



# Gotong Batak-Simalungun (Social Semiotics Study)

## *Gotong Batak-Simalungun (Kajian Semiotika Sosial)*

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Lisan Shidqi Zul Fahmi Sianipar<sup>1\*</sup>, Cristien Oktaviani Saragih<sup>2</sup>, Jekmen Sinulingga<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sundanese Language Education, Faculty of Language and Literature, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Bataknese Literature, Faculty of Cultural Science, Universitas Sumatera Utara

\*kakanglisan@upi.edu



# INTRODUCTION

*Horas banta haganupan, salam habonaron do bona!*

- Six (6) *puak* (sub-ethnics) of the Batak community then differ in their cultural diversity including language, customs, architecture, kinship system, and **traditional clothing** (Bangun, 2010; Hutabarat, et al., 2013; Siahaan, 2011).
- In **Batak-Simalungun** terms, traditional clothing is referred to as *paheian*, contains: (1) *you*, (2) *building*, and (3) *gotong*



**Hiou** (weave)



**Bulang**  
(used as a part of  
*paheian* for women)

Both of *hiou*  
and *bulang*  
are originally  
from  
Simalungun,  
and were only  
made in that  
area.

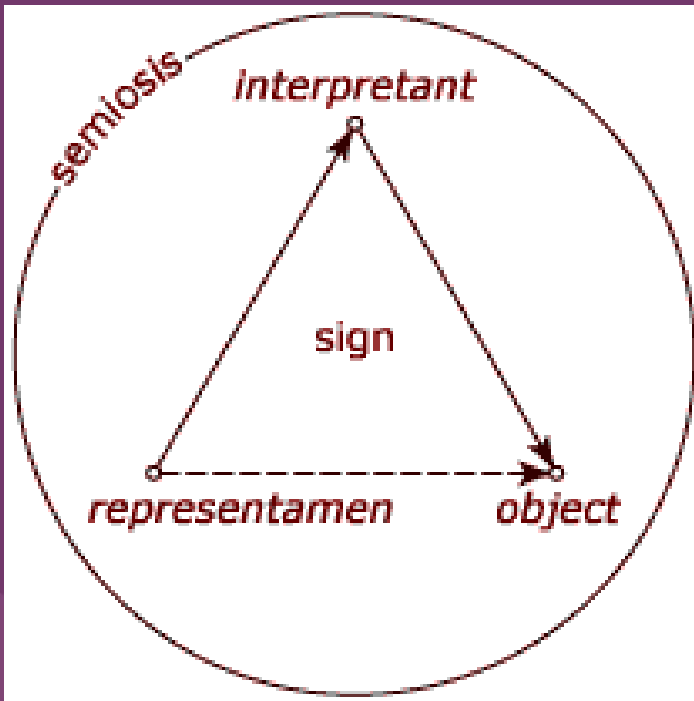


**Gotong**  
(used as a part of  
*paheian* for men)

Why *gotong*  
then made  
from **batik** as  
a basic  
material?

# LITERATURE REVIEW

This research was conducted with a **semiotic approach**, to analyse *gotong* in more depth, and also to fill the research gap, related to the *paheian* of this Batak-Simalungun community.



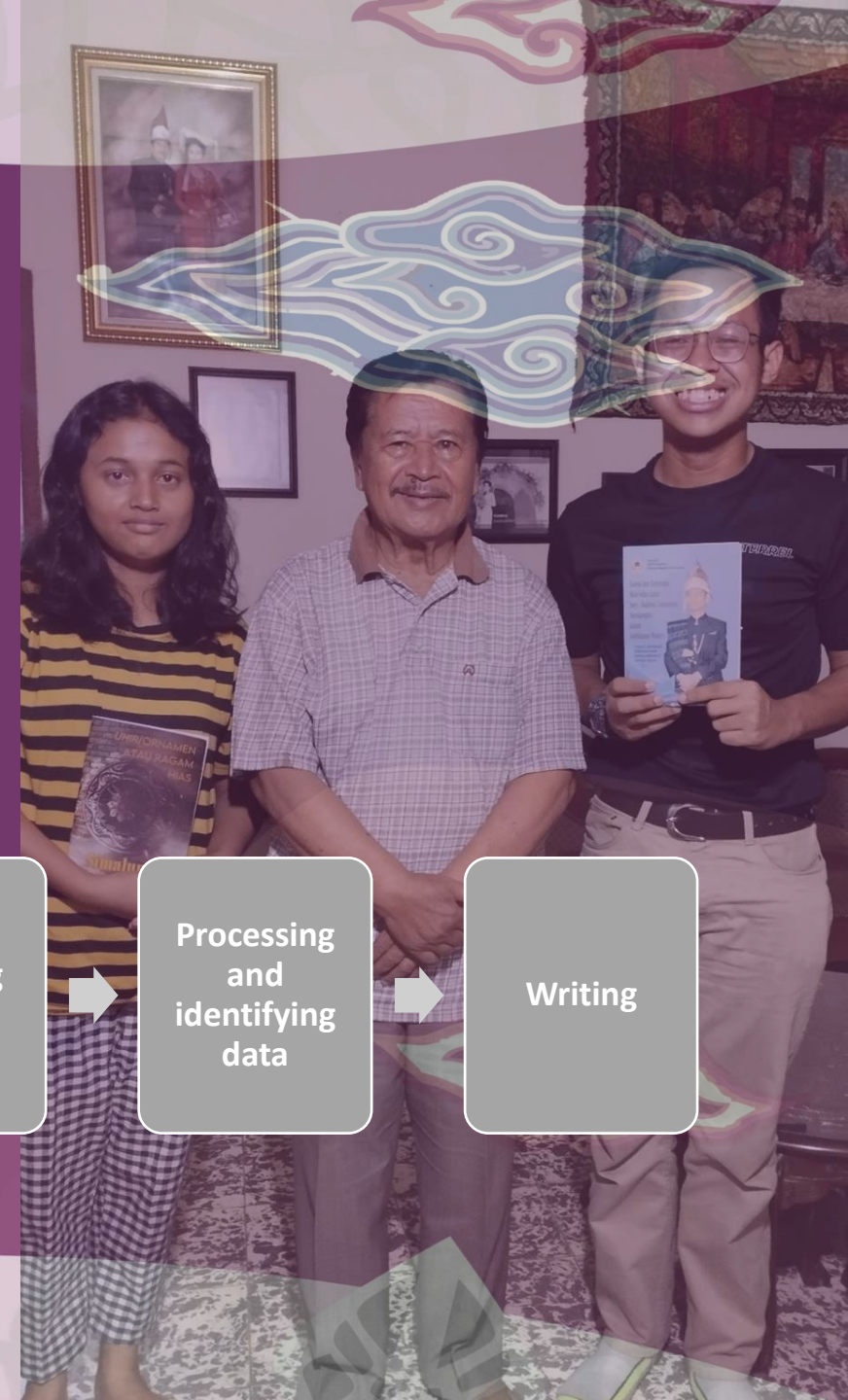
- **Semiotics** means the **science of signs**. More broadly, humans understand **that life in the world contains so many objects, which have meaning and often represent a value** (Barthes, 2007; Eco, 2011; Mudjiyanto & Nur, 2013; Trabaut, 1996; Wibowo, 2013).
- Peirce introducing the **triadic relationship** where semiotics is understood as **relationship of three things: (1) sign, (2) object, and (3) interpretant** (Atkin, 2023; Peirce, 1958).





# METHOD

- **Qualitative data measurement and analysis** (Abdussamad, 2021; Khofifah & Suyadnya, 2018; Sudaryono, 2018);
- The research then **described descriptively** (Alwasilah, 2015; Sudaryono, 2018);
- The **data collected** through **observation** and **documentation studies**, with supported data come from **interviews** and **literature studies**;

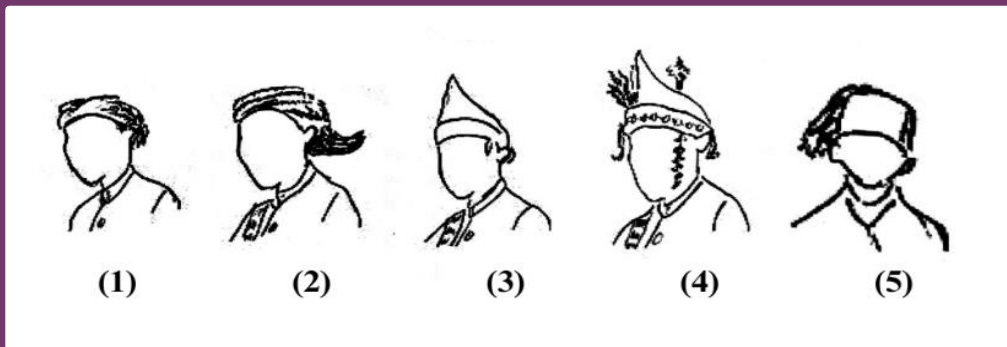


# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

## Shape of *Gotong*

Traditional *gotong* then divided into two classifications:

- 1) Variations based on the **time, place, and atmosphere of use**;
- 2) Variations based of **social position**.

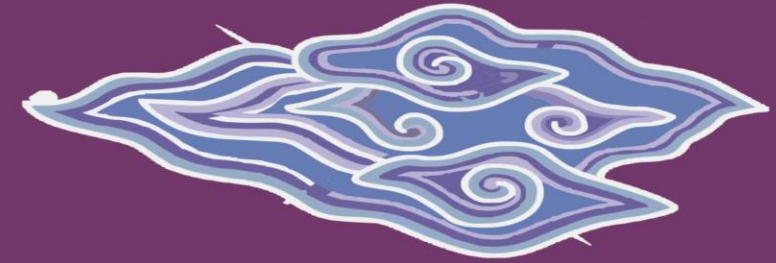


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- 1) *Gotong salalu/hujuma*;
- 2) *Gotong sapiri/aslini*;
- 3) *Gotong tikkal*;
- 4) *Gotong potik*;
- 5) *Gotong pandihar*

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- 1) *Gotong partongah*
- 2) *Gotong paruma*



In the modern era, *gotong* then **conventionalized** into one **egalitarian form**, and is commonly used in certain events named ***gotong tikkal***.



*Tikkal* shape symbolizing **power, leadership, male greatness, and Godhead**





# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

## Why Batik Decided as the Base Material of *Gotong*?



- 1) Historical impact of the cultural diplomacy Singasari Kingdom with Nagur;
- 2) Historical impact of the trade activities during Dutch-Indies Era;
- 3) Convention and recommendation after Simalungun Cultural Seminar II in 2014

In the future Batak-Simalungun batik *pinar* (*decorative motifs*) could be used as new convention regarding the base material for *gotong*.



# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

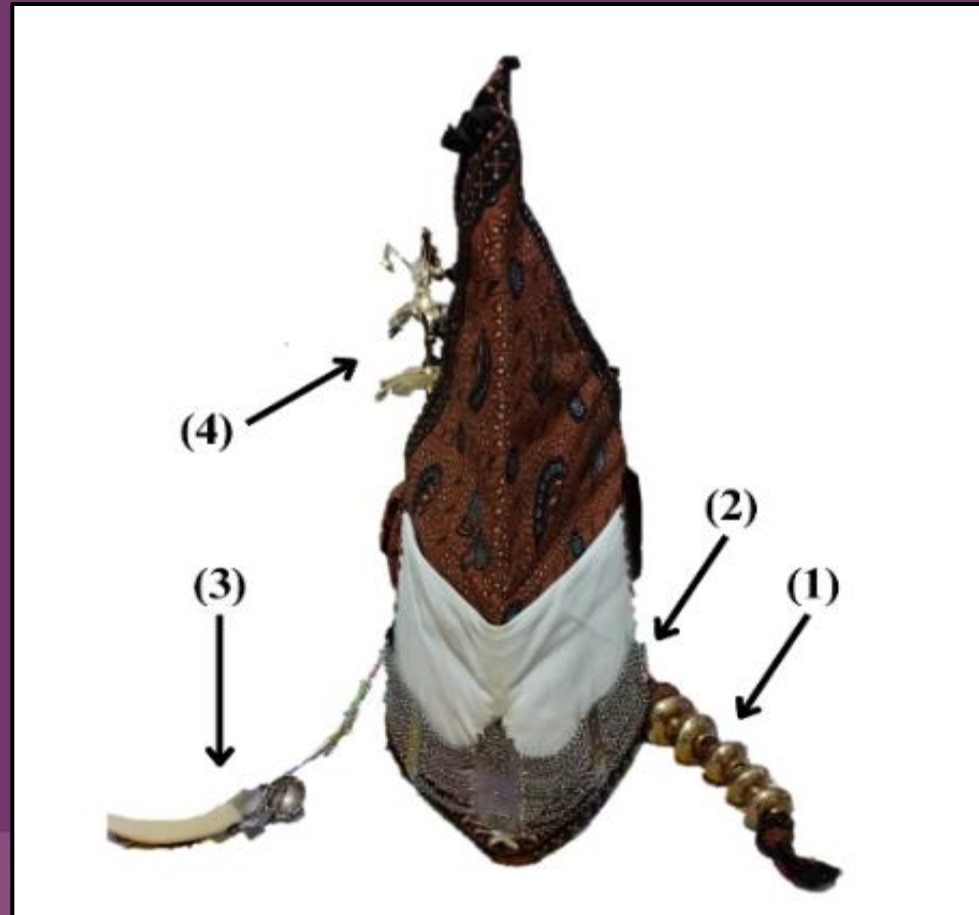
## The Accessories of *Gotong*

### (3) *Heper-Heper*

Shaped like a blossoming flower, where the petals appear sharp in the visualisation, equipped with animal fangs.

### (4) *Rudang Hapias*

shaped like an umbrella with three tiers. Represent the shape of the rave flower (*hibiscus*), biruh leaf (*lontar*)



### (2) *Rantei Gotong* (*Sambolah Pagar*)

refers to the accessory that looks like a chain-link fence, which is used on the front of *gotong*.

### (1) *Doramani*

small jars, which are usually arranged in odd numbers, and have holes at the top and bottom.





# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

## Rules for Using *Gotong* and Its Accessories Nowadays



*Gotong* not use for daily purpose. Its only the *paheian* on certain occasions.



*Doramani* in its rules can only be used by the heirs of *Harajaan Marpitu*. In addition, Purba (2014) found that *doramani* also used freely by *suhut* (host) in organizing traditional parties.



These three accessories can only be used by certain people, based on their position and rank. Futhermore, Purba (2014) also stated that if the individual user no longer holds the relevant position or rank, then he is no longer permitted to use the *gotong* accessory.



# CONCLUSION

*Gotong* as a complementary *paheian* head covering, is still used and contains certain meanings, which indicate the social position of the user. However, we can also see that there have been several changes, such as (1) the form of *gotong* which is now egalitarian in the form of *tikkal*, and (2) rules for the use of accessories, which are adapted to current positions/positions in government, institutions and organizations, in the position of the Batak-Simalungun people, as part of the Republic of Indonesia.

Apart from that, the Batak-Simalungun people actually understand that culture is dynamic. This is in line with the recommendation, that in the future *pinar* motif batik (Batak-Simalungun decorative variety), can be used to show local identity. This is because, so far, batik from Java is the basic material for the cloth used in *gotong*. Likewise, adjustments to the rules for using mutual accessories, which adapt to positions in today's Batak-Simalungun society, are also a sign that adjustments have been made.

Therefore, it is hoped that this research can be an insight opener, as well as a reminder of the importance of understanding and preserving mutual cooperation, as one of the Batak-Simalungun cultures. Meanwhile, the researcher recommends that in the future, (1) Singasari-Nagur cultural diplomacy, which has an impact on the use of batik as a basic material for mutual cooperation, (2) rules for the use of mutual cooperation and its accessories in the traditional Batak-Simalungun society/kingdom period, (3) comparison of the meaning and the rules for the transformation of *gotong* and its accessories between traditional and modern societies, as well as (4) whether there are differences in meaning on the front of the *gotong* which has yellow and white variations, can be followed up by future researchers.



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**THANK YOU!**  
**Hatur nuhun!**  
**Terima kasih! Mauliate!**  
**Bujur! Diateitupa!**

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