

## SEMANTICS PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORICAL STORY OF GOWE BONIO NI'OWULU-WULU AT DAHADANÖ GAWU-GAWU VILLAGE, GUNUNGSITOLI CITY

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### ABSTRAK

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#### Kata kunci:

Wisata Budaya,  
Semantik, Gowe Bonio  
Ni'owulu-Wulu

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan makna semantik berdasarkan sejarah wisata budaya Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu, yang berada di desa Dahadanö Gawu-gawu, Kota Gunungsitoli. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana cerita sejarah Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-Wulu dikomunikasikan dan dipahami oleh berbagai kelompok sosial dalam konteks pariwisata budaya. Melalui penggunaan metode analisis kualitatif, seperti wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dan memahami makna-makna yang terkandung dalam cerita tersebut. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perspektif bahasa dalam semantik dapat menyoroti nilai-nilai budaya lokal yang mendorong keramahan, rasa hormat, dan hubungan sosial yang baik dalam menyambut tamu.

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### ABSTRACT

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#### Keywords:

Cultural Tourism,  
Semantics, Gowe Bonio  
Ni'owulu-Wulu

*This research aims to explain the semantics meaning based on the history of Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu cultural tourism, located in Dahadanö Gawu-gawu village, Gunungsitoli City. This research uses qualitative methods to explore how the historical story of Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-Wulu is communicated and understood by various social groups in the context of cultural tourism. Through the use of qualitative analysis methods, such as in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, this research identifies and understands the meanings contained in the story. The results show that a language perspective in semantics can highlight local cultural values that encourage hospitality, respect and good social relations in welcoming guests.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an activity carried out by individuals or groups with the aim of visiting a particular place or area that has an attraction and offers a unique or enjoyable experience. According to the UNWTO glossary in Noroozi (2020), tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or nonresidents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure. There are various types of tourism, namely adventure tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, educational tourism, gap year tourism, health tourism, recreational tourism, religious tourism, sports tourism and winter tourism.

In this study, the researcher chose cultural tourism, which is a type of tourism to learn about history, art and people's lifestyles. Cultural tourism refers to a type of tourism activity that emphasizes the experience and exploration of the cultural aspects of a destination. In cultural tourism, tourists do not only visit to enjoy natural scenery or physical attractions, but also to get to know, understand, and experience the life, history, art, and traditions of the local community. Through interaction with local cultures, tourist can enrich their knowledge of the world's cultural diversity and support the preservation and promotion of unique cultural heritage.

According to Richards (2003), cultural tourism is widely viewed as a growth market, and this has stimulated many regions and countries to promote cultural tourism as an economic development tool. Cultural tourism is a tourist movement or activity that is stimulated by the existence of tourist objects in the form of local cultural arts, such as customs, ceremonies, religion, local community life, historical relics, art products, folk crafts and so on (Damardjati in Pambudi. 2010: 121. in Watoni, et al 2023). The cultural diversity of a region is a major attraction for tourists to learn more about the history, art and lifestyle of the local community. One interesting cultural tourism destination is Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu in Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu Village, Gunungsitoli City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The meaning of the village name Dahadano Gawu-Gawu is, Dahadanö means part of the land while Gawu-Gawu means the condition of the sandy soil. Bonio is the name of a small river in the area and Ni'owulu-wulu means a gathering to make a decision 'fahasara-sara dödö'. The existence of this small river called Bonio has existed since the establishment of Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu village and according to local people, there is no connection between the village and Gowe Bonio. In fact, the Bonio river area is only a place used by Si Tölu Tua to conduct deliberations. Meanwhile, the use of the results of the deliberation is not only used by Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu village, but all villages in Gunungsitoli City and parts of Idanoi.

The history of the beginning of Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu is due to the implementation of Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu. Fondrakö is a deliberation and ceremony to determine customary law that is enforced in a unitary area and group of Nias society. This Fondrakö is fowuluwuluni, in this case revising the Laraga-Talunidanoi customary law (or often called Laraga custom) that had long been in effect before. Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owuluwulu regulates, among other things, the marriage price, the implementation of customs, territorial boundaries and port duties. In practice at this time, the mention of the Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owuluwulu law is not very popular among the majority of the people of Gunungsitoli City, but is more popularly referred to as "Fondrakö Laraga", namely the name of the pre-existing fondrakö which was revised through Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owuluwulu. In this study, researchers will focus on the language perspective of customs at weddings.

Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu is related to the language perspective in semantics, where during the wedding ceremony various famaolagö ba fangowai tome expressions are performed by the traditional leaders. In a sense, semantics embodies meaning. This definition is based on the

origin of the word *sema* (Greek), a type of object, meaning "sign" ("symbol") and *samen*, meaning "to mark" ("to symbolize)." A symbol, on the other hand, is a linguistic symbol. The term semantics describes a branch of linguistics that examines the relationship between language symbols and their meaning (Kase, 2019: 155 in Kurniawan, et al. 2023). Olmen (2018) also says that semantics is the field of linguistics concerned with the study of meaning. Therefore, in understanding an utterance such as: "The girl is beautiful," semantics only considers internal language factors in the utterance, namely vocabulary and the relationship between vocabularies. For semantics, the above utterance only means notification that the girl has a pretty face. Similarly, "Famaolagö ba Fangowai Tome" contains many expressions by both "sawatö" and "tome". Every single thing they say is related semantics.

Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu is still going on today and is not only used in Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu village, but all areas/villages in Gunungsitoli city and even some of the Idanoi area also use this Fondrako when conducting weddings. Therefore, the researcher was inspired to conduct a study on the semantics perspective behind the historical story of gowe bonio ni'owulu-wulu.

## **METHOD**

The research method is a series of ways, stages, or procedures that are scientific in nature to obtain data to achieve specific purposes and uses. According to Gupta & Rangi (2012) in Pavan & Kulkarni (2014: 169), research methods are defined as the techniques or procedures utilized by researchers. They describe the approach taken to carry out the research. This research uses a qualitative analysis approach, which focuses on an in-depth understanding of meanings, concepts, and experiences rather than relying solely on numerical data. This approach is particularly suitable for analyzing textual data and understanding language use in a particular context. According to Bozkurt et al. (2022), qualitative research aims to discover and describe how individuals behave and how they make sense of what they do. It can be said that throughout history, this kind of knowledge has always been sought.

According to Ezer et al. (2021), qualitative research involves examining certain cases and events in depth in their natural environments using qualitative data collection tools, following a qualitative process to understand the perceptions and experiences of individuals. According to Patton (2014), Karataş (2015), and Miles & Huberman (2016) in Ezer et al. (2021), qualitative research methods generally allow researchers to obtain deep and detailed information about the subjects. In this respect, the researcher acts like an explorer, tracing the truth by asking additional questions and giving importance to the subjective perspective of the addressee. Qualitative research offers rich and holistic content along with a strong potential to uncover complex situations.

Furthermore, as this research aims to explore the semantics perspectives' on the historical story of gowe bonio ni'owulu-wulu, it employs qualitative analysis methods to emphasize how the

gowe bonio ni'owulu-wulu story is communicated and perceived by various social groups within the context of cultural tourism. This approach assists in identifying and comprehending the meanings embedded in the historical story behind gowe bonio ni'owulu-wulu.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result and Findings**

The cultural diversity of a region is a major attraction for tourists to learn more about the history, art and lifestyle of the local community. One interesting cultural tourism destination is Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu in Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu Village, Gunungsitoli City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The history of the beginning of Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu is due to the implementation of Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu. Fondrakö is a deliberation and ceremony to determine customary law that is enforced in a unitary area and group of Nias society. Initially, Öri Taluidanoi enforced Fondrakö Taluidanoi. As a result of differences in the interpretation of customary law and several wars, Öri Laraga and Öri Taluidanoi experienced a decline, which led to the displacement of the population accompanied by the formation of several new villages (Banua), the best known of which was Banua Bonio, located around the Nou River. In order to unite several villages that had been formed in the area around Gunungsitoli City in one customary law unit, the extended family of Si Tölu Tua consisting of the Zebua Clan (Lökhó Zitölu), the Harefa Clan (Bawö Laraga and Balugu Harimao), and the Telaumbanua Clan (Laso Börómbanua), facilitated by Laso Börómbanua Telaumbanua conducted an Customary Banquet (Owasa) for the establishment of Banua Bonio, which was followed by a very famous customary law agreement by the name of Fondrako Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu, the implementation of which fell on April 07, 1629.

This Fondrakö is fowuluwuluni, in this case revising the Laraga-Taluidanoi customary law (or often called Laraga custom) that had long been in effect before. Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owuluwulu regulates, among other things, the marriage price, the implementation of customs, territorial boundaries and port duties. In practice at this time, the mention of the Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owuluwulu law is not very popular among the majority of the people of Gunungsitoli City, but is more popularly referred to as "Fondrakö Laraga", namely the name of the pre-existing fondrakö which was revised through Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owuluwulu. In this study, researchers will focus on the language perspective of customs at weddings. Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu is related to the language perspective on semantics, where during the wedding ceremony various expressions are performed by the traditional leaders.

### **Discussion**

The following are terms in the stages of a traditional Nias wedding using the Laraga/Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owulu-wulu Customary Law:

1. Bridal initiation (famaigi niha)
2. Engagement (fame laeduru/fohu-fohu mbagi lagaene ma mbala-mbala li zihede)
3. Pre-wedding session 1 (fanunu manu/la'olembai yawa ziraha soköli-köli)

4. Pre-wedding session 2 (famalua li/femanga bawi nisila hulu)
5. Pre-wedding session 3 (fotu ba nono nihalö)
6. Pre-wedding session 4 (fame'e nono nihalö/famözi aramba, fangandrö ba nomo)
7. Pre-wedding session 5 (folau bawi walöwa)
8. Customary wedding party (falöwa)
9. Post wedding session 1 (famegö nono nihalö)
10. Post wedding session 1 (femanga gahe/famuli nukha)

There are also which one of the greetings (Famaolagö ba Fangowai Tome) made during the Falöwa (customary wedding party), with the semantics meaning:

No	Expressions
	Emali dome si so ba lala, ba ono luo na so yomo
1	<p><b>Connotative Meaning</b></p> <p>This expression has a connotative meaning because it implies deeper social values and relationships than just its denotative meaning. "Strangers" (emali) meeting on the road connotes unfamiliarity, while "brothers" (ono luo) arriving home connotes closeness and acceptance.</p> <p><b>Affective Meaning</b></p> <p>This expression also has affective meaning as it reflects emotional and social attitudes towards others. It shows a change in attitude from unfamiliarity to warmth and friendliness when one has been welcomed home.</p>
	No mihönagö mi bologö dödö yawa gate, wa no mihönagö mi bologö dödö yawa mbo
2	<p><b>Connotative Meaning</b></p> <p>This expression describes a deeper trait, such as generosity, patience, or extraordinary kindness. Connotative meanings refer to the additional associations or emotions that these words carry beyond their literal meanings. In this context, "mi bologö dödö yawa gate" and "mibologö dödö yawa mbo" indicate a very kind or generous act performed by someone.</p>
	No wo ogömi-gömi khöma danö, no ndrundrumö khöma luo
3	<p><b>Connotative Meaning</b></p> <p>This expression not only conveys a literal meaning (i.e., difficulty in seeing the world and the sun), but also has an additional, deeper meaning. The connotations of "ogömi-gömi khöma danö" and "</p>

		ndrundrumò khòma luò " in this context most likely refer to situations or conditions of life that are fraught with difficulty, confusion, or obscurity.
	Affective Meaning	It also contains affective meaning as it conveys the speaker's emotions and feelings. Feelings of despair, sadness, or confusion are reflected in the choice of words used.
		Wogamö banua zawatö, banua zalawa zohadi
4	Connotative Meaning	The sentence "Reaching the longed-for village (banua zawatö, banua zalawa zohadi)" falls under connotative meaning. The phrase "longed-for village" not only refers to a literal village, but also reflects the hope, enthusiasm or excitement felt when reaching a desired destination or place. As such, the sentence not only describes a physical situation or location, but also implies the subjective feelings of the person saying it.
		Geu sebua so töla balaki, geu sowua böro zami, böwönia wa asökhi, ba bulunia masi masi
5	Connotative Meaning	Each description in this expression carries additional meanings or connotations attached to positive traits. "Geu sebua so töla balaki" indicates strength and value, "geu sowua böro zami" indicates benefit or kindness given, "böwönia wa asökhi" indicates commendable behavior, and "ba bulunia masi masi" indicates a caring and loving nature.
	Affective Meaning	It also contains affective meaning, showing respect, admiration and affection towards the person depicted as a tree.
		Hana wa tema misösö mbalö nangi, wa tema misui mbalö laöhö wogamö-gamö banua zowatö si no so ba höndrö danö.
6	Denotative Meaning	Denotatively, this sentence asks why a person or group of people would go to great lengths to weather a storm to reach a remote place.
	Connotative Meaning	Where the expression "misösö mbalö nangi" has a connotation of struggle or effort that is hard and full of challenges. And "si so ba höndrö danö" has the

		connotation of a place that is far away, possibly hard to reach, and possibly uncrowded or unpopular.
	Affective Meaning	It can also have an emotional meaning, describing awe or amazement at the great effort it took to reach that place.
		Asala zikhö wöra na falukha, asal lawoha na faondra mboto, ba oi zara ira fa'ago bawa, oi zara ira lafatutu gangango.
	Denotative Meaning	This expression describes the behavior of ants kissing each other and sticking their foreheads together when they meet or pass each other.
7	Connotative Meaning	This expression contains connotative meanings that describe friendliness and familiarity between individuals, which can be interpreted as an invitation to treat fellow humans with a friendly and respectful attitude, just like ants who greet and respect each other.
		Me no tohare domeda ba mbulu golayama
8	Referential Meaning	In this context, the sentence refers to a situation where a guest has arrived at the courtyard of the house (mbulu golayama) which is the place to gather.
		Me no tohare wõ mbabatö ba uwu börö danö-tanö
	Denotative Meaning	Besan (mbambatö) refers to the parents of the son-in-law, i.e. the parents of the child's spouse. Uncle (uwu börö danö tanö) refers to the brother of the mother.
9	Connotative Meaning	The words "mbambatö" and "uwu börö danö tanö" have connotations associated with extended families and close familial relationships. The term "mbambatö" often carries connotations of new relationships established through child marriage, which adds to social and kinship networks.
	Affective Meaning	It can also imply respect and recognition of both parties' important roles in the family, signaling care and value for their presence.
10		No ofeta ita ba dalu galawatö mbawa, me no göi ofeta badangi-dangi ndröfi

	Referential Meaning	It conveys concrete, factual information about a time or position in the time span of months and years. Phrases like "galawatò mbawa" and "dangi-dangi ndròfi" directly refer to a specific time period in the calendar. As such, they provide a clear referential meaning of time or position in the context of time.
	Mitema'ö ira maola-maola, mifaondragö ira masi-masi	
11	Affective Meaning	"Let us welcome them with kind words (maola-maola) and love (masi-masi)" is included in the affective meaning. This sentence contains positive emotions and feelings, inviting us to welcome them with kindness and love.
	Lö tobali fo'ömö ngasara gana'a, lö tobali sögö ba zato, tobali wōna'i famaosa mboho mbawa, tobali ia wua-wua mbo	
12	Affective Meaning	This expression contains affective meaning because it shows the positive feelings or attitudes that are expected, namely creating happiness (mboho mbawa) and health or goodness (wua-wua mbo) not becoming hatred or a burden (fo'ömö ngasara gana'a and sögö ba zato).
	Na falukha zi fatalifuso, na falukha zi famakhelo, siföföna na mboho mbawa, siföföna ua wolau lego, dania ua göda lahina, dania ua göda afo.	
13	Connotative Meaning	This sentence has the connotation of implying a norm or custom in meeting with relatives. Phrases such as "mboho mbawa", "wolau lego", and "dania ua göda lahina/afo" not only describe physical actions, but also contain normative or cultural meanings about how to interact or behave towards relatives.
	Dörö ena'o ba wamaolago sia'a nafo, wamaolagö bago mömö, bago huwa	
14	Denotative Meaning	Presenting the main betel (sia'a nafo) and tobacco (bago mömö, bago huwa), the act of giving or offering high quality betel & tobacco.
	Connotative Meaning	Connotatively, presenting the main betel (sia'a nafo) symbolizes respect, hospitality, or appreciation towards someone who is respected or valued and



		tobacco (bago mömö, bago huwa) symbolizes friendship, hospitality, or social relations.
		Yahalokha khönia wa'anumana furi zatua si sagötö föna
15	Denotative Meaning	Woe to poverty without parents means experiencing poverty without the presence or support of parents.
	Connotative Meaning	This expression can illustrate how hard it is to live in poverty without the guidance, support or protection of parents. It can indicate the deeper and more complex difficulties of life, not only in material aspects but also emotionally and socially.
		No manaere khöma mbumbu newali, böhöi tola mafaolagö nuwu galimawa,
	Denotative Meaning	"It has become lopsided for us to have a large yard (mbumbu newali)". Literally, this means that the courtyard of the house, which should be spacious, now looks slanted or uneven. And "we can't even serve betel from silver (nuwu galimawa)", meaning that they can't even afford to serve betel served in a silver container.
16	Connotative Meaning	"It has tilted for us a large yard (mbumbu newali)": This can be interpreted figuratively that their condition or situation is no longer stable or as good as it used to be. A large yard symbolizes stability and prosperity, but now it is "tilted" indicating problems or difficulties. "Let alone being able to serve betel nut of silver (nuwu galimawa)": This can be taken figuratively to mean that they are unable to give anything special or valuable. The silver betel symbolizes hospitality and the ability to give the best, but they feel unable to do so due to their difficult circumstances.
		Lö wō na'i ba zinata mbawa me no aekhu ba danö sirimba-rimba,
17	Denotative Meaning	Denotatively, the phrase "no words are spoken directly (zinata mbawa)" means that no words are spoken explicitly or directly. That is, no verbal communication takes place. And "when it has fallen on the peaty ground filled with water (danö sirimba-rimba)" describes a situation where someone or

		something has fallen on the wet, mushy ground (peat) filled with water. It is a physical description of a specific place or condition.
	Connotative Meaning	Connotatively, the phrase "not a single expression is spoken directly (zinata mbawa)" means a situation where communication does not occur openly or directly. It can imply silence, shyness, or an inability to express feelings or thoughts. And "when it has fallen on the peaty ground filled with water (danö sirimba-rimba)" describes a difficult or unfavorable situation. Falling into peaty, water-filled ground can be a metaphor for a situation that is complicated, dangerous, or difficult to get through or overcome.
		Mahundragö ba lo ae tanö ba gahema.
	Literal Meaning	Literally, this sentence illustrates that even though they walk or tread, no soil sticks to their feet.
18	Connotative Meaning	This sentence also has a connotative meaning because it can be interpreted metaphorically. The phrase "lo ae tanö ba gahema" can be interpreted to mean that they feel they don't have a permanent place to live or that they don't have strong roots in a place.
		Hulo niwa'ö ba humanö, hulö niwa'o ba hoho
	Denotative Meaning	Denotatively, a parable (humanö) is a story or expression used to convey a message or moral lesson through analogy or metaphor. And a poem (hoho) is a poem or literary form written in rhythmic form, usually with the intent to entertain, teach, or convey a message through beautiful and poetic language.
19	Connotative Meaning	Connotatively, parables (humanö) refer to profound wisdom or moral lessons conveyed through simple stories. It can indicate the use of traditional wisdom or long-established values in the culture. And verse (hoho) refers to the beauty of language, creativity and emotion expressed through poetry. It can show appreciation for art and aesthetics in conveying a message or story.

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Hadia u'olembai me lo tola, hadia uhalö me lo bua yawa		
20	Connotative Meaning	These sentences use connotatives to express deeper emotional or symbolic meanings. Phrases like "lo tola" and "lo bua yawa" refer to challenges or despair in certain situations.

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## CONCLUSION

This research focuses on exploring language perspectives in the semantics of the historical narrative of Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-Wulu, a significant cultural tourism site in Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu Village, Gunungsitoli City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Cultural tourism involves experiencing the traditions, arts, history and cultural heritage of a destination first-hand. This research uses qualitative analysis methods such as in-depth interviews, participatory observation and document analysis to investigate how the story of Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-Wulu is communicated and understood by different social groups in the context of cultural tourism. Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-Wulu originated from a historic customary law meeting (Fondrakö Bonio Ni'owulu-Wulu) that took place on April 7, 1629. The event aimed to unite the various villages under one customary law unit in the midst of social change and migration within Nias society. This research highlights the importance of language in interpreting and promoting cultural heritage in tourism. It examines expressions (*famaolagö ba fangowai tome*) delivered during traditional ceremonies, which emphasize hospitality, respect and social harmony in welcoming guests.

Semantically, this *famaolagö ba fangowai tome* speech illustrates cultural values through metaphors and expressions that emphasize politeness, respect and the importance of social relations. For example, expressions such as "*mana saato sikhe na falukha ba faa'go bawa*" liken human interactions to ants greeting each other, underscoring cultural norms of respect and hospitality. Similarly, other expressions convey attitudes and emotions towards guests, reflecting traditional community values of warmth and acceptance. This research underscores the role of language in cultural tourism, not only as a means of communication but also as a means of preserving and transmitting cultural meanings. By analyzing the semantics nuances of the utterances in the Gowe Bonio Ni'owulu-Wulu narratives, this research contributes to understanding how language shapes cultural interpretations and enhances the tourist experience in cultural heritage destinations.

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