

An Analysis of Semiotic of Traditional Houses of Nias

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v9i6.561>

*Katarina Natalia Dakhi¹, Erika Sinambela², Rony A. Sembiring³ 

¹²³ Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: katarina.dakhi@student.uhn.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research used a semiotic approach to analyze Nias' traditional houses, exploring the symbolism and meaning contained in the architecture and design elements. The traditional Nias house functions not only as a place to live but also as a representation of the cultural values, belief systems, and social identities of the Nias people. The research method included analysis of the signs and symbols on the house structure. The research results showed that every element of a Nias traditional house, from the basic structure to the decorative ornaments, has a deep symbolic meaning and reflects the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and spirituality. These findings reinforce the importance of preserving Nias' traditional houses as part of Indonesia's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

Keywords: Semiotics, Nias traditional house, symbolism, traditional architecture, culture

Article History:

Received 07th October 2024

Accepted 19th December 2024

Published 24th December 2024



INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is a philosophical theory about signs and symbols. This relates to everything that is considered a sign. Examples of images, gestures, sounds, and objects. According to Saussure in (Pratami, Santika, & Utami, 2022) semiotics is a science and symbols that specifically communicate something verbally and unspoken. Semiotics is also important to use in interpreting the meaning or information from the sign. Examples of signs that provide information can be seen in advertisements.

Symbols are used as a medium to express one's ideas or feelings to other people. Symbols in the communication process include language, gestures, signs, images, colors, and other signs that can translate an idea or feeling from one person (communicator) to another person (communicant) directly. Of the various symbols that can be used in the communication process, language is the medium that is most widely used because it is most likely used to explain someone's thoughts, and with language, all past, present events, and future predictions can be explained. The function of language is such that science can develop and only with language skills can humans learn science. Many failures in the communication process are caused by language errors or an inability to understand language.

Semiotics has a close relationship with the topic of language because language itself is a sign system used for communication. Semiotics, as the study of signs and symbols, is very relevant in understanding how meaning is constructed and conveyed through language. Speaking a second or foreign language means that a person has a certain level of understanding of the language system itself and the culture of origin of the language. How

complicated it is to learn and understand a language not only in terms of its function as a means of communication but also as a culture and way of life of certain people, there is a need to see the benefits of learning it. trying to master a language quoted in (Sinambela, Sembiring, Manik, & Pangaribuan, 2024). Traditional house semiotics is a symbolic language that provides information to observers through certain forms. In this way, the process of interpreting a building that the designer wants to convey was understood or not by each individual user and person observing the building. The meaning of an architectural object is not only limited to its shape or appearance but is expected to be able to interpret the essential things hidden in forms that can be known through in-depth observation.

Nias Island (Nias language: *Tanö Niha*) is the name for the islands and archipelagos located to the west of Sumatra Island, Indonesia, and administratively within the territory of North Sumatra Province. This island is the largest island among a group of islands on the west coast of Sumatra, inhabited by the majority of the Nias (*Ono Niha*) tribe. Meaning reflects that the object not only carries information, in this case, the object wants to communicate but also constitutes a structured sign system. The science that studies signs and everything related to them, how they function, their relationship with other signs, and their transmission and reception by those who use them. Peirce's semiotic theory emphasizes the logic and philosophy of signs that exist in society and is often called 'grand theory'. According to Peirce, logic must study how people think. Reasoning, according to the basic hypothesis of Peirce's theory, is carried out through signs.

The background to semiotic research on South Nias traditional houses was carried out because these traditional houses are a reflection of the cultural heritage, social identity, and spiritual beliefs of the Nias people. By analyzing the signs and symbols contained in the architecture and ornaments of traditional houses, this research can help preserve cultural and historical values, as well as document traditions that may be in danger of being lost. In addition, this study deepened the understanding of the social structure and organization of the South Nias community, revealed symbolic meanings related to local rituals and beliefs, and highlighted how traditional houses adapt to social change and modernization. Thus, this research not only contributes to the preservation of local culture but also enriches the study of vernacular architecture and visual communication in a broader context.

In the Nias traditional house, the writer was examine parts of the architecture in the Nias traditional house, such as the ornaments and symbols found in the Nias traditional house and in the South Nias traditional house there are ancient carvings on the walls of the house and several historical relics such as musical instruments, traditional clothing, ancient war tools and pictures of ancient money.

The writer is interested in researching this because she is interested in study traditional symbols in the traditional, house of South Nias and she wants to explore the values of belief and the cultural identity of the community. This can provide a deeper insight into the culture of South Nias. The results of semiotic research on South Nias traditional houses can be a significant contribution to the field of semiotic studies, traditional architecture, and South Nias culture as a whole. It can expand academic knowledge about cultural studies and symbolic architecture by understanding more about the symbols and meanings behind the traditional houses of South Nias. The writer can help in efforts to preserve and appreciate the cultural heritage. Semiotic analysis can help in revealing values that may be overlooked physically. The writer's research on the Nias Traditional House not only provides academic benefits but also allows the writer to expand his network and make a meaningful contribution to the understanding and preservation of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. Writers needed analytical methods, and the methods themselves supported writers to simplify research. The author used qualitative methods to conduct her research, as it allowed for in-depth data collection and analysis. In the semiotic study of traditional houses, there are several data sources that can be taken to analyze the symbolism and meaning behind these cultural structures and practices. Some relevant data sources include; Direct observation: directly observing traditional houses and their elements such as architecture, decoration, and symbols contained therein; Visual documentation: collecting photos or video recordings of traditional houses and their details for further analysis. In semiotic studies on traditional houses, data collection techniques involve in-depth observation of the elements of the traditional house, such as architecture, decoration, and symbols. The use of interviews with cultural experts or traditional homeowners can also provide valuable insight into the meaning and symbolism behind the structure and elements of the traditional home. In this research, the data collection technique that was used was field observation, where the author only acted to observe and participate as part of the research. The author made direct observations and conducted direct interviews with people who live in traditional houses

Data Source

In the semiotic study of traditional houses, various data sources can be utilized to analyze the symbolism and meanings embedded within these cultural structures and practices. Key sources include direct observation, where researchers examine the architecture, decorations, and symbolic elements firsthand, and visual documentation, which involves collecting photos or video recordings of traditional houses and their intricate details to facilitate deeper analysis.

Data collection techniques in semiotic studies of traditional houses involve in-depth observation of architectural elements, decorations, and symbols, complemented by interviews with cultural experts or traditional homeowners to uncover the meanings and symbolism behind these structures. The process includes conducting field visits to observe traditional houses directly, interviewing local residents, traditional leaders, or cultural experts for their insights, taking photographs of notable architectural features, and maintaining detailed notes of all observations and interview findings for comprehensive analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data

In this chapter, the author explained the research results and in-depth data related to the research focus as a follow-up to the impact of data collection. The data in the form of images taken from the field during the research. The data that the author found in the image consisted of several types of signs including icons, indexes, and symbols. In this research, the data contained in the images were analyzed using Pierce's semiotic theory called the triadic model which included representation, object, and interpretant components. The author used one of the triadic components, namely objects.

The author analyzed image data on South Nias traditional houses in four parts, namely the top of the traditional house, the front of the traditional house, the middle of the traditional house, and the bottom of the traditional house. In the picture, the author found several signs that were revealed in the picture. The author found six signs described as follows: qualisign, sinsign, legisign, icon, index, and symbol. However, the author once stated that there were only three types of objects that the author analyzed, namely icons, indexes, and symbols.

Table 1. Data collection of Icons

No	Picture icons	Explain
1		This ancient money also has historical value, reminding people of the economic system and forms of trade that once applied in the past. As an icon, ancient money in the Nias traditional house not only functions as an aesthetic object, but also carries deep messages about history, status, identity, and culture that continue to be preserved.
2		These photos also serve as a collective representation of the Nias people. They depict the way of dressing, lifestyle, and customs of the past, all of which are integral parts of the Nias cultural identity. As icons, photos of people in the Nias traditional house not only serve as decoration, but also carry deep meanings about history, identity, tradition, and respect for ancestors.
3		The display of traditional house photos in this Nias traditional house can also be considered as a tribute to history and remind other people of the form of traditional houses in ancient times. As an icon that strengthens cultural identity, maintains traditional values, and respects the architectural heritage and history of the Nias people.
4		This photo symbolizes a man's ability to demonstrate physical and mental agility, which is an important part of initiation into adulthood in the Nias tradition. The stone jumping photo displayed in the Nias traditional house not only serves as decoration, but also carries a deep meaning of courage, cultural identity, respect for tradition, and physical and mental endurance in the Nias community.
5		The image of the warrior also reflects solidarity and unity within the community. It shows how the Nias people, through strength and unity, are able to defend themselves from external threats. The image of the warrior displayed in the Nias traditional house has a deep meaning of courage, identity, respect for ancestors, and protection. It is an icon that reinforces the traditional values and rich military history of Nias culture.

The data taken were in the form of images that had signs in them, which were then entered into a table. The author found 30 pieces of data that have semiotic meaning from the three signs that the author focused on, namely icons, indexes, and symbols.

Table 2. Data collection of Indexs

No	Picture indexes	Explain
1		This warning directly shows concern for the safety of visitors or residents of traditional houses. This text serves as an index of vigilance, reminding people to be careful when descending stairs that may be steep or slippery, given the traditional construction that is often different from modern buildings.
2		This warning directly serves as a reminder to be careful not to hit the head. This shows concern for the safety and comfort of visitors or residents of the Nias traditional house, who may face the risk of being hit due to the traditional architectural design.
3		This warning indicates that Nias traditional houses may have design elements that could cause people to trip, such as steep stairs, uneven floors, or other distinctive structures. This is a way to highlight the design peculiarities that may differ from modern house designs.
4		This warning serves as a reminder to maintain health and safety inside the traditional house. The smoking ban shows attention to the potential fire hazards and health impacts that cigarette smoke may cause in an enclosed environment.

Table 3. Data Collection of Symbols

No	Picture symbols	Explain
1		This is the ear of a traditional Nias house, which means that whatever happens or information is in the village, the king must hear it.
2		The top of the roof of the Nias traditional house is a symbol of the crown of the Nias traditional house, which is the residence of a king or leader in the village. Although over time the top of the traditional house is no longer considered the crown of the Nias traditional house
3		The dragon head carving in front of a Nias traditional house often symbolizes protection and strength. Dragons, in many cultures, are considered powerful creatures and formidable guardians. In Nias, this

4



symbol serves as a guardian of the house, protecting the occupants from threats, both physical and spiritual.

The "wimba" carving as a king's accessory in the Nias traditional house is a symbol of strength, authority, majesty, protection, and spiritual connection. It also reflects the cultural identity and artistic skills that are important in Nias society, making it an element that is full of meaning in the context of local leadership and tradition.

5



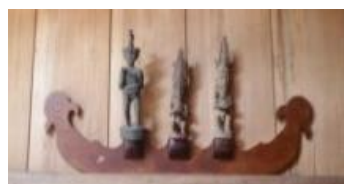
The "wimba" carving as a queen's accessory in the Nias traditional house is a symbol of honor, authority, beauty, protection, fertility, and spirituality. It also reflects the cultural identity and aesthetic values that are important in the Nias tradition, strengthening the role of the queen in social, spiritual, and cultural contexts.

6



Pig jawbones hung inside Nias traditional houses often symbolize the social status and wealth of the homeowner. Pigs are highly valued animals in Nias society, and the large number of pig jawbones hanging indicates that the family is able to hold large parties or important rituals, which require many pigs.

7



"Wimba nobleman" also serves as a symbol of identity and lineage. This carving shows a respected noble lineage, indicating that the family is part of a high social class and has special rights in society.

8



Sailing ships are often associated with travel, adventure, and trade. In the context of the Nias traditional house, the carving of a sailing ship symbolizes the spirit of adventure and trade relations that have long been part of the history of the Nias people, especially in establishing relations with other islands and the outside world. These carvings not only enrich the aesthetics of the traditional house, but also contain deep meanings about the values, history, and life of the Nias people.

9



The carvings on the king and queen's chairs symbolize the power and authority they have in society. These chairs are not just places to sit, but also symbols of power that show that the king and queen are the highest leaders who are respected and have the authority to make decisions.

10



The carvings on wooden combs symbolize the importance of beauty and self-care in Nias culture. Ornately carved combs may have been used by family members of higher social status or by nobles, suggesting that personal equipment could also be a marker of status in society.

11



The king's crown is a symbol of power and authority in Nias society. The carvings on the wooden crown reflect the king's position as the highest leader who has great authority and responsibility in society. This crown signifies the social status and power held by the king.

12



The wooden statues carved and worshipped by the Nias people symbolize a deep connection with the spiritual world and belief in ancestors. These statues are considered to be the embodiment of ancestral spirits and they serve as a link between humans and the spiritual world. The presence of these statues in traditional houses signifies the belief that these ancestors provide protection and blessings for the family.

13



House lizard are often associated with protection and the ability to ward off evil spirits. In traditional Nias houses, house lizard carvings can function as symbols intended to protect the occupants of the house from bad influences or evil spirits, maintaining the security and well-being of the family.

14



Flowers often symbolize harmony and unity. In the context of the Nias traditional house, this flower carving may symbolize the importance of harmonious relationships among family members or the community. The circular shape of this carving may also suggest unity and the ever-changing cycle of life.

15



Hornbills are often associated with majesty and wisdom. In many cultures, including Nias, these birds are seen as noble creatures, symbolizing high status and profound wisdom. Carvings of hornbills in traditional Nias houses demonstrate respect for these values and a desire to instill wisdom in everyday life.

16



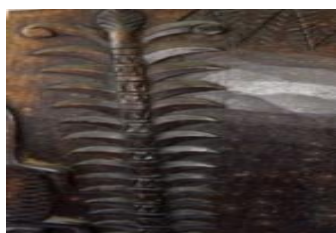
The pointed triangular shape resembling a spear is often associated with strength and protection. In Nias culture, the spear is a weapon used in warfare and hunting, symbolizing physical strength and the ability to protect oneself and one's community. This carving may have been intended to provide a symbol of protection for the occupants of the house, guarding them from danger or external threats.

17



Fish are often considered a symbol of life and fertility because of their association with water, which is the source of life. In the context of the Nias traditional house, fish-shaped carvings may symbolize the survival, fertility, and well-being of the family inhabiting the house. Fish, as an important food source, also reflect the hope for abundance and abundant sustenance.

18



Ferns are known for their ability to grow in a variety of environments and conditions, symbolizing fertility and the ability to survive and thrive. In traditional Nias houses, fern carvings can reflect hopes for fertility and continued growth.

19



The pillars of the Nias traditional house not only function as supports for the building structure, but also symbolize strength and resilience. The carvings on the pillars of the Nias traditional house serve as symbols of social status, traditional beliefs, and respect for tradition and ancestors who are believed to guard.

20



21



Gongs and bells often symbolize prosperity, social status, and spirituality. These objects are commonly used in traditional and religious ceremonies, where their sounds are believed to have magical powers to connect humans with the spiritual world or ancestors. Gongs can also symbolize a call to gather, celebration, or respect for ancestors.

The supports for the Nias traditional house are made so that one house is close to another and supports each other, this is a symbol where the community depends on each other and there is no division between one house and another and the community lives in peace.

Research Finding

Based on the analysis of signs, the semiotics found in Nias traditional houses contain 3 icons, 4 indices, and 20 symbols. can be classified in the following table.

Table 4. Table of Icons, Indexes and Symbols data names

icons	Data 1	Ancient people's money (<i>Kefe niha föna</i>)
	Data 2	Old photo (Foto niha föna)
	Data 3	Picture of a traditional Nias house (<i>omohada</i>)
	Data 4	Image of stone lamp (<i>hombo batu</i>)
	Data 5	Image of war soldier
Index	Data 1	Be careful when walking down stairs
	Data 2	Be careful of hitting your head
	Data 3	Be careful of tripping
	Data 4	No smoking
	Data 1	<i>Talina mbumbu</i>
Symbols	Data 2	<i>Bure</i>
	Data 3	<i>Omo nifolasara</i>
	Data 4	Wimba king accessories
	Data 5	Wimba accessories for the king's wife
	Data 6	Jaw pig (<i>simbi bawi</i>)
	Data 7	Wimba nobleman
	Data 8	Sailing boat (<i>köfa solaya-laya</i>)
	Data 9	The seat of the king and the king's wife (<i>kurusi rajo</i>)
	Data 10	Comb (<i>ni'osukhu</i>)
	Data 11	Crown King(<i>rai högö</i>)
	Data 12	<i>bewolawole</i>
	Data 13	House lizard(<i>cia-cia</i>)
	Data 14	Ni'oafi-afi
	Data 15	Wimba the hornbill (<i>gogowaya</i>)
	Data 16	<i>Ni'ohaluyo</i>
	Data 17	Ikan (<i>ni'o'i'a</i>)
	Data 18	Ni'ofalinga wali-wali
	Data 19	Poletarunahe

Data 20	Gong (<i>aramba</i>) dan bell
Data 21	Traditional house supports (<i>sikhöli nomo hada</i>)

Traditional houses on Nias Island, Indonesia, are rich in semiotic meanings that reflect the cultural, social, and spiritual values of the Nias people. The following are details of the research findings regarding the semiotics of traditional houses:

Architectural Elements and Their Semiotic Interpretation

The semiotic approach to Nias traditional houses involves three main aspects: icons, indices, and symbols. These three elements provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between form, function, and cultural meaning in the architecture of Nias' traditional houses. Here is the interpretation:

Icon

An icon is a sign that resembles the object or reality it represents, making its similarity immediately recognizable. The architectural form of a Nias traditional house, with its sharp curved roof, serves as an icon of adaptation to the earthquake-prone environment of Nias while also resembling a shield or protector, symbolizing security and safety. Similarly, the sturdy pillars supporting these stilt houses act as icons of stability and strength, with their tall, upright form resembling the human body standing firm, symbolizing resilience against external threats such as harsh weather and earthquakes.

Index

An index is a sign that has a direct relationship with the object or event it represents through a cause-and-effect relationship.

High Foundation: Nias traditional houses are generally built on high pillars. These pillars are an index of the surrounding environmental conditions that often experience floods and earthquakes. The height of this house shows a direct response to the geographical conditions of Nias which is in a disaster-prone area.

Symbols

A symbol is a sign that has a conventional or arbitrary relationship with its object, where the meaning of the symbol is determined by cultural or social agreements.

Decorative and Carving Motifs: Many Nias traditional houses are decorated with certain symbols such as mythical animals or geometric patterns that have spiritual or magical meanings. For example, the lizard motif on wood carvings can be a symbol of eternity and wisdom. Lizards in Nias culture are often associated with eternity because of their ability to cut off their old tails and have them grow back. So in conclusion, by utilizing a semiotic approach, Nias traditional houses can be understood more deeply than just their physical form. 'Icons' provide a direct picture of the relationship between form and function. 'Indexes' reveal the cause-and-effect relationship between architectural elements and environmental and social conditions. Meanwhile, the 'symbol' reflects the cultural and spiritual meanings agreed upon by the Nias people, which unite all aspects of their lives in the architecture of traditional houses. This interpretation emphasizes that the Nias traditional house is not just a building, but also a representation of the values, beliefs, and cultural identity of its people.

Cultural and Social Significance***Hierarchy and Social Status***

The size, complexity, and decoration of a house reflected the social status of its occupants. More elaborate and larger houses indicated higher social status and wealth, thus reinforcing the hierarchical structure in society.

Spiritual Beliefs

Nias traditional houses had a spiritual meaning. Rituals performed during construction and occupancy were intended to invoke ancestral spirits and ensure their protection and blessings. The house was seen as a living entity that maintained a connection between the physical and spiritual realms.

Community Identity and Cohesion

The distinctive architectural style of Nias houses was a cultural marker that differentiated the Nias people from other tribes in Indonesia. The communal aspect of construction and shared architectural heritage fostered a strong sense of identity and belonging among the people of Nias.

Symbolic Elements***Icon***

The boat-shaped roofs and houses are iconic symbols of maritime culture and the spiritual journey of the Nias people. They represent practical adaptations to environments and deep cultural narratives.

Index

The use of local materials such as wood and straw was an index of the island's natural resources. The stone foundations indicated a labor-intensive construction process, reflecting communal efforts and cooperation among village residents.

Symbols

Carvings and decorations on houses function as complex symbols that convey various social, spiritual, and cultural meanings. These symbols were often understood through the lens of Nias' mythology and cultural practices.

Modern Preservation and Adaptation***Cultural Heritage***

Preservation efforts were very important to maintain the cultural heritage of Nias' traditional houses. These efforts included documentation, restoration, and promotion of traditional building techniques.

Modern Influence

Although traditional designs were preserved, modern adaptations might include integrating contemporary materials and technologies to meet current needs while maintaining cultural identity. Now Nias traditional houses used zinc as a substitute for roofs made from plants.

Semiotic analysis of Nias traditional houses revealed a deep connection between architecture, culture and meaning. The house not only functioned as a place to live but also as a symbol of social status, spiritual beliefs and community identity. Through their unique architectural features and symbolic elements, traditional Nias houses encapsulated the rich cultural heritage of the Nias people, offering valuable insight into their way of life and worldview.

Discussion

In the previous chapter we discussed the semiotic analysis of Nias traditional houses. There were thirty images that the author analyzed. Each image had a different meaning, but there are also similarities in several images of Nias traditional houses.

In this research, the author found thirty images that have been analyzed of Nias traditional houses. Each image had differences in the image and meaning of the image, but there were slight similarities in some of the text in each image. The author analyzed the data using Pierce's theory. In this discussion the author used the definition of Pierce's triangle which contained icons, indices and symbols. This research data consisted of thirty images taken from the documentation.

The meaning of icons in images had an important role in conveying meaning and messages to society. The icons on Nias traditional houses could convey complex messages from images in a simple and easy to understand form. An icon is a sign that has similarities or similarity to the object it represents. Icons denote their objects through direct similarity. Next, the meaning of index that the author found in this research is that semiotic index in the context of Nias traditional houses refers to signs that have a direct relationship with the object based on proximity or cause-and-effect relationship. In semiotic analysis, especially from the perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce, indices are one of three types of signs, along with icons and symbols.

For Nias traditional houses, semiotic indices can be identified in various architectural and cultural elements, which have special meanings based on the local cultural and environmental context. The meaning of the symbols in Nias traditional houses reflects various aspects of Nias people's lives, including relationships with nature, spiritual beliefs, social structure, and adaptation to the environment. Every architectural and decorative element has a deep and rich meaning, depicting the identity and values of the Nias people. Semiotic analysis of Nias traditional houses helps us understand how these symbols work in creating and maintaining the culture and heritage of the Nias people.

The interpretation of Nias traditional houses in an iconic context involves understanding how the visual elements of the house directly reflect or resemble certain objects or concepts. Iconic interpretations of the elements of Nias traditional houses provide a deeper understanding of how the Nias people use visual elements to reflect their lives, beliefs and values. The shape of the roof, the wooden carvings, the structure of the house on stilts, the stone foundation, the layout of the chief's house, and the decorated doors and windows, all serve as icons that depict important aspects of the identity and culture of the Nias people. By understanding these icons, we can better appreciate Nias' rich cultural and architectural heritage.

The index's interpretation of the elements of Nias traditional houses involves analyzing how these elements have a direct or causal relationship with the environmental conditions, culture and daily life of the Nias people. The elements of Nias traditional houses, such as the stilt structure, supporting pillars, stone foundations, roof shape, wood carvings, and door and window designs, all function as indices that show a direct relationship to the environmental conditions, practical needs, and cultural beliefs of the Nias people. Through analysis of this index, we can see how Nias traditional houses are designed to meet the functional and cultural needs of their people, as well as how they adapt to their natural and social environment.

Symbolic interpretation of the elements of Nias traditional houses involves analyzing how these elements have socially and culturally determined meanings, reflecting the values, beliefs and identity of the Nias people. The symbols on the elements of Nias traditional houses

reflect various aspects of the culture, beliefs and values of the Nias people. The shape of the roof, the wooden carvings, the structure of the house on stilts, the stone foundation, the layout of the chief's house, and the decorated doors and windows, all have deep symbolic meaning, depicting the identity, spirituality and social structure of the Nias people. Through this symbolic analysis, we can better understand how the Nias people express and maintain their cultural heritage through the architecture and design of their traditional houses.

Discussions about Nias traditional houses in a semiotic context involve an in-depth analysis of how various architectural and decorative elements of Nias traditional houses function as signs that contain cultural, social and spiritual meanings. Using concepts from semiotics such as icons, indices, and symbols, we can understand the way the Nias people communicate their identity, values, and beliefs through the design of their traditional houses.

Icons in Nias traditional houses are elements that have a direct similarity to the object or concept they represent. The shape of the roof and house resembles a boat. The shape of this roof is visually similar to a boat, which is a symbol of the maritime life of the Nias people. The roofs of the boats show their attachment to the sea, which was important for transportation, trade and resources. This shape directly reminds us of a boat, which serves as a symbol of travel and adaptation to the marine environment.

Indexes in Nias traditional houses are elements that have a cause-and-effect relationship or direct connection with environmental conditions or practical needs of the Nias people. House Structure on Stilts. Houses on stilts are a response to an environment that often experiences floods and attacks by wild animals. Elevated homes protect their occupants from these threats. This structure shows the adaptation of the Nias people to challenging environmental conditions. This is direct evidence of architectural adaptation to local natural conditions.

Symbols in Nias traditional houses are elements whose meaning is based on social and cultural conventions or agreements. The carvings on Nias' traditional houses often depict animals, plants, and natural motifs that have spiritual and social meaning. For example, a carved bird may symbolize wisdom or protection. The meaning of these carvings is not always clear without understanding the cultural context of the Nias people. They reflect mutually agreed spiritual beliefs and values.

The Nias traditional house is a complex semiotic system in which icons, indices, and symbols work together to create rich and multi-layered meaning. Through a semiotic lens, we can see the Nias traditional house as a cultural text rich in signs and meanings. The icons, indices, and symbols in this traditional house design reflect the Nias people's adaptation to their environment, spiritual beliefs, and social and cultural values. By understanding these signs, we can better appreciate the complexity and richness of Nias culture, as well as how they express their identity and values through traditional architecture

CONCLUSIONS

Semiotic research on Nias traditional houses reveals that these structures serve not only functional purposes but also convey symbolic meanings tied to cultural identity, spirituality, social status, and harmony with nature. Through the signs embedded in their architecture, the Nias people visually and structurally express their core values and sustain their cultural and spiritual continuity. Semiotic analysis provides a deep understanding of how symbols and meanings within traditional houses communicate the cultural identity, traditional values, and social functions of the Nias community. By examining elements such as architectural design, decorative patterns, and materials, this analysis uncovers the historical, social, and religious dimensions of Nias culture, highlighting the depth and complexity of the values embodied in these traditional structures.

REFERENCES

- Bambang, M. (2013). Semiotics In Research Method of Communication. *Jurnal Penelitian Komunikasi, Informatika Dan Media Massa*, 16(1), 73–82. Retrieved from <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/222421-semiotics-in-research-method-of-communic.pdf>
- Erika Sinambela. (2015). The students' mastery in translating Indonesian idiomatic expression to English by using equivalence translation. *The Episteme Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 2(1), 3660–3672.
- Giawa, K., Tampubolon, S., & Sipayung, K. T. (2024). Grammatical and Mechanical Errors Analysis in Writing Recount Text. *Journal of Language Education (JoLE)*, 2(2), 232–241. <https://doi.org/10.69820/jole.v2i2.161>
- Haikal, R., & Syam, H. M. (2019). Makna Simbolik Arsitektur Rumoh Adat Aceh (Studi Pada Rumah Adat Aceh Di Pidie). *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa FISIP Unsyiah*, 4(4), 1–11. Retrieved from www.jim.unsyiah.ac.id/FISIP
- Herman, Silalahi, D. E., & Lumbanraja, S. (2022). Meaning of Symbols in Rumah Adat Bolon Batak Toba: a Semiotic Perspective. *Scientia*, 11(2), 273–282.
- Heryati, Faqih, M., & Rachmawati, M. (2017). Meaning Interpretation of Gorontalo Vernacular Architecture with Semiotic Method. *The International Journal of Engineering and Science*, 6(8), 39–51. <https://doi.org/10.9790/1813-0608013951>
- Hulu, M. T., Tuahman, K., & Pasaribu, A. N. (2024). The Implementation of High-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) With the Integration of Tiktok Application to Improve The Students' Speaking Skill. *Journal of Language Education (JoLE)*, 2(2), 262–269. <https://doi.org/10.69820/jole.v2i2.162>
- Ibrahim, F., & Ahmad, F. (2012). 11492268, 12(January).
- Jamil, R., & Faizah, H. (2023). Makna Bangunan Rumah Adat Lontiok Masyarakat Melayu Kuok : Kajian Semiotik, 05(02), 1994–2002.
- Manik, S., Tampubolon, S., & Padang, I. (2022). A Semiotic Pragmatic Analysis of Signs on Billboard Advertisement. *Jurnal Scientia*, 11(01), 367–368. <https://doi.org/10.58471/scientia.v11i01.521>
- Natalia Widya, Sitorus, C. Y., Simanjuntak, M., Sinaga, S. L., & Tarigan, P. (2021). an Analysis of Vocabulary Mastery of Eight Grades Students At Smp Amalyatul Huda Medan. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 4(1), 139. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v4i1.p139-147>
- Pratami, D. A. N. D., Santika, I. D. A. D. M., & Utami, N. M. V. (2022). A Semiotic Analysis in Downy Collection Advertisement. *Elysian Journal: English Literature, Linguistics and Translation Studies*, 2(2).
- Purba, F. W., Siregar, J., & Saragih, V. R. (2023). Analisis Semiotik Simbol Terhadap Bangunan Rumah Adat Suku Simalungun Kabupaten Simalungun. *Morfologi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra Dan Budaya*, 1(6), 91–103.
- Rakhmat, A. N. (2009). Simbolisasi Konflik Sosial Dalam Novel Hubbu karya Mashuri: Sebuah pendekatan Semiotik, 68.
- Siahaan, J., & Barus, A. (2022). Bolon House Pematang Purba Ornament: Semiotic Study, (Icnrsd 2018), 211–226. <https://doi.org/10.5220/0009900400002480>
- Sinambela, E., Sembiring, B. I., Manik, S., & Pangaribuan, D. (2024). Analysis of jokes technique in TikTok contents as English learning media. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 21(1), 559–570. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v21i1.63906>

- Sinambela, E., Siregar, R., & Pakpahan, C. (2023). Improving Students' Ability in Using English with A Simple Translation: A Case on Elementary School Level. *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(3), 3267–3278. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i3.4647>
- Wijaya, D. E. (2022). Analisis Semiotika Kecanduan Merokok di Film Dokumenter “Darurat! Sekolah Dikepung Iklan Rokok.” *Journal of Discourse and Media Research*, 1(1), 17.
- Yasin, A. (2011). a Semiotic Analysis on Education Advertisement on Campus Magazine.