Reading meaning of architectural work in a living heritage

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Abstract. The purpose of this article is to examine analyzing procedures for reading the meaning of culture’s architectural work in a living heritage. Culture and architecture are inseparable parts. Architecture is composed of combination of signs ordered by certain codes that should be known and understood. Semiotic is a method that places architecture in a sign system, which follows to certain rules of the game. The predicate of an architectural work in the living heritage was more than just a monument, but it proceeds of living side by side with humans. The Semiotic procedure could be used to read its meaning by adding a stage of understanding. Using analytical-descriptive methods to investigate theoretical views, to explain semiotic analysis techniques, and to present of interview results, with the case of the Carahulu Komering house in Palembang South Sumatra. The views of semiotic architecture emphasize on the structure of signs, symbols and also gave attention to the process of meaning. However, in the case of investigation in a living heritage is needed placing signs and symbols as a human’s work should be understood, not merely as a fact which is seen as an object only. In this way a communication to the actors as subject was needed. The result shows this procedure could answer the culture’s architectural work meanings understood by its community as well as in general.

Keywords: Semiotic, Architecture, Meaning, Living Heritage.

1. Introduction
Architecture is part of human culture; life views, values, norms, rules of culture which are often expressed in signs and symbols. Rapoport explained that cultural background influences the shape and character of the built environment, making it distinctive and different from one to other places[1]. Architectural expressions contain of cultural thought messages, which often appears in the form of certain meaningful symbols to be understood by the community as well as in general [2,3]. As a culture product, the architecture reflects the state of society and the relationship between the state and the public [4].

Modern city ideology is motivated by the advancement of knowledge & technology, in the architectural science has created an ease in building and developing built environment unhamperedly in the terms of materials and sizes. On the other hand, modernity which promotes effectivity and efficiency life styles has simplified and reduced many thoughts about the concept an ideology rooted in idealistic societies. Modernity leads to the development of individuality, causes the loss of architectural harmonization to the surrounding environment, and also the loss of the contextual one other. Distorted modernity by capitalism poses a threat to social disintegration. According to Habermas quoted by Hardiman, the important thing is to restore the normative content of modernity,
which is rationalization, culture, society, and personality with communicative ratios [5]. He views post-modern as a crisis symptom in a 'subject-centered ratio paradigm'. Subjective values are important in the post-modern’s idea replacing absolute views in previous modernization. View of post-modern put architecture in subjects position which needed to get respect by understanding meaning not reducing it. A space change to be a place after the process of synthesizing with human culture. Thus human-culture make space a distinctive in its character [6–10]. Architecture is the fabric of signs governed of codes agreed upon by the community [11,12].

Exploration of archipelago architecture shows that the works were constructed based on of spiritual thought to get balancing in life between humans and nature, and harmonizing between macro and micro cosmos which must be maintained time by time. Axis orientation and form lead to profane-sacred interpretation, which refers to the existence of translation.

According to Poulios the concept of living heritage employed in this World Heritage context was different from that of intangible heritage, which focus primarily on intangible cultural practices and performances [13]. Instead it embraces both tangible and intangible heritage and deal with heritage components that exist in a living environment [14]. The predicate of architecture in living heritage is to facilitate human activities that live in it, in order to play as central or subject. It was important to understand the meanings from their architectural expression, so in this way semiotics was a tool to read its architectural works. In the case of architectural heritage works that developed dynamically due to changes by time and events, semiotics also has its flexibility to be able to read them out [15].

The knowledge of reading signs known as semiotics which comes from linguistics. Saussure said that all symptoms in culture are 'signs' consist of (1) signifier (marker), which is a phenomenon that is mentally absorbed by humans as 'acoustic image,' and (2) signified means or concepts which are understood by the signifier [16]. Roland Barthes developed the Saussure view by focusing on the method of producing signs, the signifier is also called Expression (E) (expression, disclosure), and signified as content (C) (content, concept) [17]. According to Hoed in Christomy the relationship or relation (R) between E and C in humans occurs more than one stage [18]. The initial stage is the primary one that occurs when the sign is perceived for the first time, namely the existence of R1 between E1 and C1. But the meaning of the sign never occurs only at the primary stage. This process will continue to the development of secondary systems (R2, E2, and C2). The primary system development process was grouped in two streams. First is the development of E, producing a sign has more than one E for the same C, this process is known as ‘meta language’. The second stream is the development of aspects 'C'. produce a sign has more than one C for the same E. The development of the meaning (C) by Barthes is called connotation [17].

Furthermore, Pierce described the following signs: “... something which stands for something in some respect or capacity”. Pierce presented a triadic model which contained three main components: (1) Representmanent was an element of reality outside of an individual that 'represents' one other element of intended reality called an object, in other words Representments functions as a signifier, and (2) objects function as signified (Referant), (3) as well as references that were outside of humans called Interpretants [18]. New functional relationships occurs when interrelated by interpretants.

Hoed highlighted the Peirce triadic model emphasized to the process of meaning which consisted of three stages: 1. Absorption of Representamen (R), which was the 'face outside' sign that was directly related to humans (often equated with 'sign'). 2. Reference to Object (O), which was known as the concept by the sign users related to the representamen. 3. Further interpretation by the users of the sign or interpretant (I) after the representamen was associated with the object [19].

The purpose of this article’s writing is to examine an understanding of signs and symbols of architectural work in a living heritage through methods of semiotic, both theoretical and methodological, by placing architectural elements of structure, function, space arrangements and aesthetics, also adding a subjective meaning from the community in the process of meaning.
It is often found that an architectural work is not designed to be able to communicate, especially in architecture that awakens spontaneously or grows by time.

The architectural sign model is given by Jenkcs who referred to the views of Odgen-Richards, and Hjelmselfv; these figures are followers of Saussure and Barthes [11]. Odgen-Richard putted forward the view of architectural signs in the Semiotic Triangle as follows [11]:

In this Odgen-Richards scheme, the mind is the mediation between symbols and references, and from that thought a reference is also made, which relates to the result of symbolic reference conceptualization. Thus, reference is a description of the relationship between reference signs that produce certain units of understanding [20]. Jenks, et al described the Odgen-Richards triangle from the side of architectural symbols [11]. According to him the symbol was what appears to be captured by the senses, which explained something, and there was an element of agreement in it. Symbols refers to references (cognitive), and then are defined in physical reality of referents. Furthermore, Jenks et all said that the fulfillment of the function would be a reference, then it was required to bring it in the characterization of architectural objects as a sign [11]. According to Jenkcs et all signifier (forms of architecture) provided connotations of a signified (concept, thought, content), and possible to show an object (referent, object, or actual function in architecture) [11].The relationships of these three aspects are very important to determine the types of architectural signs (indexical, iconic or symbolic). They said, compared to linguistic architectural language was more motivating and a little 'arbitrary' (random) to express something, and consequently it was closer to an independent sign or an iconic sign, and also architectural signs stand close to basic functions (technical language) rather than linguistic.

Eco has introduced an extra semiotic element (object or actual function) and he did not see the difference between the signifier and the object [21]. For him an architecture connotated a work result and explains a work itself. Eco also combined extra semiotic elements into universal architectural meanings. While some of semioticians did not include this element and consider it irrelevant or avoided the 'actual function' reality, it showed the fact that code restrictions or pure semiotic elements, and if the model was not combined in this level, would result in the denial of natural idealism.

Then Jenkcs, et all concluded about two principles [11]:

- The difference between connotations and denotations lied in a coding (the rules of the game) or was related to the meaning learned.
- The terms denotation closed to the meaning of 'form follow function'. Functions were social rules, pointing to the signifier (E) and signified (C) related to the reflex action. Functionalism, or functional object around it, then depend on how a code / game rule was known and not in the form of the object or its own technical quality

According to Dharma semiotic architecture could be perceived as a text constructed in the language grammatically [2], that were described just like below:

- Syntactic; could be seen as a spatial signs and cooperation among them.
- Semantic; could be seen as a relation between sign and its denotatum or associate to the meaning of architectural signs.
- Pragmatic; could be seen as an architectural texts effect to building users
1.1. Subjective meaning in a living heritage

Two approaches of semantic-architecture were described by Taurens in Ramzy [22,23]. The first was placing the principal architectural expression to be the main consideration, for this case, part by part of building can be explored to get each meaning. In this approach, although the elements of buildings were “incomplete expressions” but can be considered only from the building point of view as a complete one. Second, the meaning was a result from context-dependent. It could be associated as a spatial context of a greater architectural expression, and also as a wider context. The describes procedure above regarding the meaning of symbols and signs considered to the process compared between sign and references outside them, also the meaning among a part of signs in the context-dependent.

The consideration of perceiving what and how the building owner’s opinion according to their subjective meaning is needed. Particularly to investigate the building which is living together with man socio-cultural implemented in the daily activities. In this way, the living meaning would be found. Chow, Inn, and Szalay indicates about subjective culture as the way of perceiving its social environment by a group of characterized community [24]. In this case the subjective meaning is a result from what community perceived about signs and symbols in their built environments.

1.2. Concept of living heritage as a phenomenon to be understood

The concept of living heritage is inextricably linked to the concept of continuity and primarily the heritage’s original function. The purpose is for heritage originally intended; the continuity of community’s connection with heritage; the continuity of the heritage’s care by the community as expressed through knowledge, systems of management, and practices of maintenance; and the continuous process of evolving tangible and intangible heritage expressions in response to changing circumstances [13]. He stated the community group have created a living heritage and survives the heritage of original functions of heritage; retaining its original connection with time by time; considering heritage an integral part of its contemporary life in terms of its identity, pride, self-esteem, structure, and well-being; Also it had a strong sense of ownership/custodianship for heritage and sees the caring for heritage as its own inherent obligation. Thus, living heritage intended is a build environment together with the community that has a central role to the sustainability of the heritage; It encompasses the combination of tangible and intangible culture that continues to withstand sustained over time, response the changing circumstances.

1.3. Living heritage and subjective meaning.

The Living Heritage community has great roles and responsibilities, in heritage sustainability. The community is the main actor or subject of heritage, attention and concern for the heritage, making them know and understand about the heritage. This community is a source of data which is not less important than the monument (signs and symbols). To explore data and information from them related to heritage is very important. It can be done with an in-depth interview. In this way, the understanding of knowledge can be obtained. Subjective use is necessary because basically human is the perpetrator/subject of culture itself, thus it is necessary to use from the side of the perpetrator's perspective on his environment [1,25].

2. Methods

Reference search is carried out in the semiotic domain of linguistics and architecture, so that the procedure for reading symbols architecture is obtained. The process starts from placing objects as signifier’(E), for this purpose it is necessary to describe the identity of the object associated with the owner's data and background, age of the building, authenticity of the building, type of building, structure and ornaments.

For meaning analysis uses Jenk’s formulation, where the meaning never occurs in one stage [11], but the initial stage meaning is when the sign is absorbed by human cognition. The following is a diagram of schematic level used in this semiotic analysis.
Figure 2. Two levels of meaning in the semiotic system: denotation – connotation. The meaning of denotation level can be a new expression in the level of connotation.

The sign of ‘Street’, has 'E' as a linear open space, contains 'C' means of connecting movement between parts of the city. At the second level, 'E' are boulevard, corridor, and alley that has the concept of ‘C’, which is a means of connecting movement between parts of the city (see Figure 2 (a)). At the sign of a winding narrow alley, on the first level refers to a linear open space means of movement in the village. Furthermore, at the second level it becomes E2 and connotes the means of movement which indicated limited access. Then it became E3 which connotes the means of moving the symbol of a controlled access based on tight social cohesion (see Figure 2 (b)).

Thus, it can be concluded, the structure of symbols in urban spaces referring to the Jenkc’s model are: (1) Signifier / expression (E) which means expression or what articulated by culture and can be absorbed by human cognition. Expressions can take the form of spatial patterns (composed of building blocks and open spaces), linking patterns (road networks, movement patterns, relationship patterns between buildings), value of a place (districts, appearance of buildings, historic buildings, green systems, enclosure, etc.). At the next level the expression is often in the form of important experiences that have been felt by someone in an urban space such as economic / socio-cultural / spiritual conditions, intensity of space use, comfort / inconvenience, etc.

The subjective meaning stage is carried out, after the semiotic procedure finished. This was done by specifying several informants from among the core community. The informant should have a sufficient knowledge background of living heritage and as the perpetrators who had been living in it overtime and have a concern on living heritage. With in-depth interviews with community leaders will be acquired cultural significance until the transcendental meaning of the signs and symbols. It is called as subjective meaning, complements the objective meaning of denotative meaning and meaning connotative.
3. Discussion

3.1. Semiotic on Carahulu Komering traditional house

The Komering people reside in South Sumatra Province Indonesia, the origins were from the same family to the Batak and Igorot tribes, which were Proto Melayan came from the Burmese and Siamese Mountains [26]. The residence of the Komering Tribe is known as the Carahulu Komering House or Lombahan Yuha which means an old house [27,28]. In his master's thesis Iskandar said that the uniqueness of the Carahulu Komering house which was hundreds of years old, appears from the high roof shape, symmetrical floor plan, main doors and windows have crowns and stacks, also had a unique decorative flower motif, fruit and leaves (see Figure 3) [28]. The unique shape of the house of Carahulu Komering is an expression of an architectural symbol that is full of meaning. This cultural wealth is a potential for local identity which express the meaning of the architectural symbol of the Carahulu Komering House.

\[\text{Figure 3. Carahulu Komering House (Source: Iskandar 2016).}\]

Table 1. The meaning of denotative, connotative, and subjective.

| Object | Meaning |
|--------|---------|
|        | Denotation | Connotation |
|        | 1st level | 2nd level | 3rd level | 4th level |
| A. EXTERIOR |         |           |           |           |
| ROOF (Iconic, Indexical, Symbol) | - Triangular shaped roof is a simple technology but powerful. Material leaf of Kajang used to cover gable wood construction, which taken from the surrounding environment | - The main roof function is to cover spaces in the house from natural conditions, both weather and wild animal attacks, and also human enemies. | - It was a cultural message which was conveyed continuously from generation to next generation, related to the seriousness of the Komering tribe which originally was 'mountain people' moved to the lowlands, and hopes for new hope for stability of living environment in new land. | - Transcendentally, the shape is metamorphosis of 'mount', which is associated to cosmology, it means the holy peak which connects the macro cosmos & the microcosm. |
|         | - The top form the roof, is a response to tropical climate, allowing rain water to be immediately flowed to the ground, and the sun's heat during the day can be | - The roof is the peak / climax of a house building (the roof is the highest hierarchy of houses that are grouped of the bottom (under, floor), middle (walls & spaces for activities), and above (roof). | - It meant a cultural message which was conveyed continuously from generation to next generation, related to the seriousness of the Komering tribe which originally was 'mountain people' moved to the lowlands, and hopes for new hope for stability of living environment in new land. | - Transcendentally, the shape is metamorphosis of 'mount', which is associated to cosmology, it means the holy peak which connects the macro cosmos & the microcosm. |
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isolated in the roof space.

**CUCUK LANGIK ORNAMENT** (Iconic)

- The shape of roof decoration is made from transverse wooden boards crossing.
- The shape can withstand strong wind exposure, so that the roof wasn't lifted up. The strength in formed from the union between ceiling boards and roof cuttings.
- The function as a crown ornament element of the roof top of the building, as well as a reinforcing element of the roof’s structure (see figure 4)
- The shape is adopted from the deer horn, if one day it will break, it will grow back again, this has a meaning a respect to nature.
- The meaning was, the cultural message of motivation which traditionally inherited to generation to the next generation to always maintain community sustainability.
- The facing up shape to the sky, means always hoping for Blessings from Allah Almighty.

**RAWANG BALAQ/ main door** (Indexical)

- The door leaves technology system utilizes hinge pegs, if the door leaf was moved it will result a certain sound that was sufficient due to the friction of the door with beam of door step. Beam of door step are made for door safeness.
- The function as a connecting between outdoor and indoor, which were as a filter tool of physical conditions, as well as for social conditions between outdoor and indoor.
- The functions were for people movement, for flowing of light and air
- The main door shape of the house has a resemblance to the shape of the mihrab of the Nabawi Mosque, and the 3 old mosques in city of Palembang, also the 2 mosques in Komering which had a crown above the door, craved poles on the left & right, then the shape of the doorway. So, could be concluded that the meaning of the door was as connecting facility of profane space with a sacred space inside the house. (see figure 5)
- A respect and glorifying to guests who pass through the door, thus also meant glorifying their existences. The main door (Rawang Balaq) meant of welcoming guests who visiting the holy house.

**TUTUP RAWANG BALAQ/ main door leaves** (Iconic, Indexical, Symbol)

- Materials were from the best teak panel which traditionally carved to avoid splits out.
- The ornamental element serves to provide a barrier to the house with the surrounding environment.
- Provide an aesthetic element to beautify the appearance of the door.
- Showing the social status of the owner.
- The nail leaf motif carves meant the nature of the Komering tribe who like wandering, then arrived in a new land of hope. Sunflower motif (Mataharani) which was placed in the middle of the door symbolizes the energy source of life (See figure 6). The Arabic form of calligraphy symbolizes the owners have a faith religion of Islam.
- The expression of the door leaves and its ornaments meant the hospitality of the residents in welcoming guests, while at the same time expressing their identity as Komering people who
- The meaning of the door is a barrier from the hustle and bustle of worldly life. Entering someone's house must abandon all worldly attributes, to focus on household activities in the house.
are ready to adapt to the dynamic situation, be enthusiastic, and their Moslem identity.

| SOPIK HURANG RAWANG BALAQ | Main door foot step (Iconic) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - Teak carved material as main door step, with wood construction as far as using the connection with the pegs. |
| - The function as a foot step from the outer space into the house or vice versa. From the profane space to the sacred space. |
| - The plant’s decoration of wood carved; clove flower & pineapple symbolizes of surplus agricultural product of the community (see figure 6) |
| - The symbol of pineapple with prickly skin and buds as a crown of fruit has a philosophy of prudence in living life and the continuation of generations |
| - The symbol of clove flower has a meaning even though it is small but many benefits & high economic value commodities. |
| - The symbol of the doorway means that the Komering people welcome guests to enter a sacred house with joy and express prosperity, prudence, and maintain the sustainability of regeneration. |

| PALANG RAWANG BALAQ | main door lock (Iconic, Indexical) |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - The door lock in the form of a doorstop, made of wood, the shape is a silhouette of badik (weapon), a weapon that is simple and easy to make. |
| - The function is to protect their selves from threat of nature and humans’ enemies. |
| - Physically as a doorstop beam could be used as a weapon if needed to protect themselves. |
| - The form of weapons (badik) symbolizes strength & self-protection. |
| - The doorstop beam is a symbol of expresses the vigilance of Komering tribe based on Islamic philosophy |
| - The meaning is an implementation of Islamic teachings that coach people to protect their selves and their family from sins and mistakes. So that they can get salvation with happiness in the world and in the hereafter. |

| JUNTAIALAN BALANDAR HATOK | console (Indexical) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| - Material from the best quality of wood, for passing on the loads from roof-to-column. |
| - The function is to resist overtake the cantilever roof. |
| - An aesthetic element. |
| - The Shape of the arrow silhouette is ready to be shot, means the philosophy of the Komering people who are careful and focused in carrying out life. |
| - The console symbol has the meaning of a Komering person who is focused and careful and alert in carrying out life to get God's pleasure. |
| - The Meaning as a message to focus on carrying out the purpose of life based on religious teachings, because if it misses, they will not be safe in the world or in the hereafter. |

**B. INTERIOR**

| SPATIAL LAYOUT IN THE HOUSE | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - The shape of the box with a simple and interlocking structure presents intact |
| - The shape of a simple square box with slender pillars, so it has Metamorphosis of the cube shape from the effective Ka'bah indoor space has meaning that |
| - The meaning of a home is a sacred space for worshipping activities to Allah, so |
### 3.2. Denotation & Connotation Meaning

Architectural works perceived as a sign have a primer denotatum meaning which is known denotation and secondary denotation which is connotation [2]. Based on the above description, all of the signs at a Komering Carahulu’s house have meaning of denotative and connotative. Denotative actually is functional meaning [21], also literal meaning or obvious meaning [23,29]. All of part of house building have meanings as a responsive building structure to climate condition as well as external environment-ecology by using natural material dominated with wood of forest product around the area. Reading the meaning of the architectural symbols of Carahulu Komering houses provides knowledge about traditional houses that have a combined in the first order is physical structure meaning, the second order is functional meaning, the third order as cultural meaning. And the fourth order provides a subjective meaning which should be communicated to the community. Physical structure accommodating the environment such as the climate and the situation of the surrounding natural environment [11,21]. Functional meaning relates to its roles as a space to accommodate human activities. Cultural meaning means expression which respect their culture and identity. As connotative meaning, a house is a sacred space where worship is carried out in their daily lives which is based on a philosophy of alertness, meticulousness, focus in action, adaptability, economic capacity, and sustainability to live by passing down good values to future generations. A house is a medium to connect the real world (microcosmos) to the after world (macrocosms), owner should gain meaningful activities according to their beliefs inside house, by that thing they will get rewards and bless from Allah, also they will get a place of heaven in after world.

In the denotative meaning Carahulu Komering is a place to conduct daily activities as individual beings and socially guided by socio-cultural norms. In the Connotative it means that a house is designed as a building on stilts using a traditional technology of wood material with meaningful wood carving ornaments, it is intended to protect from climate conditions, nature / animals, from human enemies. Functionally houses to provide facilities for domestic activities at home, receive guests, and worship activities to Allah.

### 3.3. Organizing the Meanings

The next step was constructing meaning which arose from building elements into a series of meanings which were an overall expression. In linguistics analogous to words, or phrases that construct a sentence. Relation to the organizing meanings researchers have used the coding of paradigm and syntagma. Paradigm is a set of units that contains of categories determine where are the required unit was selected. Meanwhile a syntagma is a series where the units were connected to each other to make it possible to have a meaning overall [23]. In this case phoneme is a paradigm constructed in the word syntagma, furthermore it constructed to be other syntagma which is phrase or sentences [23,29].

Using Paradigm procedure, the meanings of Carahulu Komering’s house exterior were covering:

- **Roof**: is a symbol of sacred Mountain Mahameru from Hindu's culture, which is a place of Gods. This spatial concept adapted to the filler elements in Islamic civilization. The shape of the roof decoration adopted from a deer horn that rises into the sky (*Cucuk Langik*) is an

| Place for running the family daily activity (Iconic, Indexical) | stiffness, has formed the plane of space. The stiffness of the space field is maintained even if the pole in troubled | effectiveness in accommodating the activities of residents. - Effectively adapt to the earthquake shocks. | space in the house is used to carry out activities for worship to get the pleasure of Allah. - The space arrangement inside the house shows a present appreciation for gender. - The symbol of the existence of the owner when receiving guests that they can get a place in heaven. Thus, the home as a medium between real space in the world and imaginary space in the afterlife. (See figure 7) |
expression of praising the Glory of God the Creator. (see Figure 4). The Roof is a part of most sacred of a house, symbol of connection between the world and after world (microcosmos and macrocosms).

![Figure 4](image4.png)

**Figure 4.** Decoration of roof (*Cucuk Langik*) is adopted from a deer horn (Iconic). Source: Iskandar 2016)

- A pair of door leaves with ornament means personal and community hospitality. The spirit of living a sustainable life of its community, especially to face the challenges of life based on the Madina’s society and Palembang’s society. It is seen on the door’s form which is oriented to the Nabawi Holy Mosque of Prophet Madina, and the Great Mosque in Palembang in disseminating religious values of Islam. The meaning of the door is a barrier from the hustle and bustle of worldly life. Entering someone's house must abandon all worldly attributes, to focus on household activities in the house

![Figure 5](image5.png)

**Figure 5.** The main door of *Rawang Balaq*.

- The pattern-form of ornament on wood carving means the abundance of agricultural produce, gardens and forests that depict prosperity, excitement, awareness to keep the sustainability of its environment for the future generations.
The house means the sacred building to worship, entering the house preferably done with good manners and ethics, and the friendliness of the host in accepting and entertaining his guests. It means the implementation of Islamic teachings to do charity goodness with Human (Habluminannas) and Charity for God (Habluminallah), thus the community will get the blessing of living in the world, and someday will Get Happiness in Heaven.

Reading a meaning of signs, a Carahulu Komering house by syntagma methods completed the subjective approach shows that a house actually is not a sacred building to facilitate a worship to Allah. House also a facilitate to create harmonization between macro cosmos and micro cosmos. With that way, somebody in their community could get a better quality of life in the world and will get a good place in Heaven.
4. Conclusion

Semiotic methods are an attractive alternative to reading the meaning of architecture and urban space, because the nature of architectural artefacts themselves are expressions of cultural values manifested in tangible forms of the built environment. However, to read the architectural work in the living heritage besides using certain coding, also needs one more step to understand the community’s meaning. The system of meaning in semiotics is tiered. A meta semiotic architecture consider to the sign will be a form of semiotic expression to the next level, it continues as it is. In the first level the meaning relates to the its physical structure, the second level the meaning relates to the function, the third level relates to the cultural message, and the fourth level relates to the transcendental meaning. In the level of third and four, researcher should make communication of the meanings to the community who lives in that place over time, to gain the subjective meanings. Subjective meanings in the living heritage is very important to be understood and to be appreciated for its sustainability in the present and the future.

A house of Carahulu Komering is not only a physical form to protect residents inside from its environmental condition. A house is a building of socio-cultural facility, spiritual/religious to establish relations to its community and neighbouring relationships; the house is expressed their culture through the way they built a house, the shape & size, material, structure, layout, shapes and sizes of doors and windows. A House also complete with ornaments of symbols like flowers, leaves, local agricultural products which express their home talk philosophy, attitude of life & life view of its inhabitants. As a living heritage, a house is a sacred space between the real medium in the real world while the life in the hereafter is the end of this whole life.

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