



**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE TOBA BATAK  
SAUR MATUA CEREMONY**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aims of this study are to describe the kinds of figure of speech and discover the existence of figure of speech that is delivered by Hula-hula, boru, and dongan tubu in Toba Batak saur matua ceremony. This research was conducted by using qualitative descriptive. The data were the utterances gathered from umpasa that are delivered by Hula-hula, boru, and dongan tubu of 3 Toba Batak saur matua ceremonies in Rantau prapat and Tarutung. The data analyzed by using theory of descriptive analysis. from identifying the data that are needed for this research, classifying the data based on the theory of figures of speech and analyzing the data based on the theories that were used. The findings are there were 7 out of 10 kinds of figure of speech were found in the umpasa of Toba Batak saur matua ceremony. The most dominant figure of speech in Toba Batak saur matua ceremony was simile. Toba Batak people tent to deliver umpasa through simile which compared between two dissimilar things by using the comparative term (like, as) and described to the first qualities of the second of invest the first with connotations inherent in the other.

**Keyword:** *Figurative Language, Toba Batak, Saur matua ceremony*

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## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is the interaction that happens when one with another do the communication in their daily activity. According to Brown (1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997), Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Why speaking happens in society because people need communication when they want to say something, transmit information or need to speak. Speakers use communication when they want to express or inform someone about something. They use language according to their purpose and it is necessary for there to be a listener and a speaker for effective communication. (Harmer, 2007: 46).

According to Levredge (2010), the relationship between language and culture is deeply rooted. Language is used to maintain and convey culture and culture ties. Different ideas stem from different language use within one's culture and the whole aspects of these relationships start one's birth. It is obvious that language plays a paramount role in developing, elaborating and transmitting culture and enabling us to store meanings and experience to facilitate communication. Each culture has its own peculiarities and throws special influences on language systems. Language is a key component of culture. Without language, culture would not be possible. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture, it reflects culture. Cultural differences are the most serious areas causing misunderstanding unpleasantness and even conflict in cross-cultural communication. As Trudgil (2003) argues that, language is closely associated with social structure and culture value system. And he also states that language as a social phenomenon is loosely tied up with the social structure and value system. By language, a culture will exist. We can know the culture of someone by their language or the way of they speak to another.

When language is expressed, we can express the same idea but different in ways when we convey it. We may make a direct informative statement of fact or we may use figurative language. According to Mahmood (2014), Figurative language is a type of language that uses words or phrases different from literal meaning. Figurative language is used in any form of communication, such as in daily conversation, articles in newspaper, advertisement, novels, poems, so forth. Figurative language may be said to occur whenever a speaker/ writer for the sake of freshness or emphasis departs from the usual denotations of words. Figurative language is same with Figures of speech, Figurative language are not devices to state what is demonstrably untrue. Indeed they often state truth that more literal language cannot communicate, they call attention to such truths. Every use of Figurative language involves a risk of misinterpretation, though the risk is well worth taking. Tirajoh (1988) also

argues that the Figures of speech help to communicate the experience because they appeal to the reader's own experience. The Figure of speech gives depth and richness to the experiences. According to Arp & Perrine in Rose (2003), Figurative language can be divided into ten namely simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, overstatement or hyperbole and irony. In *Saur Matua* ceremony so many words that they use to say something and the words has each meaning from the words. It's make the writer to know more deeply about the meaning of utterances that happen in *Saur Matua* ceremony. In line with this phenomenon, we can see example in this below:

*Balok ma balok ni hauma*

'border in the field'

*Balokan ni balok ni huta*

'as border in the village'

*Batapasahatma natua-tuan on tu ruma Na*

'this time we enter this parents to her/his house'

*Baholan imana Na punasa*

'to the God as create him/her'

From the example we can see the meaning of the sentence not talk about "House" but the meaning of the *Umpasa* is "Paradise" the place of God. If we know all about the words that Batak tribe used in *Saur Matua* we can find so many Figurative indeed. In example above use Simile. Toba Batak people would not say words with a direct statement but they use figurative word and had a deep meaning. *Umpasa* tend to give cultural meaning with comparing characteristic, behaviors of vegetation or objects what are round humans.

Toba Batak Language (TBL) is one of the ethnic language in North Sumatra, which is used by the Toba Batak people to communicate within or in the areas in *Saur Matua* Ceremony. It is Death Ceremony in Toba Batak Society. One of them is Toba Batak society, which also has varieties kinds of culture and custom. The custom way of Toba Batak society includes into a system. The real national culture is rooted in territory culture, according to the principal archipelago concept so that there is an absolute defense in facing the foreign culture or unlucky situation from inside. As a Bataknese, she wants to explain about ceremony "*Saur Matua*" that ceremony is a part of the series of the Death Ceremony and until now has been still held and considered as an important thing for Toba Batak society.

*Saur Matua* is the one who died superbly well to have children and grandchildren of the boys and of girls. *Saur* means complete or perfect where it is said that those who had died had been perfect in kinship, have had children and have grandchildren. So if the deceased perfect in kinship then customary burial ceremony was held perfectly (*Saur matua*). If it had been a perfect death, then it must be made perfectly in that event, called *ulaon na gok* (event with full custom). *Ulaon na gok*

implemented maralaman (*on the home page*). *Boan* (food) prepared is sigagat duhut (*buffalo*). They are present, unite, come together to deliver the final resting place of the bodies.

In performing the cultural event in Bataknese, there are three components of Bataknese are interconnected namely *Dalihan Na Tolu* which takes important part in Bataknese cultural event that takes a long process of talks and discussion during the Death ceremony.

In our daily activity we do the communication with another by use the real meaning. We talk to another with simple language to make the listener easy to catch the idea so communication will be happen. One common problem many people face in literature is difficult to interpret and understand Figurative language because Figurative language has another meaning and this research the writer focuses in *Saur matua* ceremony. *Saur Matua* ceremony depends on the socio-economic status that organizer for those who are classified as social high status (rich people), because when we held the *saur matua* ceremony we need much money to held that ceremony. As for poor families, they can't able to held the ceremony because need much money. So, they hold the event which simple. The condition of social economic makes families who cannot afford difficult to follow the ceremony because to need much money to held *Saur Matua*.

Related to the topic in this thesis, the writer finds some previous studies. Friska (2016) has been analyzed about figures of speech in wedding ceremony. She found There were 5 out of 10 kinds of figures of speech in the *umpasa* of Toba Batak wedding ceremony in Medan which are simile, metaphor and etc. And the most dominant figure of speech in Toba Batak wedding ceremony in Medan is simile. Besides, the use of figurative language has been examined by some researchers also. These researchers have analyzed figurative language in some journals. Firstly, Lian (2011) in here He discusses about how Malaysian university students construct meanings of advertisements found in Men's magazines, centring on their interpretation of figurative language. Four second-year TESL undergraduates were asked to interpret ten selected advertisements of various products and services using McQuarrie and Mick's Rhetorical Figures Framework (1996). Secondly, Rashid Mahmood (2014) have analyzed about a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Figurative language in Pakistani English Newspapers. A corpus has been compiled from four English Newspapers: Dawn, The News, The Nation and The Express Tribune on the basis of best readership across the country. It explores how Figurative language is used in communicating ideas to facilitate the readers and to uncover the manipulation through its usage.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested to analyze the kinds, the process and the reason of figurative language used in the Toba Batak *Saur Matua* Ceremony.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted in descriptive qualitative reseach. The data had been conducted in variety of ways such as observation, interview, and tape or video recording. In this study the

researcher used video recorder in order to get the data which was turn to describe the use of figures of speech in Toba Batak Saur Matua Ceremony.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992: 106) states that the term data refers to the rough material researchers collect from the world they are studying; they are the particulars that from the basis of analysis. The source of data in this research were two informants or called "*Raja Adat*" through direct interview and direct observations in Toba Batak *Saur matua* ceremony, the first informant as raja adat in Rantau Prapat, the name of informant was Pentus Tampubolon, his age 55 years old, his background study was senior high school. The informant's job was a farmer. The second informant was Manahan Marpaung and the informant lives in Tarutung. He was 60 years old. His background study was senior high school and the informant's job was a farmer. The researcher did the interview with informants to know about *Dalihan Na Tolu*. While the data of this research were the utterances of clauses gathered from "*Umpasa*" that were delivered by *Hula-Hula*, *Dongan tubu*, and *Boru* of Toba Batak *Saur Matua* ceremonies in Tarutung and Rantau Prapat I (Lobusona) and Rantau Prapat II (Ujung Bandar). The areas were chosen in order to compare the existence of figurative language that was delivered by *Hula-hula*, *Dongan Tubu* and *Boru*.

In collecting the data there were some steps; Interviewing some informants or experts of culture who actually understand well about Toba Batak *Saur Matua* ceremony. Transcribing the result of interviews from some informants or experts of Toba Batak *Saur Matua* ceremony. Recording the Umpasa in Toba Batak *Saur Matua* ceremony and Identifying all figuratives Language from the Umpasa which were delivered by *Hula-Hula*, *Dongan Tubu* and *Parboru* in Toba Batak *Saur Matua* ceremony.

The data analyzed by interactive model classified officially by Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014). In this analysis, it was by ongoing analysis and after collecting the entire the data. Purpose an analysis as four concurrent flowed of activity: (1) data collection, (2) data condensation, (3) data display, and (4) conclusion drawing / verification.

In qualitative research, the data should be auditable through checking that the findings are credible (true value), transferable (applicability), dependable (consistency) and confirmable (neutrality), which is called as the trustworthiness. The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry was to support the argument that the inquiry's findings were "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Findings**

After having analyzed the *umpasa* in three Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremonies in Rantau Prapat I (Lobusona), Rantau Prapat II (Ujung Bandar) and Tarutung, several findings as follows:

- (1) There were 7 out of 10 kinds of figures of speech were found in the *umpasa* of Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremony in Rantau Prapat I, Tarutung, and Rantau Prapat II which were metaphor, simile, personification, allegory, overstatement/hyperbole, symbol and irony. And the most dominant figure of speech in Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremony in Rantau Prapat I (Lobusona), Tarutung and Rantau Prapat II (Tarutung) was simile.
- (2) Toba Batak people tend to deliver *umpasa* through simile which compared between two dissimilar things by using the comparative term (like,as) and described cultural meaning with comparing characteristic, behaviors of vegetation or objects what are round humans. Toba Batak people would not say it with a direct statement but they use figurative word and had a deep meaning.
- (3) The reason why figures of speech used in *saur matua* because figures of speech or *umpasa* was a series of figures of speech which means to give an advice, motivation, warning, directing or guiding someone or asking a blessing. Not only as the advice, motivation, guiding and blessing *umpasa* as the basic life for Batak people to walk their life. And *umpasa* was a part of the beauty of Batak language used in a variety event.

## Discussions

According to Keller (1997: 98) Language in the society is becoming a social maker. He also states a social maker is an indication of who the people are what groups they belong to, how educated they are and their social relation to others. That statement is support by Marjohan (1983:3) says that society exerts some influences upon language. In this research, the researcher found that 7 out of 10 kinds of figures of speech. And the most dominant figures of speech was simile.

In cultural value from Batak people we can saw if Bataknese is a society who is very kept their father lineage (patrilineal). Each child from a father using his clan heredity. This system affected their personality and solidarity to keep the harmony and sense of families. Edward Brunner says in Friska (2016), "if a Bataknese moved to other city just stay to keep their village system entirely. It was so this system being a culture foundation and identity of society to keep their custom.

The philosophy of Toba Batak was an important aspect of life for Bataknese, that was social philosophy of bataknese. The philosophy that meant as *Dalihan Na Tolu*. This philosophy had long existed in the Batak's life and was a reference in the society activities like death, wedding, funeral, home, enter the deliberation and many more. The philosophy as well as guidelines in behave manners customary in the interactions to kinship groups.

In English principle of *Dalihan Na Tolu* that expression were "Respect the in law-families to have good relationship with same ancestor of the clan, and to persuade the daughter families, people those who did not have respect to their the in-law-families, they would get difficulty to earn their living. If there was not good relationship with the same clan, they would involve in quarrel, but if there was no affection with daughter families, they would not get a help each other.

According to Francis in Masruri (2012), figurative means imitation, meanwhile language is a set of signals and the structures and can be studied by human being. The ways how figures of speech reflect in Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremony we can see the writer concluded that Toba Batak speakers namely *Hula-hula*, *boru*, *dongan tubu* tend to make comparison between two dissimilar things an analogy that imaginatively identified one object with another and either described to the first qualities of the second or invest the first with connotations inherent in the other. Toba Batak society especially the speakers in delivering the *umpasa* tend to speak with denoting one kind of object or idea was used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. The speakers in Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremonies made an implicit comparison to explain the content of their *umpasa*.

According to Friska (2016) The reason why figures of speech in *saur matua* ceremonies because *umpasa* was a series of figures of speech which means to give an advice, motivation, warning, directing or guiding someone or asking a blessing. *Umpasa* was a part of the beauty of Batak language used in a variety event. It was used during traditional ceremonies such as death, birth, marriage ceremony and others.

For Batak people there were the role of *Dalihan Na Tolu*. The role of *hula-hula* gives a blessing to their *boru*. The role of *dongan tubu* as the close family with the same of *marga* to help the party can run well. And the role of *boru* was prepare the food in that party. So, there was relationship one with another. In first region in Rantau Prapat I we can see a little bite of figures of speech indeed. The researcher saw there was factor to influence that. In this party *parhata* not spirit to lead the party and the social background of the family was low economic.

In Rantau Prapat II (Ujung Bandar) the background of family was middle to high economic and *parhata* in that ceremony was a good *parhata* that have good in language. *Parhata* created the party became spirit and the researcher found figures of speech more than Rantau Prapat I (Lobusona). In *saur matua* ceremony we found cultural values indeed. The cultural values that the researcher found such as Kinship, Religion, *Hamoraon*, *Hasangapon* and *Hagabeon*. So, the life of Toba Batak society was rested and influenced by those values above.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study was concerned in figurative language in Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremony. The conclusions were taken as the followings:

- (1) Toba Batak society used figure of speech on their *saur matua* ceremony. Figures of speech that were used in Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremony were simile, metaphor, personification, symbol, overstatement/hyperbole, allegory and irony. The use of simile to be dominantly.
- (2) Figure of speech reflected Toba Batak cultural values such as Kinship, Religion, *Hagabeon* (descendants), *Hamoraon* (wealth), and *Hasangapon* (pride). *Kinship* was a clan solidarity. *Religi* was an intimate relationship with their Creator and they tend to rely on everything in

God, *Hagabeon* was an expression that expects has many children. *Hamoraon* as one of the underlying cultural values and encourage the Batak people, especially the Toba, to find a lot of property. *Hasangapon* was a consideration to be private, perfect human are a high status in life, and no ridicule from others. When a certain degree he also has hamoraon (wealth) and he has hagabeon (descendants) these cultural values which becoming their life principle of their society. And the dominant cultural values in figures of speech that reflect Batak culture were Kinship and Religi because kinship and religi were the basic fundamental for Batak people in their life. The relationship with God and human as the important things to walk the life.

- (3) The figures of speech which were uttered by the speakers such as *Hula-hula*, *boru* and *dongan tubu* used in Toba Batak *saur matua* ceremony as a prayer, motivation, advice and a guidance in their life and they should be patient because the death of their parents.

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