

Open
AccessCheck for
updates

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section(s): *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Thematic and linguistic representations of cultural identity in Batak Toba songs (1980–2025)**

Arsen Nahum Pasaribu & Sondang Manik

Department of English, Faculty of Language and Arts, University of HKBP Nommensen, Indonesia

Correspondence: arsen.pasaribu@uhn.ac.id**ABSTRACT**

Although songs of Batak Toba are crucial for the survival of language, transmission of values, and ethnic pride, up to now most of the previous research has only been analyzed from a certain point of view such as the role of gender, speech patterns, or semiotics. This prohibits thematic, cross-time studies from being conducted. To address this void, the current study took a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the lyrics of 100 Batak Toba songs composed between 1980 and 2025. The lyrics were coded, clustered, and interpreted according to Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to identify the major cultural themes. The analysis revealed five motifs: love and romance, family and kinship, spirituality and faith, cultural identity and homeland, and counsel, morality, and life's challenges. Love and romance was the most frequent theme, including happiness, loyalty, tension, and sorrow. Family and kinship featured parental sacrifice, respect and intergenerational relationships. Spirituality and faith were expressed through Christian belief and Batak values, and cultural identity and homeland invoked pride and nostalgia as well as an emotional tie to the land of ancestors even as the people migrates. Counsel and morality redressed determination, good attitude, and intergenerational wisdom. These themes are closely connected to Batak Toba philosophy in general and more specifically to the *Dalihan Na Tolu* (batak "three-legged furnace") philosophy in terms of (respect, love, harmony), as well as the ideals of *Hasangapon* (honor), *Hagabeon* (future generation), and *Hamoraon* (wealth). This study reveals Batak Toba songs as living cultural archives where private feelings and collective identity are entwined; Thus, this research signifies Batak Toba songs as a cultural archive. It also suggests a closer interdisciplinary examination of ethnomusicology and cultural studies on the way indigenous philosophies inform creative output.

KEYWORDS: Batak Toba Songs, Cultural Identity, Ethnic Identity Literary Discourse, Thematic Analysis

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 7, Issue 1, 2026

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 26 October 2025

Accepted: 13 December 2025

Online First: 16 December 2025

Published: 1 January 2026

HOW TO CITE

Pasaribu, A. N., & Manik, S. (2026). Thematic and linguistic representations of cultural identity in Batak Toba songs (1980–2025). *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 7(1). <https://royalliteglobal.com/advanced-humanities/article/view/2328>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Introduction

Music and song lyrics are not simply artifice or oral literature, but are also cultural texts through which an 'us' is constructed, values are shared, ethnicity is performed and broader social relations are reflected (Mpinami & Sipeyiye, 2025; Jama & Menggo, 2024; Niinre, 2023; Lidskog, 2016). Traditionally, songs have served as a repository of culture, transmitting traditions, world views and emotional experiences from one generation to another among all peoples (Liu et al., 2024; Elmer, 2021; Jama & Menggo, 2024). For the Batak Toba, music is significant as it is connected with rituals, used in daily life, and commits the language to memory through songs. Batak Toba songs can, according to scholars, often be characterized as revolving around kinship, spirituality, homesickness, and love for the homeland, and these are or have been integral themes in Batak Toba identity (Tinambunan, 2022). Yet this acknowledgement rests alongside a somewhat piecemeal analysis of Batak Toba song, in which meaning is too often confined to isolated dimensions of signification, such as associative connotations or semiotic readings (Snoddon, 2024). Although such lines of questioning have been immensely fruitful, they have missed an ensemble way of thinking about themes and their play across different historical and social sites.

The existing literature offers a variety of approaches ranging from gendered representations, cultural identity, and linguistic analysis. For instance, Girsang, Nasution, and Surbakti analysed women portrayal in a number of Batak Toba songs and demonstrated how the lyrics simultaneously depict women's fulfillment of domestic and public duties and negotiate with their status in the society (Girsang et al., 2014). In a comparable manner, Sihombing et al., (2017) explored representations of women by analyzing the lyrics using Halliday's systemic functional grammar and concluded that mental processes were the most dominant in the lyrics while women are predominantly conceptualized as emotional and relational beings rather than as actors. These researches highlight how the gendered view is crucial to understanding the cultural meanings behind Batak Toba music.

Other scholars have highlighted cultural identity, ideology, and preservation of heritage represented in song lyrics. An article which applied an analysis of "O Tano Batak" from systemic functional linguistics appeared in *Telangkai Bahasa dan Sastra* (Pasaribu, 2020), demonstrating how transitivity and thematic structures the Batak people were ideologically instilled to keep ties with the land through such utterances. Similarly, (Simanungkalit et al., 2025) in his analysis of the folklore Tombak Sulu Sulu, through Barthes semiotic method briefed on how denotations, connotations, and myths contain cultural values, social norms, and spiritual beliefs. Both pieces of research underline that song and folklore become poetic signs of Batak personas and ideologies.

Yet another discussion on linguistics and semiotics related to the songs of Batak Toba has also received an attention. Pasaribu, (2020) reviewed the lyrics of Nahum Situmorang through transitivity analysis and concluded that material and mental processes were overwhelmingly dominant that reflected both actions as well as feelings based on social experience. Munthe et al., (2022) were interested in contemporary Batak songs composed by Putri Silitonga and found out that mood related situation was the highest represented, indicating the emotional element of contemporary music. Meanwhile, Saragih (2021) examined metaphors used in Batak Toba songs with the nature of motherly love as the topic and found out that ontological metaphors reached the highest frequency, which could imply using concrete objects as media to express profound emotional feeling. In sum, these research articulate how the Batak Toba songs generate meaning through language, metaphor and context.

Though these rendered much-needed contributions, the present research still suffers from limited scope. Research is sometimes conducted with few songs or with only one dimension of meaning in mind, or through one concept of theory, in which case further thematic patterns may be uncovered in future studies. For instance, Manalu (2019) highlighted associative meaning while other studies such as Munthe et al., (2022), Saragih (2021), Pasaribu (2014), and Sihombing et al., (2017) delved into on contextual meaning, metaphors and linguistic structures and Girsang et al. (2014) and Simanungkalit et al. (2025) studied gender roles and cultural identity. While these studies are interesting and informative, their attention was not directed towards the multifaceted thematic dimensions of Batak Toba song culture through the ages.

What particularly remains lacking is the systematic investigation of themes across the decades (Parada-Cabaleiro et al., 2024). The Batak Toba songs created and sung in the past fourty years have not yet been studied in reference to thematic continuities, changes or innovations in cultural articulation. This void is meaningful given that Batak Toba music, in its traditional or contemporary form, is a mutable archive of cultural values,

identities, and affective territories. In the absence of a thorough thematic mapping, the academic study of these songs is disjointed and unable to do justice to their cultural richness.

This study is an attempt to fill this gap, as it conducts thematic analysis of Batak Toba songs from four decades, based on a large corpus of lyrics. By analyzing a larger sample of material, by contrast, the argument is that it will be possible to identify a core of recurring themes, a cultural continuity, and changing thematic patterns. To this end, it seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of Batak Toba songs, both as a musical genre and as a medium to convey lived experiences, culture and changing societal conditions.

Literature Review

This study is built upon an interdisciplinary theoretical foundation that links linguistic, cultural, and semiotic perspectives. It particularly draws on three complementary frameworks. First, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Halliday (Halliday, 2004; Eggins, 2004) formalin-fixed and paraffin embedded or frozen tissue sections: a is used to explore how language operates as a resource for meaning-making within song lyrics. Second, Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis (TA) (Lochmiller, 2021; Byrne, 2022) serves as a qualitative tool for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurring cultural themes. Third, the study incorporates the philosophical and cultural values of Batak Toba society, especially *Dalihan Na Tolu* and the triadic life principles of *Hasangapon*, *Hagabeon*, and *Hamoraon*. These frameworks together create a unified perspective for examining Batak Toba songs as both linguistic texts and cultural narratives that express the people's collective identity.

By integrating these approaches, this research connects the micro-level of linguistic expression with the macro-level of cultural meaning. Through SFL, language is viewed as a semiotic system through which social meanings are constructed and conveyed (Babel, 2025; Van, 2021). Thematic Analysis provides systematic procedures for identifying patterns that reflect these meanings (Lochmiller, 2021), while Batak Toba cultural philosophy offers the moral and social grounding necessary to interpret them within local wisdom and communal values (Sitorus et al., 2024; Sibarani et al., 2018). In combination, these frameworks allow a holistic understanding of Batak Toba songs as artistic expressions and cultural archives that capture shifts in worldview, values, and identity over time.

Within this theoretical orientation, Batak Toba songs are treated as semiotic performances (Silalahi, 2023), spaces where linguistic form, cultural beliefs, and emotional expression intersect to portray what it means to be Batak in an ever-changing world. Therefore, the theoretical framework not only guides the analytical process but also reinforces the main argument of this study: that Batak Toba songs serve as dynamic representations of cultural identity, rooted in traditional philosophy yet continuously adapting to social and historical transformations.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): Language as a Social Semiotic

Halliday's SFL Theory Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) views language as a social semiotic system and meaning is shaped functioning of language through social context rather than a semantic product of language (Halliday, 2004; Eggins, 2004) formalin-fixed and paraffin embedded or frozen tissue sections: a. From this perspective, writers and speakers select linguistic features from sets of options (a system) in order to achieve particular communicative goals and intentions. As a result it is functional; it is used to express specific meanings related to subjective experience, social relationships and discourse coherence. Instead of seeing grammar as a static collection of rules, SFL views it as an evolving system that is influenced and influences the cultural and situational context of communication.

Within this perspective Halliday distinguishes three simultaneously operating metafunctions of language in every clause: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The ideational metafunction is concerned with the representation of experience – how language represents the external and internal world in terms of activities, entities, states, and possessions). The interpersonal metafunction includes “the ways in which speakers conduct social relations and express their attitudes and evaluations, through choices in mood, modality and appraisal. In addition, the textual metafunction, textualizing ideas is the fact that the textual metafunction ensures the organization and coherence of discourse at the clause level and that the clause is regarded as the at least one of the substance of discourse (Halliday, 2004). These metafunctions enable analysts to investigate the expression of language of not only what individuals do and think, but also how they interact and how what

they say is socially organized.

A number of studies have done take these metafunctions to study Batak Toba songs, showing linguistic patterns of community values and emotional positioning. For example, Pasaribu (2014) applied SFL's transitivity analysis to analyze how Nahum Situmorang's landmark song "O Tano Batak" conveys personal nostalgia as well as collective homeland connection through which cultural ideology is embedded in grammatical processes. In the same way, Munthe et al. (2022) conducted mood analysis to analyze interpersonal meanings in Putri Silitonga's modern songs, and the findings revealed that singers adopt linguistic mood and modality to demonstrate love, modesty, and respect to the other. These researches illustrate the advantage of SFL in linking the linguistic form with cultural meaning and confirming that language in Batak Toba songs does serve as symbolic resource in expressing identity, emotional and social values.

In the current research, SFL is utilized as a theoretical lens that informs the understanding of Batak song lyrics as a medium of sociocultural communication. Although the analysis is at a thematic rather than a clause/grammatical level, the research embraces SFL's fundamental notion that language is meaning-making in context. This focus gives the assurance that themes identified—love, kinship, faith, homeland and moral values—are not read as decontextualized 'issues', but as culturally informed expressions of Batak worldview. Through an SFL reading, the analysis enables the thematic results to be located within the semiotic system that Batak speakers and songwriters employ to conceptualize communal convictions, emotional states and social identities. In this respect the study preserves a close theoretical connection between language practice and cultural experience, and in this way it substantiates the assumption that an understanding of the form and content of Batak Toba song cannot be separated from the social life and philosophical experience of the people.

Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis: Identifying Cultural Patterns

The principal analytical method for this research is the Thematic Analysis (TA) following the conceptualization of Braun and Clarke (Lochmiller, 2021; Byrne, 2022). TA offers a structured approach to qualitative data analysis that can remain flexible in identifying, analyzing, and reporting meaning patterns within data (Naeem, 2023). It has much to offer to studies interested in how language constructs wider cultural and social understandings (Sun et al., 2025). In this study, TA is utilized in Batak Toba songs spanning four decades, articulating the connection between language and culture. The six iterative phases (data familiarization, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining/naming themes, and write-up) facilitate an in-depth analysis of text. This sequence of processes has the potential to unfold meanings both inductively from data itself and deductively through dialogic engagement with the SFL-informed conception of languaging as meaning-making in context. Therefore, TA enriches SFL as a means of raising linguistic and semiotic findings onto broader cultural interpretations.

Rather than content analysis which mainly quantifies repeated words or topics, TA tries to identify latent content, meaning the underlying values, assumptions and worldviews that are behind the surface expressions of the lyrics. This interpretive perspective enables TA to offer a useful approach for studying songs, since meaning is not only expressed through literal narratives but also as metaphor, symbolism, rhythm and feelings (Naeem et al., 2024). Memories and feelings are communal and song lyrics can reflect that by distilling them into common experiences. By employing thematic analysis, the researcher is able to establish an interpretative understanding of how linguistic contents represent wider cultural narratives on love, kinship, faith and moral obligation rather than merely providing a descriptive account of the text. In Batak Toba music, these functions operate as cultural measures, balancing between the preservation of conformism and the instigation of change in the community's sense of morality and emotionality.

In addition, TA allows this study to follow the diachronic development of cultural themes within Batak Toba songs 1980-2025 (Sun, 2025). The analysis, by examining thematic motifs over time, demonstrates the modulation in the articulations of cultural values in response to historical trends – migration, urbanization, religious influences and technological changes in music production. For instance, older compositions may highlight ancestral connections, respect for *Dalihan Na Tolu* and the holiness of kinship, whereas in modern day pieces they may convey mixed sentiments of nostalgia, individuality and translocal identity. Now Thematic Analysis is an appropriate interpretive tool to capture such cultural processes and identity negotiations. In this context, taking into account SFL's semiotic conception of language, TA enables the researcher to argue that the

thematic arrangements in Batak Toba songs being studied are not random but rather they are patterned ways of portraying the collective of which its members constitute, sustain, and transform via language and art.

Batak Toba Cultural Philosophy: *Dalihan Na Tolu* and the Ideals of Life

Dalihan Na Tolu, literally ‘the three-legged stove’, is the foundation of the ethical and social system of the Batak Toba worldview (Sinaga, 2024; Arifiah & Siregar, 2022). This threefold way of thinking is the cornerstone of how one is to live and has permeated all aspects of interpersonal relations and societal expectations. It is active in three principles that are dependent upon each other: *somba marhula-hula* (worship your wife-givers), *manat mardongan tubu* (caution among kin), and *elek marboru* (benevolence to wife-takers). For Sihombing, these values sustain interrelated binaries of give and take, respect and counter-respect, and equidistance that ensure there is social harmony in Batak (Sihombing et al., 2017). As if to say that such is to be expected and accepted, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is modeled like a social institution and seems to be foisted upon one as a social status, but and yet it is much more than perceived as such a predetermined social model – it is a moral ecology – one that prescribes ethical conduct, kinship and spiritual balance in household and in community life. It is thus the ethical basis in labour, communication, ritualistic and artistic expressions, such as songs.

What is integrated in and completes this moral triad are the three ideals of life; *Hasangapon* (respect and dignity), *Hagabeon* (givenness of life & continuation of lineage), and *Hamoraon* (prosperity and well-being) (Valentina & Martani, 2018). These are the dreams and goals in life of the Batak Toba people for a balanced life. *Hasangapon* connotes moral superiority and social prestige, *Hagabeon* is the survival of human life and family and *Hamoraon* is wealth which equals living a blessed life. Significantly, these three life ideals are not taken on singly but in balance so that one’s personal achievement is not different from what is expected on communal ethics. In Batak songs, all of these motifs are repeated over and over—apprecatedly honorable ancestors, fertility and offspring prayers, or bitter sweet cries for wealth and advancement—all of these emotional undercurrents of gratefulness, humility and devotion.

In this study, *Dalihan Na Tolu* and the three life ideals are not analysed as abstract philosophical notions, but as living cultural codes that are articulated in linguistic and musical forms (Onwuegbuna, 2015). They lay the interpretative groundwork for understanding the moral and emotional content of the lyrics of Batak Toba songs. As metaphor, imagery and symbolic language these philosophical ideals are ‘perpetually re-expressed’ and ‘transmitted’ from generation to generation. For example, metaphors of *tano* (land) and *boru* (daughter) frequently signify kinship and fertility, and *ulos* (traditional cloth) imagery expresses warmth, continuity, and respect. Taking these expressions as located within the *Dalihan Na Tolu*, this article reads the Batak songs as cultural pedagogy – texts through which communal wisdom, identity and spirituality are narrativized. Hence, this philosophical perspective provides a complement to the earlier linguistic and thematic frameworks by situating the analysis in the moral world of Batak Toba society.

Method

This study utilizes a descriptive qualitative design, which is appropriate for investigating meanings, cultural norms, and patterns of themes within verbal or written narratives. A goal of descriptive qualitative research is the description and interpretation of the culture-sharing group’s shared experiences, and these experiences are typically understood from the perspective of those who take part in them. In this research, the phenomenon being studied is the representation of cultural identity, emotion, and moral value in Batak Toba song text. Instead of formulating hypotheses to be tested or measuring linguistic variables, the article is concerned with describing and interpreting the construction of meanings and the communication of culture through language and metaphor. This method is consistent with the ontological assumptions of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Thematic Analysis, which consider language a semiotic resource used in the production and negotiation of meaning in social and cultural contexts.

This research is based on 100 Toba Batak song lyrics created & sang around the 1980 to 2025. Those lyrics are cultural texts that reflect the transformations in values and emotions as well as worldviews in Batak Toba society for a period of four decades. The songs were selected from a variety of sources, such as commercial recordings, lyric print anthologies and online sites like Youtube and databases of Batak songs. The variety of sources guarantees the authenticity and diversity of the data, in the range of various generations of composers

and performers, such as traditional figures like Nahum Situmorang and Tilhang Gultom on the one hand and contemporary voices like Victor Hutabarat and Putri Silitonga on the other. The study's accumulation of data over diverse formats and periods, permitted an investigation into the persistence and change of themes of culture over time.

Data gathering consisted of collection, transcription, and formatting of lyrics into a digital corpus for analysis. The printed texts were transcribed manually and then checked against the audio to ensure their accuracy, while the online version were checked against several sources in order to identify and correct any discrepancies in spelling or translation. All the lyrics were stored in a textual database, with metadata such as title, composer, performing artist, the year of release, and the theme category. Here too, the author also speaks about many re-listening to the songs in order to grasp feelings and cultural elements not always clear from the lyrics. Field notes documented interpretive insights concerning cultural context, metaphor, and situational meaning. This prolonged engagement refined the researcher's understanding, and developed her knowledge and insight of the data, all of which are important tenets of qualitative methodology.

The data were analyzed by applying Thematic Analysis (TA), based on the six-steps approach developed by Braun and Clarke (Lochmiller, 2021; Byrne, 2022). It started with a process of reading and re-reading the song texts to become intimately familiar with them, in order to evoke initial responses and cultural associations. Then, preliminary codes were created to locate significant segments related to emotion, value, or social function. These codes were subsequently grouped into overarching themes, including kinship, faith, homeland, nostalgia, or moral instruction. In the reviewing and refining stage, themes were reviewed for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity to determine if the themes properly represent the entire data set (Byrne, 2022). The third theme-development phase is the definition and naming of themes and the writing of the analytical narrative: the way in which the thematic results are interpreted in the light of the Batak Toba cultural philosophy—particularly *Dalihan Na Tolu* and the old thinking of *Hasangapon*, *Hagabeon* and *Hamoraon*. Through this meaning-making exercise, the findings surfaced with a combination of dominant and latent patterns of the songs, demonstrating how Batak Toba verbal art inscribes changing interpretations of identity, feeling, and morality.

Results and discussion

1. Thematic Distributions of Batak Toba Songs

An analysis of the themes of Batak Toba songs in the last four decades (1980–2025) shows that in this range of period, a wide spectrum of cultural concerns and emotional life of the people was portrayed. Even so, love still ranks as the most popular topic, with romantic highs and lows being the chief source of inspiration. Simultaneously, spirituality and faith are paramount; they reflect the community's persistent dependence on divine guidance and religious commitment. And these spiritual territorialities are frequently sung alongside love and separation songs, which articulate the sorrow of being away from one's beloved or homeland and are often associated with experiences of migration and diaspora.

Simultaneously, family and kinship are just as significant, conveying a message of importance of family bonds and respect for elders that pervades social life. Alongside this, cultural pride and homeland are focused on in songs that profess Batak pride and respect for culture and motherland. Many songs also dispense wisdom and share values by encouraging to overcome hardship, to be strong in poverty, and to acknowledge that sacrifice is what everyone goes through. There is also a strong connection to nature and homeland through the years, as the lakes, mountains, and villages are raised up as emblems of home, as banners of longing, and as profound cultural symbols.

These results show that Batak Toba songs operate on two levels that is as artistic expression and as cultural text that contains, conveys, and reconstructs the values and worldview of the community. In line with Braun and Clarke's (Lochmiller, 2021; Byrne, 2022) six phases, coding and categorization of the 100 song lyrics revealed five general themes: love and romance, family and kinship, spirituality and faith, cultural identity and homeland, and advice, morality and life struggles. The detailed results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table1. Thematic Distributions of Batak Toba Songs (1990s–2020s)

Theme	Representative Songs	Thematic Meaning	Cultural Expressions
Love and Romance	<i>Haholongan, Holong Panimpuli, Holan Sasada Ho, Gotap ni Rohangki, Songon Bulan, Orang Ketiga, Tartipu Au</i>	Love as affection, loyalty, longing, but also betrayal and heartbreak	Expresses deep emotions in relationships; shows fragility of love when tested by wealth, betrayal, or distance
Family and Kinship	<i>Anakhon Hi Do Hamoraon di Au, Boru Panggoaran, Tondi Tondiku, Amang Parsinuan, Jujung Goarhi Amang, Ito Na Burju</i>	Children as wealth; family as source of love, guidance, and pride	Reinforces Batak philosophy that family is central; kinship responsibilities are moral and social duties
Spirituality and Faith	<i>Tangian Ni Dainang I, Pa Sabam Roham, Togihon Au Tuhan, Burju Ni Dainang I, Nang Gumalunsang</i>	Faith as resilience, prayer, and surrender to God	Christianity and Batak spirituality blend; parents' prayers guide and protect children; faith sustains life struggles
Cultural Identity and Homeland	<i>O Tano Batak, Horas, Huta Na Martua I, Da Na Tiniptip Sanggar</i>	Love for homeland, pride in Batak identity, and respect for tradition	Expresses longing for Batak land even in migration; cultural rules (e.g., clan marriage prohibition) strengthen identity
Advice, Morality, and Life Struggles	<i>Poda, Poda Hangoluan, Patik Pa Limahon, Hapogosonta, Korban Setia</i>	Advice, moral education, and reflections on hardship and sacrifice	Songs transmit intergenerational wisdom; affirm resilience in poverty and the value of perseverance

The result is that love and romance reigns supreme in the lyrical tradition, featuring in songs of every decade and in sounds of the very young to the very old, including those articulating both deep emotional intimacy and stories of betrayal and heartbreak. As important are the themes of family and kinship, which highlight parental sacrifice, children as a source of wealth and pride, and fraternal solidarity. Spirituality and Faith Spirituality and faith are also recurrent in songs of religious fervor and parental prayers for strength in life's struggles. Whereas, identity and homeland discourse portray the nostalgia of Batak land, pride of tradition and maintenance of social norm such as kinship ties on marital ties. To conclude, advisories, morality and life struggles emphasize the function of songs as channels of wisdom, enabling them to offer survival strategies to younger generations and narrate perseverance against poverty, illness and betrayal.

Love and Romance

Analysis of Batak Toba songs reveal that love and romance are the most popular theme, as confirmed by Silalahi, (2023), which can be found in more than one-third of the songs. These pieces address various aspects of relationships, both romantic and otherwise, ranging from happiness and affection to conflict and heartache (Saragih, 2021a). Prevalence of this theme illustrates how romance is fundamental and eternal topic that always connects people from generation to generation. Here is the extract of the song lyrics that explain about love & romance.

Ito nabasa, ito nalagu, hasian. Didia ho, didia ho dapottonokku. Tung so sirang ito, anggo au sian ho hasian. Anggo au sian ho hasian. Ianggo so sinirang ni da hamatean. Aut na diboto ho ma ilukku, nasai maraburan. Aut na diboto ho, ate atekku malala dibagasan. Pikkir ito, marbilang bilang ma ho hasian. Ingot ma au na sai tongtong paima ho. Tung so sirang ito, anggo au sian ho hasian. Anggo au sian ho hasian. Ianggo so sinirang ni da hamatean. Aut na diboto ho ma ilukku, nasai maraburan. Aut na diboto ho, ate atekku malala dibagasan. Pikkir ito, marbilang bilang ma ho hasian. Ingot ma au na sai tongtong paima ho.

(Darling, my love, where are you? Where can I find you? I will never leave you—only death can part us. You don't know how many tears I've shed, or how deeply my heart is breaking inside. Please think about it again and again. Remember, I'll always be waiting for you. I will never let you go until death separates us.)

The lyrics revolve around the subject of love and romance, which is sung through longing, loyalty and

emotional pain. The recurring phrase, “I will never leave you—until death do us part,” expresses the depth of the singer’s love, indicating that love is not only emotional, but spiritual and eternal. This vow-like statement plays into cultural notions of fidelity and permanence within relationships. But the tear and heartbreak imagery in the song emphasizes the fragility of love, reminding us that the singer is in pain whether it be from separation or infidelity. The message “Please remember with me again and again” adds a note of persuasion, which signals the singer’s wish to be reunited, or at least have his love be acknowledged.

Family and Kinship

Family and kinship are also leitmotifs. These songs underscore the need of family unity and respect for the elders, making kinship the pillar of Batak Toba culture (Sagala & Locationta Primadona Ginting, 2022). In the same way, in cultural identity they sing about the Batak culture, tradition and pride, strengthening the people breathing the connection to ancestral roots. Here is the extract of the song lyrics describing family and kinship.

Burju ni dainang i. Dang boi tarbalos au. Nang sipata sala au. Sai dianju au anakna on. Ditaon ho do udan las ni ari. (Ditaon ho do udan las ni ari). Holan humokkop gellengmon (Humokkop gellengmon). Asa boi taruli (Boi taruli). Lao manomu ari na naeng ro. Mauliate ma inang (Mauliate ma inang). Mauliate ma amang (Mauliate ma amang). Di sude pambaenanmi (Pambaenanmi). Anggiat ma marparbue i. Mauliate ma inang (Mauliate ma inang) Mauliate ma amang (Mauliate ma amang). Toho ma ho pandaune (Pandaune). Di ngolu ni Sude na gellengmon. Ditaon ho do udan las ni ari (Ditaon ho do udan las ni ari). Holan humokkop gellengmon (Humokkop gellengmon). Asa boi taruli. Lao manomu ari na naeng ro.

(How kind my mother is—her love is beyond anything I could ever repay. Even when I make mistakes, she always shows patience. She works tirelessly, under the rain and beneath the hot sun, just to provide for her children and give them a better future. Thank you, Mother. You are truly a hero to all of us.)

The lyrics emphasize the family and kinship theme, especially a mother’s love for her children. The chorus’s insistence on the mother’s labor “in the rain and under the sun” highlights the hoeing and folding of mother’s hands into mother’s back, mother’s journey to and from work and family and bears testimony the physical, emotional toil mothers undergo to lay a path for their children. The recognition that her love is ‘more than I could ever repay’ is an expression of the gratitude and respect which children owe their parents and is representative of a moral and cultural duty that is very important in Batak Toba society.

Moreover, the mother’s patience with her child, regardless of the mistakes the child may make, reflects forgiveness and unconditional love, as well as teachings of morality within the household. The final statement, “You are a hero to all of us,” transforms the mother into an emblem of power and dignity, which resonates with Batak values, with family as the foundation of one’s social and cultural existence. So the song is a personal tribute, but it also is a communal affirmation of the fact that mothers are central to kinship, values and, ultimately, the continuity of family honor and fortune.

Spirituality and Faith

The second major topic that emerged in the songs is spirituality and religion. The lyrics, expressing the life and belief of the people, are dominated by a strong religious outlook, often saying prayers to help, thank and trust God for lending them strength when caught in the snare of life (Firmando, 2024). A closely linked motif is that of longing and distance: the repertoire melodically describes the pain of separation from lovers, family and in some cases, the homeland. Such sentiments evoke both migration and diaspora experiences, and the prophetic importance of close ties. The next sections provide a selection of song quotes to illustrate these themes of love and romance, spirituality and faith.

Ho Do na ihutton nokkuale Jesus, ale Tuhana. Malua jala taruli ahudukku pajonnoktu lambung Mi. Nang disan gok hinaulidohot akka bunga-bunga idang na boipe gangguan tahe. Ho nama hupilit dalam ki. Alani togihon abu Tuhan patuduhon dalam Mi tu ahu unang be pasombu lili ahusai togu ma jonok tu. Ho Sai pasu-pasu ma hami akka pinomparmon. Asa tung di antusi be muse. Pasangappon natoras na.

(I will follow You, Jesus, my Lord. I know I am safe when I am with You. There may be many beautiful things and flowers in this world, but none of them can turn my heart away from You. I choose You as the path of my life. Lead me to walk with You, show me Your way, and never let me go astray. Keep me close to You, and bless us as Your children.)

The lyric encapsulates the theme of spirituality and faith with a tremendous sense of faith in Jesus as both leader and protector. The refrain's promises of "I will follow You" and "You are the way of my life" underline the singer's decision to prioritize faith over all worldly allurements. "Many good things and flowers" refers to the contrast between transient earthly beauty and the timeless safety of God, the stability of spiritual allegiance. There is an element of reliance and trust in the lyrics too, particularly in the request to be led, counselled and kept from wandering. It is a recognition of human frailty and a vital dependence on God's assistance in the struggles of life. The closing prayer, "Bless us as Your children", now takes flight from the particular to the universal, mirroring Batak Toba's spiritual worldview, as you share faith within the clans and the community, rather than secluding it in the self.

Cultural Identity and Homeland

The Batak Toba songs also show the themes of cultural identity and homeland, expressing strong love for the Batak land, pride in being Batak, and respect for tradition (Pasaribu, 2014). Songs like *O Tano Batak*, *Horas*, *Huta Na Martua I*, and *Da Na Tiniptip Sanggar* reveal the deep emotional bond between the Batak people and their homeland. Even when they live far away, the lyrics express longing to return, showing that migration does not erase their connection to their roots. These songs also highlight traditional values, such as the rule that people from the same clan cannot marry, which strengthens Batak identity. In this way, the songs remind us that homeland and tradition remain central to Batak Toba life. Here is the extract of the song lyrics describing the cultural identity and homeland.

O tano Batak haholongan hu. Sai na malungun do ahu tu ho. Dang olo modom dang nok matakku. Sai na marsihol do ahu sai naeng tu ho. O tano Batak sai naeng hu tatap. Dapotnohonku tano ha godangan hi. O tano Batak andingan sahat au on naeng mian di ho sambuloki. Molo dung bitcar matani ari lao panapuhon hau mai. Godang do ngolu siganup ari Dinamaringan di ho sambulokki. O tano Batak sai naeng hu tatap. Dapotnohonhu tano ha godangan hi. O tano Batak andingan sahat au on naeng mian di ho sambulonki. Au on naeng mian di ho sambulonki.

(O Batak land, my beloved home. How deeply I long for you. I cannot sleep, my eyes will not close. My heart keeps yearning, wanting to return to you. O Batak land, I long to see you, to set foot again on the land of my ancestors. O Batak land, when will I arrive, so I may live with you once more. When the sun rises to shine upon the trees, Life abounds each and every day, Blessings flow upon you, my homeland. O Batak land, I long to see you, to set foot again on the land of my ancestors. O Batak land, when will I arrive, so I may live with you once more. Yes, so I may live with you once more.)

The "O Tano Batak" song reflects the close relationship between the Batak people and their land. With the refrains "O Batak land" and "The land of our ancestors," the lyrics claim that the land is more than a location; it is related to belonging and identity. Such feelings of longing as "How deeply I long for you" and "My heart keeps yearning, wanting to return to you" are feelings that even those who live far away carry deep in their hearts.

The homeland is similarly called a "land of living" and a "land of blessings" in the song. Sun, trees and everyday plenty symbolize the land as rich and nourishing. The phrase "land of my ancestors" connects the current generation to the past generation, and also conveys the hope of returning one day. And so the song captures both homesickness and pride in Batak culture. It tells us that land is fundamental to who we are; our sense of belonging, culture, and feeling whole.

2. Thematic Connections of Batak Toba Songs with Batak Toba Philosophy

The songs of Toba Batak are not only artistic verbalization but also the reflection of the cultural philosophy and life practice of the society (Sinaga, 2024; Arifiah & Siregar, 2022). The themes in their lyrics were otherwise consistent with the basic values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* – respect/love/harmonious social relations, and life values of *Hasangapon* (honor), *Hagabeon* (posterity), and *Hamoraon* (wealth and prosperity). From these observations, it can be concluded that Batak Toba songs are a cultural text to retain tradition, to reinforce social, and to articulate the collective identity. Table 2 shows the theme connected to Batak Toba song with Batak Toba life philosophy.

Table 2. Thematic Connections of Batak Toba Songs with Batak Toba Philosophy

Theme in Songs	Dalihan Na Tolu (Social Philosophy)	Hasangapon, Hagabeon, Hamoraon	Interpretation
Love and Romance	<i>Somba marhula-hula</i> (respect in marital ties); <i>elek marboru</i> (protection of women)	<i>Hasangapon</i> (honor through marriage alliances)	Romantic ties often symbolize unions that bring dignity and respect to families and clans.
Spirituality / Faith	Harmony with community rituals	<i>Hasangapon</i> (honor to God); foundation for balanced life	Songs reflect deep faith, reinforcing respect for divine order and traditional ceremonies.
Longing and Separation	<i>Manat mardongan tubu</i> (harmony within clan despite distance)	<i>Hagabeon</i> (posterity tied to homeland)	Expressions of separation highlight enduring bonds with family, clan, and homeland.
Family and Kinship	Core of <i>Dalihan Na Tolu</i> (all three principles: respect, love, harmony)	<i>Hagabeon</i> (continuity through descendants)	Lyrics emphasize loyalty, respect, and intergenerational bonds within family networks.
Cultural Identity	Respect for lineage and traditions	<i>Hasangapon</i> (dignity through heritage)	Songs preserve and transmit Batak pride, rituals, and collective memory.
Parental Advice	<i>Somba marhula-hula</i> (respect elders)	<i>Hagabeon</i> (raising honorable children)	Advice links parental sacrifice to children's success and continuation of family legacy.
Hope and Encouragement	Maintaining harmony by uplifting kin	<i>Hamoraon</i> (pursuit of prosperity)	Encouraging words reflect resilience and aspirations for a better life.
Heartbreak	Maintaining dignity in conflict resolution	<i>Hasangapon</i> (keeping personal honor)	Songs highlight moral strength and dignity even amid emotional loss.
Sacrifice	Fulfillment of kin obligations	<i>Hamoraon</i> (working hard for prosperity)	Sacrifice reflects endurance and responsibility for family welfare.
Nature and Homeland	Clan harmony tied to ancestral land	<i>Hagabeon</i> (homeland as symbol of posterity)	Attachment to land and homeland reflects belonging, continuity, and rooted identity.

Table 2 displays the similarities between Batak Toba songs with the philosophical foundations of *Dalihan Na Tolu* and life manners of *Hasangapon*, *Hagabeon* and *Hamoraon*. The table also reveals that each key topic of the Batak Toba songs such as love, faith, family ties, cultural identity, and sacrifice is not merely an artistic expression but also an ingrained sociocultural value. For example, love and romance themes can be associated with *somba marhula-hula* (respect for the wife-giver) and *elek marboru* (benevolence to woman's taker), and *manat mardonga tubu* (caution in kin) representing how romantic relationships go beyond personal feelings

and become a pact that maintains the honor of the family (*hasangapon*) (Valentina, 2018). Just as that, family-oriented songs that illustrate this universal theme among the three tenets of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, implying that all lines of descent (*hagabeon*) is at the heart of continuing life (Sinaga, 2024; Arifiah & Siregar, 2022).

Other motifs like spirituality and faith reveal the respect afforded to God and the significance of social cohesion through prayer and ritual acts, and longings and separation articulate long-lasting ties between family and home and the subsequent generation's connection to ancestral homes (*hagabeon*) (Firmando, 2024). Cultural identity themes reinforce dignity (*hasangapon*) through the affirmation of cultural heritage and shared recollection, while parental advice relates to intergenerational responsibilities and demonstrates how children's future is assured through sacrifice. To the hopes and encouragements and sacrifice of the aspirations for prosperity (*hamoraon*), a picture is added where resilience and hard work is the way to letting the well-being of the people rely on. Even such emotionally charged themes as heartbreak are constructed around the need to retain dignity (*hasangapon*), and demonstrate a kind of moral stamina in private pain. Lastly, songs of nature and homeland resonate to the ancient land, identity and posterity (as regimental songs) underscoring the integral of clan harmony and homeland in Batak Toba philosophy.

The novelty of this study is that it systematically records 100 Toba Batak songs over a span of four decades (1980–2025), and it shows sharply changing themes from communal and family values to individual emotional problems. By connecting these themes with the philosophy of the Batak Toba, this thesis reveals for the first time the symbolic means through which traditional cultural ideals, *Dalihan Na Tolu* (the social harmony) and life ideals *Hasangapon*, *Hagabeon*, *Hamoraon*, shape, maintain, and transform song lyric content. Family-focused lyrics representing *Hagabeon* and sacrifice and advice as themes of *Hamoraon* and mentor relationships across generations, while love and honor as themes of *Hasangapon* as well as marital alliances. This cultural context provides an explanation for why the songs, even when they address heartbreak, yearning, or personal turmoil, are still strongly rooted in Batak ideals of respect, kinship, and dignity. In illustrating this dynamic process, the study contributes not only to enrich ethno musicological research but also to serve as a cultural documentation to see how philosophy and tradition still inspire creative expression over time.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the Batak Toba songs of the years 1980 – 2025 are not only musical sound waves, but they are also cultural texts that contain an encoding of absolute values, the emotions, and identity. This study also substantiates, via thematic analysis of one hundred song lyrics, the traditional themes of love, kinship, spirituality, homeland, and moral teachings remain as fundamental elements of Batak Toba musical discourse. These salient themes indicate a cultural continuity that enables the current Batak subject to maintain his traditional worldview despite shifting social conditions within different generations. At the same time, the emergence of different emotional nuances and identity constructions suggests the community's cultural evolution. We can see that the pattern of coexistence between change and continuity is repeated in Batak Toba music; this demonstrates the fluidity of its musical culture. In the end, the study asserts that the Batak Toba song is a place of storage that is still living between personal feeling and collective memory.

Furthermore, the combination Systemic Functional Linguistics and Thematic Analysis allows the study to better reveal the construction of cultural meaning through linguistic choices in Batak Toba songs. The songs show how language serves as a semiotic tool to express feelings, fulfill kinship obligations and perpetuate ideologies enshrined in *Dalihan Na Tolu*. The frequency of metaphors, cultural and symbolic references and evaluative language in general leads us to argue that songwriters are deliberately embedding cultural philosophy in their artistry. It means that Batak Toba cultural so and so *Hasangapon*, *Hagabeon* and *Hamoraon*, are still used as the foundation not only in social life but also in this creative art work. Throughout the years the philosophical tendencies continue to emerge in lyrical themes that stress respect, heritage, spiritualism, endurance, and community unity. Consequently, the linguistic and thematic findings jointly provide a confirmation that Batak Toba songs are potent sites of cultural reproduction and sociolinguistic identity renegotiation.

As a whole, this body of work consolidates the case that Batak Toba songs ought to be seen as cultural archives that store emotional memory, moral orientation, and ethnic awareness. By analyzing thematic trends over the span of four decades, the article reveals how Batak Toba culture articulates tradition, modernization, migration, and shifting socio-political landscapes in music. These perspectives can deepen future transdisciplinary

applications involving ethnomusicology, cultural studies, and linguistic anthropology to investigate the extent to which indigenous philosophies remain a source of inspiration in creative output. Future studies may adapt the corpus or include performance practice, or may contrast it with that of other ethnics, in the search for wider patterns of cultural resilience. Studies like these would not only advance the recording of indigenous knowledge, but also assist in the preservation of intangible heritage. As demonstrated here, Batak Toba songs still provide vital cultural texts for the maintenance of identity and the determination of ancestral principles in relation to living life in the present.

Acknowledgment: This research was supported by funding from the Institute for Research and Community Service, Universitas HKBP Nommensen. The authors gratefully acknowledge this support, which made the completion of this research possible.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

Authorship and Level of Contribution

Arsen Nahum Pasaribu was primarily responsible for collecting the data, conducting the analysis, drafting the manuscript, and revising its content. Sondang Manik contributed by assisting in data collection and carefully reviewing the accuracy of the data analysis. Both authors worked collaboratively in shaping the final version of the manuscript, and they have approved it for submission.

References

- Arifiah, A., & Siregar, I. (2022). Knowledge and Perception of Dalihan Na Tolu Among Batak Settlers in Jakarta. *Journal of Gender, Culture and Society*, 4(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32996/jgcs.2022.2.1.1>
- Babel, A. M. (2025). A Semiotic Approach to Social Meaning in Language. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 29, 59–73. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12689>
- Byrne, D. (2022). A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality and Quantity*, 56(3), 1391–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y>
- Eggins, S. (2004). An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics. In *Continuum International Publication Groups* (Second). Continuum. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01476765>
- Elmer, S. S. (2021). Song Transmission as a Formal Cultural Practice. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12(4), 1–18.
- Firmando, H. B. (2024). The Role of The Traditional Beliefs of the Toba Batak Community in Social Practices in the Lake Toba Region : A Review of Culture and Context. *Asketik: Jurnal Agama Dan Perubahan Sosial*, 8(1), 156–177. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30762/asketik.v8i1.1433> ©
- Girsang, M., Nasution, I., & Surbakti, A. (2014). The Role of Women in Selected Batak Toba Songs Based On Gender Equality. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(6), 32–36. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-19653236>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). An Introduction to Functional Grammar. In *Hodder Arnold*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394207305.ch1>
- Jama, K. B., & Menggo, S. (2024). Language and cultural values exploration of traditional songs in Malakan Ethnic, Eastern Indonesia. *LITE: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya*, 20(2), 105–118. <https://doi.org/10.33633/lite.v20i2.10859>
- Lidskog, R. (2016). The role of music in ethnic identity formation in diaspora: a research review. *International Social Science Journal*, 66(219–220), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/issj.12091>
- Liu, J., Chen, Y., & Huang, S. (2024). Exploring the Sociocultural Influence of Music Traditions Across Different Cultures. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 02008(187), 1–4. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202418702008>
- Lochmiller, C. R. (2021). Conducting Thematic Analysis with Qualitative Data. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(6), 2029–2044. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.5008>
- Manalu, D. Y. H. (2019). Makna Lirik Nyanyian Andung Dalam Upacara Kematian Sarimatua Pada Masyarakat Batak Toba di Samosir. *Selonding*, 14(14), 2030–2044. <https://doi.org/10.24821/selonding.v14i14.3130>
- Mpinami, L. A., & Sipeyiye, M. (2025). Negotiating Identity through Music in Zimbabwe: Interrogating Some Selected Nambya Music. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096251319229>
- Munthe, E. J. B., Simamora, M. A., & ... (2022). an Analysis of Contextual Meaning in Batak Toba Songs Lyric By Putri Silitonga: a Case on Semantics. *American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 12–23. <https://americanjournal.org/index.php/ajrhss/article/view/71%0Ahttps://americanjournal.org/index.php/ajrhss/article/download/71/55>
- Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2024). A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22(October), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>
- Niinre, A. (2023). The Role of Lyrics in Estonian Literature: Three Exemplary Cases. *Interlitteraria*, 28(1), 64–70. <https://doi.org/10.12697/il.2023.28.1.6>
- Onwuegbuna, I. E. (2015). Philosophical Embodiments in Igbo Music : An Analysis of Mike Ejeagha ' s “ Popular ” Folk Songs Style. *Sage Open*, 64(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015569667>
- Parada-Cabaleiro, E., Mayerl, M., Brandl, S., Skowron, M., Schedl, M., Lex, E., & Zangerle, E. (2024). Song Lyrics Have Become Simpler and More Repetitive over the Last Five Decades. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 1–13.
- Pasaribu, A. (2020). Transitivity Analysis of Nahum Situmorang'S Traditional Song Lyrics. *NICCT 2019, June*, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.20-9-2019.2296586>
- Pasaribu, A. N. (2014). Identity and Ideology of Toba Batak in “O Tano Batak” Song Lyrics. *Telangkai Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 8(1), 1–8. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Arsen-Pasaribu/publication/335201787_

- identity_and_ideology_of_toba_batak_in_o_tano_batak_song_lyrics/links/5d5631c6299bf151bad6f1e9/identity-and-ideology-of-toba-batak-in-o-tano-batak-song-lyrics.pdf
- Sagala, R. E., & Locationta Primadona Ginting, M. H. (2022). Semiotics Critical Analysis of the Anakkon Philosophy of Hi Do Hamoraon Di Au in Marparbue Do Lojami Song Lyrics. *British Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 20–23. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32996/bjal>
- Saragih, D. Y. (2021a). An Analysis of Metaphor in Batak Toba Song Lyrics (Mother’s Theme). *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 2013–2021. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v4i2.1889>
- Saragih, D. Y. (2021b). An Analysis of Metaphor in Batak Toba Song Lyrics (Mother Love’s Theme). *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 2013–2021. <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v4i2.1889>
- Sibarani, R., Situmorang, H., & Ali Pawiro, M. (2018). Concerning Toba Batak’s Local Wisdoms and Cultural Values for Regional Character Building. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 11(20), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.17485/ijst/2018/v11i20/114298>
- Sihombing, R. R. U., Sumarsih, S., & Bahri, S. (2017). the Use of Processes As Reflected in Woman Portrayals in Batak Toba Songs Lyrics. *Linguistica*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.24114/jalu.v6i1.13399>
- Silalahi, P. V. (2023). Signifying the Signs In Breakups of a Couple Lovers in Six Selected Batak Toba Songs. *TANDA: Jurnal Kajian Budaya, Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 3(1), 1–8.
- Simanungkalit, K. E., Saddhono, K., & Rohmadi, M. (2025). Representation of Cultural Elements in Tombak Sulu Sulu Among the Batak Toba Community: A Semiotic Analysis Using Roland Barthes’ Perspective. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(4), 1298–1307. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1504.28>
- Sinaga, N. (2024). The exploration Batak Toba culture based on Schwartz Basic Values Theory: A descriptive analysis of cultural value Dalihan Na Tolu. *Psikologia: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Psikologi*, 19(2), 92–98. <https://doi.org/10.32734/psikologia.v19i2.15632>
- Sitorus, M. H., Barasa, T., Sihaloho, M., Manik, S. S. A., & Halawa, I. (2024). Integration of Toba Batak Local Wisdom as Character and Multicultural Education Values in the Curriculum. *EDUKASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 5(2), 353–368. <https://doi.org/10.62775/edukasia.v5i2.1454>
- Snoddon, K. (2024). Signing songs and the openings of semiotic repertoires. *Translation and Translanguaging in Multilingual Context*, 10(2), 255–277. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1075/ttmc.00136.sno>
- Sun, Y., Hsieh, J., & Gao, X. (2025). Integrating Qualitative Comparative Analysis with Reflexive Thematic Analysis in Theme Development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 24, 1–14. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069251318749>
- Tinambunan, E. R. L. (2022). Gondang Batak Toba: Makna Religi dan Implikasinya pada Keagamaan dan Adat. *Jurnal SMaRT*, 8(2), 261–273. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v8i2.1775>
- Valentina, T. D., & Martani, W. (2018). Apakah Hasangapon, Hagabeon, dan Hamoraon sebagai Faktor Protektif atau Faktor Risiko Perilaku Bunuh Diri Remaja Batak Toba? Sebuah Kajian Teoritis tentang Nilai Budaya Batak Toba. *Buletin Psikologi*, 26(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.22146/buletinpsikologi.28489>
- Van, H. Van. (2021). “Metafunctions of Language” in Systematic Functional Linguistics: A Framework for the Interpretation of Meaning of Text in Social Context. *VNU Journal of Forein Studies*, 37(4), 1–25. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4750>

