

Symbols, Meaning, and Functions of Simalungun *Hiou*: Semiotic Studies

Warisman Sinaga, Yos Rizal, Ramlan Damanik

Faculty of Cultural Studies, University of Sumatra Utara

Corresponding Author: Warisman Sinaga

ABSTRACT

Semiotics is the study of sign; every sign or symbol has meaning or message to be conveyed by a communicator to his communicant. The semiotics in this research is used as a method of text analysis when the research tries to study the meanings, symbols and motives of the Simalungun's *hiou*. The purpose of the research is to analyze the social values of the *hiou*. Barthes' approach as well as Saussure's theory were used in the study. The oral data collection involved conversation method which was followed by stimulating, advance/face-to-face conversation, tapping, and writing techniques. Furthermore, the technique used skillfully followed by the technique of recording and technique record. The written data used observation method which was followed by tapping and writing technique. The research results are presented in narrative form with formal and informal methods. In this research, seven kinds of *hiou*, such as, among *imput ni hirik*, *bintang maratur*, *ragi santik*, *suri suri nanggar suasah*, *hati rongga*, *ragi panei*, and *simangkat angkat* are found and have different meanings and uses.

Keywords: *hiou*, semiotics, motive, Batak Simalungun

INTRODUCTION

Batak Simalungun as one of cultures in Indonesia is rich of ritual ceremonies and at each ceremony local people use a cloth called *hiou* scarf symbolizing the bond of affection between parents and children or between a person and another person, as stated in the philosophical words: "Ijuk pengihot ni hodong" (palm leaves fastens the stem).

Hiou functions to make the body warm, but now it has a symbolic function in all aspects of life and "mercury" singly, meaning that it is related to the nature, circumstances, functions, and relations with certain objects or things. Today, fashion designers are interested with the *hiou* motives and make new creations such as clothes, gowns, bags, among others.

Some types of *hiou* are *suri-suri* which is put on woman's head, *ragi panei* which is used as woman's coverage, and *jabit* for everyday cloth. The *tolu sahundulan hiou* is a wedding gown symbolizing the Simalungun kinship of *tolu sahundulan* consisting of elements of *tondong*, *boru* and *sanina*. It has the sublime values that can build character.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotics is the study of a broad array of objects, the events and Eco argued that semiotics is "the science of signs". Ferdinand de Saussure (in Budiman, 2011:3) said that semiology was a general science of signs, "a science that examines the signs of life in the society".

Signs in a society that has been agreed is actually the result of the logic of

thought as it is raised by Pierce (in Budiman, *ibid*) that semiotics is none other than a different name for the logic, i.e. a formal doctrine of "the signs".

The word doctrine here is the manifestation of agreement from one generation to the next one, for example, the sign of nature "if it is cloudy then it will soon rain" has a doctrine. Although it is raining without a cloudy day, it is often overcast and vice versa. There is, however, a sense of articulation for some people or groups about the "cloudy" sign.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are seven kinds of hiou, that are discussed in the followings.

1. *Imput Ni Hirik Hiou*

This hiou resembles the tails of crickets. Consider Fig. 1.

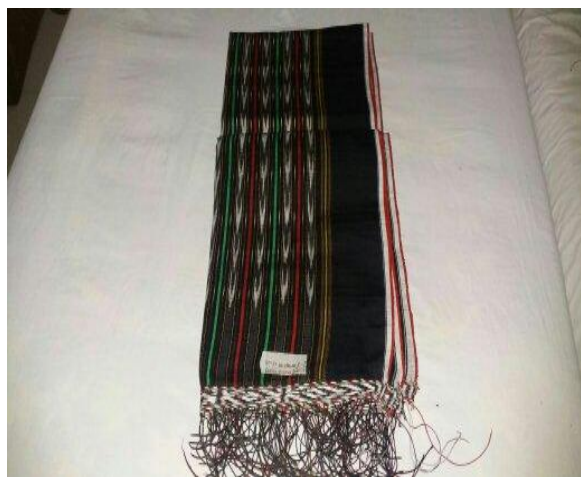


Figure 1. Imput Ni Hirik hiou

2. *Bintang Maratur Hiou*

Bintang Maratur the same with hiou mangiring made from cotton base color black, and parts of the central motive of arrow tip lungsi tied up and in the middle of the fabric was given an extra feed of the red, green, yellow line motive and motive beads from dilah umbrella. Both ends there are a variety of decorative interlace of beaded bead colors red, white, orange, hijuan florals and swirls. Being on the edge of either end of the beaded beads embellishments are given the color of red and white. Both sides of an elongated red and white edges. Hiou

Bintang Maratur described the regular line of stars.



Figure 2. Bintang Maratur Hiou

3. *Ragi Santik Hiou*



Figure 3. Ragi santik hiou

The outer end or the edges of ragi santik hiou are fitted with tassels.

4. *Suri-suri Nanggar Suasah Hiou*



Figure 4. Suri-suri Nanggar Suasah Hiou

As the name indicates, this hiou has suasah and nanggar motives; the nanggar is a place to order what is wanted. The dark blue colored weaving and long black tassels are accompanied with the tips. This fabric has a line lengthwise and line the dots. Its width is given the ornament and the most detailed is on the lid. This weaving is placed on the shoulder as cloth coverage.

5. Hati Rongga Hiou

A. Hati Rongga Hiou for female



Figure 5. Hati Rongga Hiou for female

B. Hati Rongga Hiou for male



Figure 6. Hati Rongga Hiou for male

C. Hati Rongga Tapak Catur Hiou



Figure 7. Hati Rongga Tapak Catur Hiou

Hati Rongga Tapak Catur Hiou is made of cotton yarn with a blue base color and the middle section of the fabric is combined with black lines forming a small path and ornate belt lungsi tapak satur motive. The decoration of the hiou is only the line motive that is in the middle and the two ends of hiou use white, yellow, green and

gold threads. While both ends are fed with additional feed in white and green.

6. Ragi Panei Hiou



Figure 8. Ragi Panei Hiou

This middle section of the piece is colored almost exactly like the suburbs but has a lot of light blue lengthwise stripes. On either side of the central part, there is a dividing line in white gray or light blue. The simple fabrics are worn by old men and women, but they are not forbidden for young people. The hiou is woven from cotton yarn base with black colour, and the middle section of the fabric is combined with lungsi blue and an extra feed at both ends of the red, white, yellow, green colours.

7. Simangkat Angkat Hiou

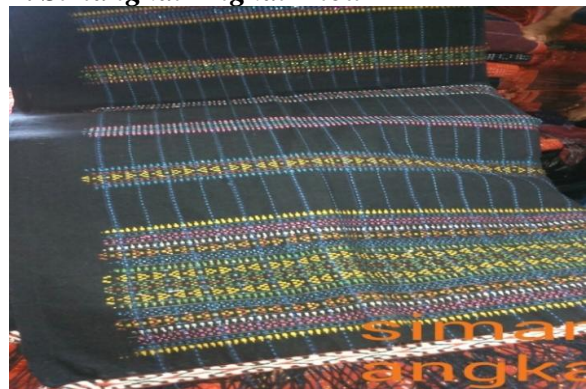


Figure 9. Simangkat Angkat Hiou

The simangkat angkat hiou is woven with black base color, and in the middle of the cloth there is a line in yellow and blue lines in alternating fashion, and there is also an ornament with the dwarf saw and there

are several motives dilah umbrellas, flowers, sarpitpit, ipon ipon (teeth) and tondolan line. On the edge of both ends of the given feed, the extra yarn colors are green and yellow; whereas, on the edge, there is a tassel.

Hiou Functions

Hiou can not be separated from Batak Simalungun daily life. Each hiou has its own meaning and it also has the nature, circumstances, functions, and relations with certain objects or things. The term *manghioui* is meant to give hoiu that symbolizes the warmth and compassion to someone who is the recipient of hiou.

Hiou is usually used for rituals of death, wedding party, name-giving to child or grandchild, new home entrance, and seven month of pregnancy. Advice is given to those who receive hiou by the manghioui, such as for marriage party. Hiou in Simalungun also serves to distinguish which *suhut bolon* (host) becomes the *parboru* (sister of the one who had a relation). By wearing a certain hiou one can know that in an area there is misfortune. In Simalungun the custom is known as *tolu sahundulan* and the third parties in *tolu sahundulan* are sanina, boru and tondong, *suhut*, anak boru. Below are the functions of hiou.

1. As an honor / award

As a custom fabric, hiou is never absent in traditional ceremonies such as birth, marriage, entering new homes, welcoming guests and others. Some types of ulos are given as an honor / award to a person(s) such as parents, brides, friends, kings, elders, officials, children, and others in accordance with certain rules and procedures. When giving hiou, an expectation exists because, when in general people express something with flowers, Batak Simalungun distribute hiou. Hiou in daily life is very dominant and, in general, its function varies.

a. *Imput ni hirik hiou*

This hiou is given by a mother to her pregnant daughter when she is seven months of age in pregnancy. The hiou is placed on her head in order she is safe during her

pregnancy and during giving birth; in addition, she is hoped to free from cold and sickness and from wind entrance (*masuk angin*) which could enter from head. On the edge of the *imput ni hirik hiou*, herbs spices are tied to protect from all dangers, to spare from evil deeds, and to warm up the body of a mother who gave birth.

b. *Bintang maratu hiou*

This hiou is given by a mother to her daughter who gives birth and functions as the earlier sling of the grandchildren. This hiou also serves as a type of information to neighbors and neighboring community as well as relatives that a newlyborn child, especially the first grandchild, was born and he/she is called as *Ompung Pangoaran* (a term which is addressed to grandfather and grandmother of the first grandchild).

c. *Ragi santik hiou*

After wedding ceremony, it is followed by traditional event with hiou which serves to distinguish *hasuhut on* (temple expert) with the other guests and it is submitted to the bride's *tondong* and during *menghioui* event, a lot of words of advice are spoken so that the future of the bride, in wading through the household, is always blessed by Lord.

d. *Ragi panei hiou*

This *hiou* is synonymous with *ragi santik hiou* and is used in the event of sorrow (*saur matua*). This *hiou* is usually used to cover corpse since it signifies a form of separation.

e. *Suri suri nanggar suasah hiou*

This *hiou* is worn when there is misfortune and it is distinguishable which one is for *suhut* (someone who experiences the misfortune) and which one is for *boru* (the party that serves to launch the traditional event). When this *hiou* covers the whole body, it signifies the concerned catastrophe (someone who gets misfortune) and when being tied in the abdomen, it indicates that the concerned is *boru*. The

suri suri nanggar suasa hiou should be folded into four so the shape is small and it is then carried by right hand so it indicates that in the area there is a misfortune.

f. Hiou Hati Rongga

This *hiou* has three types, namely *hati rongga* thread chess *hiou*, black *hati rongga hiou*, and red *hati rongga hiou*. The first is used when there is a custom event either love or grief and its function can be as a shawl; it also shows that wearing thread chess *hiou* indicates a temple expert. The thread chess *hiou* is not allowed for newly married couple, while the red *hiou* should be for women and the black for men.

2. As an Official cloth

The *simangkat angkat hiou* is not only used in traditional events but today it also appears in official events. For example, in a welcoming ceremony, the guests who are considered honorable and distinguished receive *hiou* as an appreciation from local people.

3. As a cloth for customary dance

Batak Simalungun is also recognized for its traditional dances, such as *sombah tortor* dance, *manduda* dance, *haroan bolon* dance, among others. Simalungun *tortor*, when it is performed for public, requires all dancers (*panortor*) to wear *hiou*.

4. The preservation of hiou

Hiou is hand-crafted and has high value, and it should be preserved because, with the increasing development and advancement of technology, its function decreases. Therefore, the reason will suffice the need for untainted even its development so that the role of *hiou* not holding up in the life of society.

5. The meanings of hiou

a. Imput ni hirik hiou

This *hiou* is specifically given to a pregnant woman by her parents and her pregnancy is in the seventh month. In the giving process, parents utter wise words that her daughter

should keep her pregnancy healthy and she will give birth in perfect condition.

b. Bintang maratur hiou

This *hiou* is a sling that is given by grandparents to their newly born grandson or granddaughter. Before the newly born baby is taken to the river to have a bath, the *bintang maratur hiou* is used to carry the baby.

c. Hiou Ragi Santik

This *hiou* is given to a newly married son by his parents with a hope that he should not behave like a child and the couple should also be open each other. Openness can create happiness in their family.

d. Ragi Panei

This *hiou* is spread to cover a dead person; it means that there is no eternal life for creatures in the world and everybody will come back to Him.

e. Hiou Simangkat angkat

This *hiou* means that every given-task must be responded and carried out.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that Batak Simalungun is rich with *hiou*, such as *imput ni hirik*, *bintang maratur*, *ragi santik*, *ragi panei*, *simangkat angkat*, *suri suri nanggar suasa*, and *hati rongga*. The primarily function of *hiou* is to mark an honor / award and its other functions are as official and customary dance dresses. The *hiou* has the philosophical meanings and the doctrinal teachings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was carried out with reference to the Research Funding Agreement (Perjanjian Pendanaan Penelitian), Directorate of Research and Community Service (DRPM), Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (Kemenristekdikti) under the scheme of Higher College's Supreme Research for the 2017 Fiscal Year Budget based on the Contract No.: 99/UN5.2.3.1/PPM/KP-DRPM/2017 dated April 21, 2017.

REFERENCES

- Ahimsa-Putra, Heddy Shri (2001). *Strukturalisme Levi-Strauss; Mitos dan Karya Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Galang Press
- Amir Pilliang, Yasraf (2003). *Hipersemiotika: Tafsir Cultural Studies atas Matinya Makna*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra
- ----- (2003). *Hantu-hantu Politik dan Matinya Sosial*. Solo: Tiga Serangkai.
- Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jendral Kebudayaan Museum Negeri Medan ,1999/2000. *Tenun Tradisional Batak Simalungun*. Medan: Museum Negeri Medan.
- Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jendral Kebudayaan Museum Negeri Prov. Sum. Utara, 1994/ 1995. *Katalog Kain Tenun Daerah Sumatera Utara*. Medan : Museum Negeri Medan.
- Guntur, Henry. 2008. *Membaca: Sebagai suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa*. Bandung: Angkasa Bandung.
- Husnul, Ade.2 012. *Bicara Sastra (Analisis Karya Sastra dengan Berbagai Pendekatan)*. Serang: CV. Dunia Kata.
- John (2005). *The End of Science: Senjakala Ilmu Pengetahuan*. Terj. Djejen Zaenuddin from *The End of Science: Facing the Limits of Knowledge in the Twilight of the Scientific Age*. Jakarta: Mizan Publika.
- Kutha, Nyoman. 2009. *Teori Metode dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Priyono, Herry B. (2002). *Anthony Giddens; Suatu Pengantar*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Rafiek, M. 2010. *Teori Sastra: Kajian Teori dan Praktik*. Bandung: PT Refika Aditama.
- Ritzer, George (2005). *Teori Sosial Posmodern*. Terj. Muhammad Taufik dari: *The Postmodern Social Theory*. Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana
- Sutrisno, Muji & Putranto, Hendar.Ed. (2005). *Teori-teori Kebudayaan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius Trifonas,
- Syam, Nur. 2007. *Madzhab-Madzhab Antropologi*. Yogyakarta: LKIS.
- Peter Pericles (2003). *Barthes dan Imperium Tanda*. Terj. Sigit Djatmiko dari *Barthes and The Empire of Signs*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Jendela.

How to cite this article: Sinaga W, Rizal Y, Damanik R. Symbols, meaning, and functions of simalungun hiou: semiotic studies. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2018; 5(11):55-60.
