

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Tanjung Balai is inhabited by many ethnics, namely Malay, Javanese, Batak, Nias, and Chinese. The largest number of tribes is dominated by Malay ethnic. The people in Tanjung Balai have Asahan Malays culture. One of the habits of Asahan Malays on big days or important days is they will come together to celebrate the events.

One of interesting traditions of the tribe of Malays in Tanjung Balai is *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*. This tradition is applied in all Malay tribes. The tradition of eating *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is the beginning process of eating together between a newly married husband and wife. Eating *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is part of the traditional Malay wedding ceremony, whereas among the Malays in the past, most of the marriages were conducted through an arranged marriage, because the two partners do not know each other yet. As an effort to establish a good communication and relationships between husband and wife, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* was created and conducted continuously and become an unseparatable tradition from Malay's wedding ceremony until now.

Eating *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is a medium of communication for the extended family of both parties, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is used as a device that should not be forgotten in every official Malay traditional wedding ceremony since it has important meaning.

In this modern era, the tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is held by most Malay in their wedding ceremony but the meaning of the tradition slowly fade away and become an additional traditional event for Malay's wedding Ceremony. This tradition is slowly lose its meaning. There are some factors why this happened such as the

changing of the era, the influence of modernization, and the low awareness of the society for securing the traditions.

Most Malays, moreover young people, do not know the meaning of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*, some of them do not even know the story and history of this old tradition. Based on the preliminary research that has been done to several newly married couples in Tanjung Balai which conducted the tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* in their wedding ceremony, they stated that they just follow the order of the family for following the traditions and conducting this event.

It is a crucial issue for those who suppose to be the front lines to take actions for continuing and conserving this traditions. In fact, having less knowledge and less awareness about their own traditions.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

The statements of the problem in this research focuses Based on the background of the study, the research questions are arranged as:

- a) What are the symbolic meanings of the food in the tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* in the wedding ceremony in Malay Ethnicity in Tanjung Balai?
- b) Is the tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* important in the wedding ceremony in Malay Ethnicity in Tanjung Balai?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

As from the research question above, the objective of the study are:

- a) To find out the symbolic meaning of the food in the tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* in the wedding ceremony in Malay Ethnicity in Tanjung Balai.
- b) To acknowledge the importance of tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* nowadays in the wedding ceremony in Malay Ethnicity in Tanjung Balai.

#### 1.4 Scope of the Study

In conducting research, the scope of the problem is very necessary. This is useful so that the discussion that will be studied becomes focused and not broad. This study limits the research on examines the symbolic meaning of the food in *The Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* and the position of the tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* in the wedding ceremony in Malay Ethnicity in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatera.

#### 1.5 Significance of the Study

The significances that researcher expect from this research are:

a. Theoretically

Theoretically, the results of this research are expected to add insight and enrich scientific repertoire regarding the symbolic meaning of the food in the tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* in the wedding ceremony in Malay Ethnicity in Tanjung Balai.

b. Practically

It is hoped that this research can be used as a means to evaluate ongoing programs, as well as the results of this study are expected to provide input for those who need knowledge of symbolic meaning of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* in traditional Malay wedding ceremony.

Through this research, it is hoped that people (specifically Malay) can understand the symbolic meaning of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* in the wedding ceremony in Tanjung Balai and its position among Malay in Tanjung Balai. It is hoped this research will give additional insight, knowledge and experience for writers as well as for dear readers.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Culture and Tradition**

According to Koentjaraningrat (2002:180), culture is a whole system of ideas and feelings, actions and works produced by man in social life that are made his own by learning. According to Soemardjan and soemardi (1974:490), culture is a means of work, taste and creation of society. From these various definitions, it can be concluded that culture is a system of knowledge that includes a system of ideas or ideas contained in the human mind, so that in everyday life, culture is abstract. Meanwhile, the embodiment of culture is objects created by humans as cultural beings, in the form of behaviour and objects of a real nature, for example patterns of behaviour, language, living equipment, social organization, religion, art, and others, all of which are aimed at helping humans in carrying out social life.

Culture in a society is a certain value system that is used as a guide for life by citizens who support that culture. Culture tends to become a tradition in a society because culture is used as a frame of reference in acting and acting out.

Culture is produced by the community itself and given to that society as well. So often we can see the character of a society from its cultural results.

In the other hand, tradition is a culture that continues to live in a society for generations which existence will always be maintained from one generation to the next. (Yahya,2009:2). Tradition is also a custom that is passed down through generations in a society. It is the collective consciousness of a society. (Rendra, 1984:3). Thus, tradition is defined as a custom or belief that is carried out by the community with a symbolic meaning or special meaning based on its origins in the

past, and passed on to the next generation for generations, by reconstructing the existing tradition.

*Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is one of the traditions of the Malay community that is carried out for generations, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is a series of events carried out by the Malay community, especially the Tanjung Balai Malays in marriage events as a strengthening of the relationship between the bride and groom and both families.

## **2.2 Symbolic Meaning**

Etymologically, symbols come from the Greek "*Symbolos*" which means a sign or feature that tells something to someone or others. (Susanto in Kusumawardani, 2003:3). In a broad sense, symbol is a synonym of sign. Despite the blurring of terminology, it designates symbols as a group of signs and distinguishes them into three categories, namely;

1. Symbol as a Synonym of Conventional Sign,
2. Symbol as an Iconic Sign, and
3. Symbol as a Sign of Connotation.

Symbols have a very important role in cultural research. Culture and symbols are likened to one currency with two sides. Geertz's (1973: 250) thinking about culture and symbols explains that, the system of symbols that man created, and conventionally used together, is orderly and truly studied, gives man a framework full of meaning to orient himself to the other, to his environment, and to himself, as well as a product and dependence with social interaction.

As a social being and also as a communication being, man in his life is overwhelmed by a wide variety of symbols. Human beings use a wide variety of symbols, both created by man himself and those of a natural nature.

Symbol comes from the word *simbolos* which means a sign or characteristic that tells a person, a symbol is a thing or state that leads the understanding of the subject to the object.

A symbol is a shape that marks something else beyond the embodiment of the symbolic form itself. A symbol or emblem is something that is used to refer to something else, based on the agreement of a group of people.

Symbols are used and defined according to use in social interactions. Symbols represent anything that individuals agree with. Something can be said to be a symbol if there is something else in it. A symbol is defined as a sign, word, and so on that states a thing that contains a certain meaning, for example, white is a symbol of chastity, the image of rice as a symbol of prosperity.

The understanding contained in this symbolism depends on the agreement of the community that interprets it. This means that a symbol can have different meanings from one group to another. Basically any form of religious ceremony or any memorial ceremony by society is a form of symbolism. The meaning and intent of the ceremony is what man intends to commemorate it. Therefore, symbolism is very prominent in its role in traditions or customs. The explanation above, it is known that the substance of symbols that exist in cultures spread throughout Indonesia, is not only limited to the meaning that is visible to the eye, but more than that, symbols can bring a certain person or society to make something establishment, or a living handle of the symbols they find around them.

Meaning is an integral part of semantics and is always inherent in whatever we speak. The definition of meaning is very diverse. Ferdinand de Saussure expressed, as quoted by Abdul Chaer (1994: 286) meaning as an understanding or concept that belongs to or is present in a linguistic sign. Related to this, Aminuddin (1998: 50)

stated that meaning is a relationship between language and the outside world that is mutually agreed upon by language users so that they can be understood by each other.

Meaning as a link between language and the outside world is in accordance with the agreement of the users so that it can be understood by each other. Meaning has three levels of existence, namely:

- a) At the first level, meaning becomes the content of a linguistic form.
- b) At the second level, meaning becomes the content of a linguistic.
- c) At the third level, meaning becomes the content of communication capable of producing certain information.

Meaning is a combination of semiotics from both theoretical and terminological sides According to Pelc (in the Semiotics by Noth 1990:101) says that meaning is used semiotically when the term is associated with any kind of sign, not only words, sentences, texts, but also symptoms, signs, symbols, representative images or statues.

### **2.3 Semiotics**

The study is concerned with symbolic meanings. Then semiotics becomes the base of interpreting the objects of research. Semiotics is the study of sign process, which is any form of activity, conduct, or any process that involves signs, including the production of meaning. The study of semiotic is one of a growing scientific approach mainly on the humanities and science communication. Semiotics becomes important to understand the various social realities of life human culture especially the various meanings and signs that live and grow in the society.

According to Benny (2011:3) as his understanding, semiotics is a science that examines the signs in people's lives. In simple method semiotic is the science of signs.

Semiotics study about the system, a rule that produce the signs meaning. In the beginning, the meaning does not exist prior to interaction. For each meaning, a symbol is needed to be interpreted together in a communication process. After that, an object or a 'symbol' becomes a certain symbol and has meaning. Through repeated acts of interaction, individuals as actors in relation to social groups share symbolic meanings (Del & Thien, 2009: 132).

### **2.3.1 Semiotic Systems**

Semiotic is a theory about the giving of "signs". Broadly speaking, semiotics are classified into three basic concepts, namely semiotic pragmatic, semiotic syntactic, and semiotic semantic. Bertens (2001:180).

#### **a. Semiotic Pragmatic**

Semiotic Pragmatic elaborates on the origin of signs, the usefulness of signs by those who apply them, and the effects of signs for those who interpret, within the limits of the subject's behaviour. In architecture, pragmatic semiotics is a review of the influence of architecture (as a sign system) on humans in using buildings.

Semiotic Pragmatic Architecture affects human senses and personal feelings (continuity, body position, muscles and joints). The result of an architectural work will be interpreted as a result of perception by the observer, the result of that perception can then influence the observer as a user in using the work of architecture. In other words, the result of architectural work is a form that can influence the wearer.



b. Semiotic Syntactic

Semiotic syntactic describes the combination of signs without regard to their "meaning" or relation to the subject's behaviour. This Syntactic Semiotics ignores the effect of consequences on the interpreting subject. In architecture, syntactic semiotics is a review of the embodiment of architecture as an alloy and combination of various sign systems. The result of the architectural work will be able to be decomposed and into its parts, the relationship between the parts in the whole will be able to be clearly deciphered.

c. Semiotic Semantic

Semiotic semantic elaborates on the meaning of a sign according to the "meaning" conveyed. In semiotic semantic, the architecture is a review of a system of signs that can correspond to the meaning conveyed. The result of architectural work is the embodiment of the meaning that the designer wants to convey through the expression of his form. The form will be reinterpreted as a result of perception by the observer.

The embodiment of the meaning of a design can be said to be successful if the meaning or "meaning" that the designer wants to convey through his design can be understood and accepted precisely by the observer, if the expression that the designer wants to convey is the same as the perception of the observer.

## **2.4 Theory of Barthes**

This theory was put forward by Roland Barthes, in his theory Barthes developed semiotics into 2 levels of signs, namely the degree of denotation and

connotation. Denotation is a level of sign that explains the relationship of signifiers and signifieds to reality, generating explicit, direct, and definite meanings. Connotation is the level of sign that explains the relationship of signifiers and signifieds in which operates an implicit, indirect, and uncertain meaning (Kusumarini, 2006).

Barthes continued this thinking by emphasizing the interaction between text and the personal and cultural experiences of its users, the interaction among conventions in the text and the conventions experienced and expected by its users. Barthes's idea is known as the "order of signification", which includes denotation (the actual meaning according to the dictionary) and connotation (a double meaning born of cultural and personal experience).

## **2.5 Food and Culture**

Food and culture are closely intertwined. Food plays a significant role in shaping social, symbolic, and political-economic aspects of different cultures.

According to Barthes, in Williams (2016:3) food is multidimensional and shapes our identities and cultures. He also defines food as a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior.

Anderson views food as a communication of identity that defines one's individuality and one's place in society. Anderson asserts that food communicates class, ethnic group, lifestyle affiliation, and other social positions. (Williams, 2016:6)

Understanding that food and culture is essential for appreciating and respecting the diversity of human societies will allow us to explore the connections between food, identity, and meaning especially in the traditions.

## 2.6 *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*

The tradition of "makan *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan*" is a customary meal in the Malay culture of Sumatra, Indonesia, that is often held during wedding ceremonies.

The food is served in a room where various foods are already prepared, including yellow rice or *nasi lemak* (rice cooked in coconut milk), lauk-pauk (side dishes), *Ayam Masak Bulat* (whole body of chicken cooked with special seasoning), Assortment of cakes and jelly, *bunga bon-bon*, *kolak*, vegetables and traditional Malay sweets such as *halua*, *kolang kaling*, *gelugur*, *pala*. The rice is served in a big bowl with a flower made of malay's candy on top of it. The meal is eaten by the bride and groom, as well as female members of both families, who sit facing each other in a rectangular formation. (Sutrisno 2008:57)

Traditionally, *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is for both sides of grooms family. But in Tanjungbalai this tradition is attended by only women from man sides of the bridal families. The two brides are brought to a room or in front of the aisle where the *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is placed. This ceremony is led by a woman who acts as a spokesperson which called as *mak inang* of two bridesmaids. The tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is done with the bride, groom, and women from the families of both parties sitting facing each other in a rectangular shape. This custom is carried out in a room where various foods have been served which are: including pahar containing *nasi lemak* topped with flowers made of candied fruits, side dishes, cakes, and halua; ayam

The tradition of *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* is accompanied by special rhymes that contain the meaning of holding the event. The rhymes will be spoken by mak inang, some are used as an opening and some are used as a closing. Then, mak inang will

order the bride and groom to fight for each other's flowers three times on the condition that the flowers that are removed must be of different colors.

Next, the bride and groom will carry out the hidden mustika where the bride and groom must fight over grilled chicken which is immersed under the *nasi lemak*. The bride and groom will plant their hands and after finding the roasted chicken inside, both the bride and groom will pull the roast chicken together. According to the belief of the Malay tribe, if the groom gets the head of the chicken, he is considered the responsible head of the family. If the bride gets the chicken thigh, she is considered to be a mother who will have children.

After eating *Nasi Hadap-Hadapan* which ends with the implementation of hidden mustika, then the procession of handing over the groom to the bride's family is held. Then, once again, the wedding ceremony was closed with a rhyme based on Islam.

## **2.7 Marriage**

Marriage is a ceremony of binding marriage vows which is celebrated or carried out by two people with the intention of formalizing the marriage bond according to religious norms, legal norms, and social norms. Wedding ceremonies have many varieties and variations according to ethnic, religious, cultural, and social class traditions. The use of certain customs or rules is sometimes related to certain religious legal rules. The wedding ceremony itself is usually an event held to carry out a ceremony based on prevailing customs, and an opportunity to celebrate it with friends and family. Women and men who are getting married are called brides, and after the ceremony is over, they are called husband and wife in a marriage bond. In Indonesia,

marriage itself is influenced by several factors civilly, based on the marriage law which stipulates several things, namely:

- a) Marriage must be based on the will of both parties.
- b) Husband and wife have a balanced position in managing the household.
- c) Polygamy is permitted if permitted by applicable religious/civil law, etc.

According to religion, the customs that govern it, which have become the culture of each tribe, are in all corners of the country. Each of these customs has its own culture and procedures in the conception of marriage. Although the essence of marriage in each of these tribes is the same, creating a harmonious, happy and prosperous family, but in the procession and implementation, each tribe has its own characteristics that symbolize sacred values that have been passed down from generation to generation from their ancestors. An example of a very dominant ethnic group used as the subject of this research is the Malay tribe.

## **2.8 Malays**

The Malays are an ethnic group of Austronesian people mainly inhabiting the Malay Peninsula, eastern Sumatera, southern Thailand, Southern Coast of Burma, Singapore Island, coastal Borneo including Brunei, Borneo, Sarawak and coastal Sabah. Collectively, the areas inhabited by the Malays are known as the Malay world. The distribution of Malay tribes in Indonesia inhabits the eastern part of Sumatra Island, such as in Siak, Riau. However, there are also several areas in North Sumatra that are inhabited by the Malays, namely Medan, Serdang Berdagai, Langkat and Tanjung Balai. The surrounding area of Medan is known as Deli Malay, Langkat is known as Langkat Malay, Perbaungan and Serdang Berdagai is known as Deli Malay, the interior of Batubara and Tanjung Balai is known as Batubara and Tanjung Malay.

The thing that distinguishes Malay from one another is in the dialect only, while the customs and traditions are mostly all the same.