes	Closed eyes were a sign that someone was sleeping.	At death, the sign of closed eyes was that the person had died.
2.	Kebaya	Kebaya was a traditional Batak and Javanese clothing used for specific events.	The kebaya in the Toba Batak tribe was also used for clothing at death to show that the deceased was a Batak tribe.
3.	Ulos	Ulos was a cloth used by the Toba Batak tribe in ancient times to cover the body from the cold.	At the death of Batak Toba, Ulos has a significant and different role and meaning.
4.	Flowers	Flowers were a symbol that showed both happiness and sadness.	In the event of the death of the Toba Batak tribe, the flower symbolizes death when it is placed on the body of the person who has died.
5.	Coffin	The coffin was the final resting place for the dead.	For the Toba Batak tribe, the coffin symbolized the last home of the deceased person. All types and models of coffins were given as the final home.

c. Saurmatua

Saur Matua is an ancient death custom. The demise of the Batak Toba tribe, when all of Saur Matua's offspring/descendants were married and had grandkids, was what Saur Matua meant. The Saur Matua event was also held for a more extended period than the other sorts of fatalities. All of her descendants are supposed not to cry at this traditional occasion because all of the deceased's descendants are married and have children. The implication is that Saur Matua's manner of dying is a tradition that must be followed to be happy. Typically, the event performed for the sort of death of Saur Matua lasts at least three days and can last up to a week. The guy who died with Saur Matua is already rich. Rich has meaning to the Toba Batak tribe, who has married all his offspring and died without obligation.

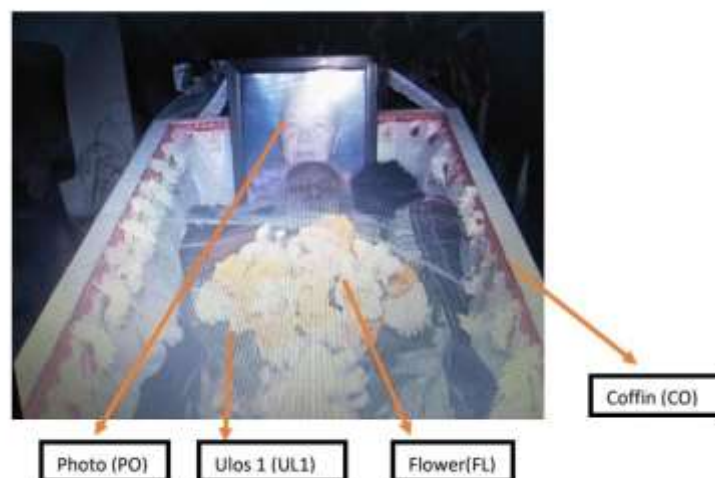


Table 3 *Signs of Mate Saurmatua*

No.	Data	Meanings	Analysis
1.	Photo	The photo was a picture of a person shown through a photo.	At the death of the Batak tribe, the photo was a symbol given so that when people want to see the face of the deceased, it can be seen through a photo of himself placed on the head of the person who died.
2.	Ulos	Ulos was a cloth used by the Batak tribe to protect themselves from the cold.	For the Batak tribe, Ulos was a cloth used to cover the person who died.
3.	Flower	Flowers were a symbol of happiness and sadness.	Flowers placed on the body of someone who died or a corpse was a sign of a mourning event.
4.	Coffin	A coffin is a place where a corpse or person who has died is placed.	The coffin was placed for the Batak Toba people to put the people who died there.

A more considerable number of context-free examples seek statistical significance. This study likewise employed a descriptive technique, which described a phenomenon. It concentrated on answers to current and pressing issues. The information was gathered, organized, explained, and analyzed. As a result, this study examined the semiotic interpretation of the symbols used in the Batak Toba death ceremony. Thus, several stages were taken in this research, such as creating a research topic, setting research instruments, collecting, transcribing, analyzing, and interpreting data. After receiving the study equipment, data were collected through recording, observations, and interviews with informants to determine the context of the Batak Toba Death Ceremony. Following determining the problem in this investigation, the following stage was to identify the instruments to be employed in this study. In the instance of an instrument, visual and sound records were used. Following that was a social analysis of the Batak Toba community. The Toba Batak tribe's activities in the case of death were the subject of the social analysis.

Beginning with a. pre-events, which include actions carried out or the formulation of event arrangements b) significant events, was a complete event that occurred or the appearance of signs on the death of the Toba Batak tribe ranging from providing ulos, dances, and food to shutting the coffin. c) Closing the celebration was generally opening the fortune of persons who had died. The following data can be collected from a variety of sources. Then, the data was transcribed so that the researchers could do data analysis. The researcher evaluates the data analysis once it has been acquired. Finally, the researcher concludes (summaries) from all the data gathered.

V. CONCLUSION

Semiotics is a linguistic study that focuses on how a sign gives meaning to an object or object. Semiotic studies were descriptive studies where when someone sees a sign, it must be described according to the meaning of the object or according to the meaning from the perspective of the person who saw the sign. Many of the signs that appear almost have the same function and location. It is just that what makes the difference is how old the Batak person died. In other words, the older a Toba Batak tribe dies, the greater or honorable the event of his death will be. It is not just age that is the benchmark. Others are descendants. The more descendants of a Batak tribe that dies, the more successful or big the traditional party will be at the time of the Batak. For the Batak tribe, death is a benchmark to see how rich a person is based on his death—realization of Meaning Verbally and nonverbally in the Toba Batak Death ceremony. The purpose of this advice is to remember all the services or good deeds of parents who have died and not to embarrass their descendants. For the Toba Batak tribe, especially for the Toba Batak tribe who have descendants, children are their wealth that is more valuable than gold or anything.

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