

Cultural Approach to Batak Toba Folklore

Authors : Maritess A. Rulona

Abstract : Cultural appropriation on traditional symbols has been a worldwide problem. Indonesia's Batak Toba, an indigenous people group has experienced such appropriation. Batakese has rich cultural heritage and oral traditions. Their cultural symbols originated from their folklores namely myths, legends, and folktales. This research used both oral traditions and cultural symbols of Batak Toba for a comparative analysis of their ancient and modern practices. This is anchored on Franz Boas' Cultural Relativism in analyzing their five common cultural symbols. Further, it also utilized Stith Thompson's Motif-Index to determine the common motif evident in their ten folklores. Ten Batak Toba key respondents provided information in this study. Some informants were also featured in the 20-minute documentary of this study. Thus, the findings were: 1) Traditional customs such as weddings, burial, and reburial are still observed using their cultural symbols; 2) The five most common cultural symbols are Ulos Ragidup, Sigale Gale, Rumah Bolon, Lake Toba, and Gondang; and 3) Batak culture values animals such as buffalo, lizard, and goldfish since they have ancient beliefs of mythical creatures; In conclusion, this study proved that there is a clear connection between the tribe's oral traditions and cultural symbols. With these findings, this study recommends that elder Bataks teach younger Batak to be immersed in the cultural practices and to incorporate their traditional practices in their modern events.

Keywords : batak toba, cultural appropriation, motif-index, oral tradition, cultural emblems

Conference Title : ICLLL 2023 : International Conference on Languages, Literature and Linguistics

Conference Location : Osaka, Japan

Conference Dates : October 30-31, 2023