

## Conference Paper

# The Local Wisdom of the *Mangarou Totok* Spell Towards Natural Resources in the Simalungun Community: An Anthropolinguistic Study

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**Abstract**

This research aimed to describe the treatment process and the local wisdom of the *mangarou totok* spell towards the natural resources in the Simalungun community. This research applied an anthropolinguistic approach. The parameters of the study were interconnection, value and sustainability. The data were collected by in-depth open-ended interviews and direct participatory observation. The qualitative paradigm with the interactive model was applied during this research. Based on the research findings, there are eight steps in doing the process of the *mangarou totok* spell. Some of the types of local wisdom found in this research were: health, politeness, preservation, cooperation, care for the environment, social loyalty, positive thinking, commitment, and compliments. This research presents the variety of contributions focused on the sustainability of natural resources, namely: *sitabar* banana midrib, betel leaves, *gambier*, lime, areca nut, and black pepper. This research presents a new contribution to the economic and social activities of the Simalungun community. The implementation of the *mangarou totok* spell through natural resources can increase the Simalungun community's income especially for shamans and the cheap cost of medications for patients. The *mangarou totok* spell also improves social activities because it teaches society to help one another voluntarily through budget treatment. The Simalungun community has lived in harmony by implementing the *mangarou totok* spell, the implementation of which requires the society to coexist with nature which provides them with the materials that they need in practicing the *mangarou totok* spell.

**Keywords:** Local Wisdom, *Mangarou Totok* Spell, Natural Resources,

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## 1. Introduction

*Mangarou totok* spell is one of spell of traditional medication in Simalungun ethnic. The *Mangarou totok* spell is applied to treat the infant dentition. Usually, many health problems appear in the dentition process such as fever or pain that causes the baby

feel unwell. Then Simalungun community believes that the *Mangarou totok* spell are able to treat and help the babies in relieving those problems in the process.

*Mangarou totok* spell uttered by a *datu* “shaman”. *Datu* is someone who has the special ability in applying spell as traditional medication. Then, the society believes that *datu* can communicate with the supernatural inhabitation for asking the treatment. *Datu* is the intermediary between the superstitious “ghost” and the baby as the patient. *Datu* asks the ghost to treat the infant’s dentition by uttering the *mangarou totok* spell.

*Mangarou totok* spell need the banana midrib as a material to treat the infant dentition. The banana midrib is a processed base on the rules of *mangarou totok* spell in Simalungun ethnic. The banana is one of the natural resources that grow in our environment. The banana grows in tropical places such as in Indonesia. The banana midrib is the stem of the banana bunch. It is usually used to treat the injured body and kill the bacteria that comes from the wound. Therefore, the Simalungun ethnic applies the banana midrib to cure their injured body long before modern medication are found.

Besides traditional treatment, the *mangarou totok* spell is one of the local wisdom in Simalungun community that needs to be preserved because this tradition has been out of the interest of the young generation. Nowadays, the young generation is more interested to consume modern medicine rather than traditional medicine. Modern medicine is easier to obtain and has the same function as a traditional medicine. Therefore *mangarou totok* spell is infrequently applied in Simalungun community. This research illustrates and describes the traditional medicine process of infant dentition. Then this research also aims to inform the societies about the existence of *mangarou totok* spell elaborated with local wisdom in *mangarou totok* spell, all of which are beneficial to preserve Simalungun culture.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Anthropolinguistic Study

Languages have a close relation to culture. However, the relationship between language and culture has become an interesting subject to learn. This phenomenon is one of the subjects in anthropolinguistic study. Anthropolinguistics is the study of human culture through the meaning of language use that is related to where they live, namely nature. Anthropolinguistic is a part of science that focuses on the study of languages in anthropological concept. Duranti (1997:2) states that anthropological linguistics is a study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice.

Hymes (1963:277) states that anthropolinguistics is the study of speech and language within the context of anthropology. Foley (1997:3) states that anthropological linguistics is viewing language through the prism of the core of anthropological concept, culture, and such as to uncover the meaning behind the use, misuse, and non-use of language, its different form, register, and styles. It is an interpretive discipline peeling away at language to find cultural understanding.. One of the research objects in anthropolinguistics is local wisdom.

## 2.2. Local wisdom

Local wisdom is inherited from one generation to another orally. Local wisdom is a science that is obtained from the local community, and it can be used to regulate human life to become good human beings, to achieve peace and prosperity. Sibarani (2014: 115) states that the local wisdom is the positive value of culture. It means that the positive values of the culture in the past are still appropriate nowadays for the young generation. The local wisdom that comes from the positive values of culture can be used and applied wisely (Sibarani, 2017:13-14).

Local wisdom is good ideas of wisdom, value, virtue, guide, coming from societies. The local wisdom is the local genius or community's wisdom deriving from the lofty value of cultural tradition to manage the community social order or social life. This definition emphasizes wisdom to manage the social life that comes from noble culture. Local wisdom is the value of local culture, having been applied to wisely manage the community's social order and social life. It means that emphasis on cultural nobility is used to manage the social life. To manage social life means to solve the social problems of societies such as crime and poverty. Sibarani (2018:2) states that local wisdom is the indigenous knowledge or local wisdom of a society to make peace and improve the community welfare. It means that the local wisdom is a basic thing to build the characters of humans from childhood to adulthood

There are two types of the cores local wisdom, namely: local wisdom for people's welfare or prosperity and local wisdom for human beings' peacefulness or goodness. The local wisdom which is used to increase the welfare includes hard work, disciplines, education, health, mutual aid or cooperation, gender management, cultural creativity and preservation, and environment care. The local wisdom having purpose to create peacefulness comprises politeness, honesty or integrity, social loyalty, harmony, commitment, positive thinking, and compliment.

### 2.3. Mangarou totok Spell

*Mangarou totok* spell is originated from the local tradition for asking healing in Simalungun ethnic. The *mangarou totok* spell is the supplication prayers aimed to supernatural figures to treat the infant's teeth and the spell is uttered softly. A *Datu* utters the *mangarou totok* spell with spiritual gestures so that it will more powerful. In line with it, Sinaga (2019) states that *saluh suh* incantation is used to help the process of giving birth normally and uttered in the spiritual movement to have a powerful result.

Generally, all the spell in Simalungun ethnic need certain materials in its process so that it will a powerful spell. Thus *mangarou totok* spell needs some materials namely: lime, Gambier, areca nut, black pepper, and betel leaves. All the materials used in *mangarou totok* spell come from the natural resources.

### 2.4. Natural Resources

Natural resources come from nature or everything that is unmade by humans. Natural resources give the contribution to human life such as plants, river, and humans cannot live without caring of nature. Humans will able to have a longer life if they can live in harmony with nature. The harmonic relationship between humans and nature is an interesting subject to be learned.

## 3. Research Method

A qualitative paradigm with an interactive model was applied in this research. Qualitative is the descriptive research that inquires the understanding of sharing the information of human social life. Qualitative research is one of the methodologies to explore and understand the problem in society and human life. Qualitative research aims to comprehend the situations, events, and roles of the society or the particular social interaction. It means that this research is an investigative process, in which the researchers can understand a social phenomenon by distinguishing, comparing, duplicating, categorizing, and classifying the research object. The data collections are applied in the forms of in-depth open-ended interview from the shaman as the informant who realizes about *mangarou totok* spell. The direct and participatory observation was applied in the *mangarou totok* process. The data were the utterances of shaman's performance and the materials used in *mangarou totok* spell performance.

After collecting data, the interactive model was used in analyzing data. There were three activities in the interactive model, namely: data condensation, data display, and drawing/verifying conclusion (Miles, M.& Huberman, 2014:10) as shown below:



Figure 1 Components of data analysis interactive models Miles & Huberman.

Figure 1

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Result

#### 4.1.1. The treatment process of infant teething

The healing tradition of the infant dentition (*mangarou totok* spell) in Simalungun ethnic is a sacred process. The shaman and the patient have committed to follow the rules and treatment steps carried out properly. There are several stages of the *mangarou totok* spell process in doing the infant dentition. The first step is to prepare a *demban panurungi*. *Demban panurungi*, a requirement for asking the medicine from a shaman. It consists of lime, gambier, areca nut, black pepper, and are wrapped in betel leaves (It only can be called *demban panurungi* if all the ingredients are complete). The method of folding the *demban panurungi* must be under the Simalungun tradition.

The second step is to prepare the *demban sayur*. It contains gambier, lime, and areca nut put inside the folded betel leaves. Then the patient gives *demban sayur* to the *datu* "shaman" as a way for asking treatments, and the shaman takes it as a sign of his willingness to help. The act of giving *demban sayur* to the shaman is a sign of honor to the shaman. On different occasions, the *demban sayur* has the other function to invite the member of the relative in every ceremony. The third step is that the shaman asks the *demban panurungi* from the patient as a requirement for requesting treatment.

The fourth step is the shaman takes and slices the banana into seven in separated pieces. The banana midrib used for this treatment is a *sitabar* banana midrib. According to the shaman, *sitabar* banana midrib has a different content from the other banana

midrib. The *sitabar* banana midrib can be used to the human body safely. The fifth step is shaman takes a handful of *demban panurungi* while uttering the *mangarau totok* spell. Then, he puts it to his mouth and chews it softly. The sixth step is the shaman takes the *sitabar* banana midrib and utters the *mangarau totok* spell on it. The seventh step is the shaman spouts the *demban panurungi* on *sitabar* banana midrib four times to the upper part and three times behind and saying “heal, heal, heal, and heal” for each part.

At the end of the treatment, the shaman gives the *sitabar* banana midrib to patient that have been spelled. After giving the *sitabar* banana midrib, the shaman explains the ways to use it. The parents give the seven inseparated pieces to the baby one by one. Then the baby bites the midrib until she/he does not want it again.

Usually, if the baby does not want the midrib anymore, they will throw it. At the time, the parents must take and put it far from them so the babies so that I cannot be anymore. The rest of the banana midrib must be kept in a safe place that the baby cannot reach. The seven pieces of banana midrib are used up until seven days. However, it will better if all is finished in one day. The parents should give the seven pieces of banana midrib every day for seven days. Here is the text of *mangarau totok* spell that are uttered by *datu* “shaman”.

*Ham siraja bakkut appa ham si raja ussol-ussol,  
Usal-usol hon ham ma pisau balati ni si ucok/butet,  
Ase ulang tama “aroon ni” Iya sahmat.....iya sahmat.....iya sahmat.....iya sahmat....  
iya sahmat.....iya sahmat.....iya sahmat.*

**(Sources from Informant, taken at Nagori Dolok village, Simalungun District on  
October, 25 2018)**



**Figure 2:** *Demban panurungi* as the material of *mangarau totok* spell. Sources: Nagori Dolok in Simalungun District on October, 25 2018.



**Figure 3:** *Demban sayur* is the betel leaves that signed of helping request in Simalungun Ethnic. Taken on Nagori Dolok village in Simalungun District on October, 25 2018.



**Figure 4:** *Datu* is utterancing the *mangarou totok* spell and spouting the *demban panurungi* in *sitabar* banana's midrib. Taken at Nagori Dolok village in Simalungun District on October, 25 2018.

#### 4.2. The kinds of local wisdom in Mangarou totok spell.

These are some kinds of local wisdom in *mangarou totok* spell of the Simalungun societies. They are health, politeness, environments care, preservation, cooperation, social loyalty, commitment, positive thinking, and compliment.



#### 4.2.1. Health

*Mangarou totok* spell aims to treat the infants' dentition. At the age of eight-nine months, the baby will experience swollen gum as the process of dentition. In the dentition process, the baby will get symptoms such as high fever, diarrhea, and vomiting. Inconveniences may happen as the baby cries. In this situation, the *mangarou totok* spell can help to relieve the pain. *Mangarou totok* spell requires the materials in doing the treatment and can be found in our environment. Simalungun societies believe that the *mangarou totok* spell tradition can relieve the pain of dentition process.

#### 4.2.2. Politeness

The *mangarou totok* spell teaches us to be polite and respectful towards other people. This can be seen when the patient comes to a shaman for asking the treatment. They speak softly and politely or using pleading words. When requesting treatment, the patient must be wearing *hiou* "a sarong", sits properly, and bends over in front of the shaman. These are the rules in the Simalungun ethnic tradition.

#### 4.2.3. Environment Care

*Mangarou totok* spell teaches and guides the society to care about the environment because it uses natural resources as the materials. The materials are *sitabar* banana midrib, betel leaves, lime, black pepper, and areca nut that need to cultivate and preserve. Therefore, those materials are used by the Simalungunesse for traditional treatment.

#### 4.2.4. Preservation

By practicing *mangarou totok* spell as traditional medication, some materials need to be preserved. One of them is the *Sitabar* banana plant. The *Sitabar* banana plant is one kind of banana that grows in Simalungun. *Sitabar* banana plant is different from the other banana. It is scarce to find because only some Simalungun community knows if the *sitabar* banana midrib can be used as a traditional treatment. The fruit of the *sitabar* banana is small and it cannot be sold. Therefore, through the *mangarou totok* spell, the *sitabar* banana needs to be preserved as the natural resources for traditional medication.



#### 4.2.5. Cooperation

One of the types of local wisdom is cooperation. Cooperation is important in the *mangarou totok* spell performance. Good cooperation between shaman and patient is important because the treatment cannot be done if there is no good cooperation between the two parts. Cooperation is also found through the preparation of materials of *mangarou totok* spell performance before the treatment act for baby teeth. The shaman requests the patient to follow the rules and prepare the materials of *mangarou totok* spell performance. Then, the shaman and the patient make a good cooperation in practicing the *mangarou totok* treatment.

#### 4.2.6. Social Loyalty

Social loyal is one of the purposes of local wisdom. Social loyalty is seen in the *mangarou totok* spell while the shaman does the treatment of the teeth problem. The shaman gives his caring through the willingness to do the *mangarou totok* spell to relieve the baby's pain. The shaman considers that the infant as his grandchild. Therefore, *mangarou totok* spell performance teaches us to care one the other as social humasn based on the local wisdom. The patient gives the low budged treatment as the cost of treatment because the shaman does not determine it.

#### 4.2.7. Commitment

Commitment is an agreement between the two parties in charge of the same goal. This commitment is found in the practice of *mangarou totok* spell between shaman and patient. The commitment is seen while the patient visits the shaman bringing the requirements needed to pratice the spell. The patient also knows the rules to be done to get the treatment goal. So that, *mangarou totok* spell teaches the society to be a committed person especially for the Simalungun ethnic.

#### 4.2.8. Positive Thinking

Positive Thinking is an attempt to do the positive action to achieve goals. Usually, someone will do good actions useful to her/himself or other people. Positive thinking is found in the *mangarou totok* spell. It can be seen while the patient comes to the shaman for asking the treatment. The patient thinks that if he/she comes to ask the

treatment, their goal is that treating the teeth process will be successful. They believe to do the treatment by coming to the shaman to relieve the baby's pain. Therefore, their actions show that *mangarou totok* spell teaches us to be a positive thinking person.

#### 4.2.9. Compliment

Most of the spells in Simalungun ethnic contain compliment. The *mangarou totok* spells consists of two compliments, namely: praising to the Creator of the universe and the humans. Before uttering the core of spell, the shaman gives praise to the Creator of the universe. Shaman utters something like, "*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam.*" This shows that the *mangarou totok* spell contains compliment to the Creator of the universe. The second compliment is praising to humans. This is seen when the patient gives thanks to a shaman by giving some money.

#### 4.3. Discussion

The *mangarou totok* spell of Simalungun ethnic is aimed to treat the infant dentition process. The *mangarou totok* spell is oriented to maintain and preserve the oral tradition of the Simalungun ethnic. In maintaining and preserving the *mangarou totok* spell as local wisdom of Simalungun ethnic, people must do the rules, requirements, and prohibitions because all of them are a unity that cannot be separated. Before the *mangarou totok* spell is performed *datu* "shaman" must make everyone sure that all the requirements have been well prepared. The requirements of *mangarou totok* spell are prepared by the shaman's wife because in Simalungun ethnic the wife must help the husband's profession. Therefore, the shaman wife must know and master to choose good materials such as shape and color. Then she must also know how to create good *demban sayur*, *demban panurungi*, and *sitabar* banana midrib according to the Simalungun tradition because this supports the efficacy of *mangarou totok* spell.

Simalungun the women should know and understand the functions of the materials in *mangarou totok* spell. These materials are also used in the other spells in the Simalungun tradition. Every spell of Simalungun ethnic uses the *demban sayur* because it is an opening requirement of request to the shaman. *Demban sayur*, *demban panurungi*, and *sitabar* banana midrib are the materials that are important to the efficacy of *mangarou totok* treatment.

They have the aim to preserve as a form of caring for the environment because those come from natural resources. The materials and the rules of *mangarou totok* spell are shown important thus the treatment cannot be performed if they are not prepared completely. The first step is asking the treatment to the shaman by giving the *demban sayur*. Then the shaman takes it to show his agreement to do the treatment process. While the shaman and patient are holding the *demban sayur*, the patient will convey his/her problem or desire so the shaman knows what to do. Then, the shaman begins to do the treatment process of *mangarou totok*.

As a tradition, *mangarou totok* spell contains the kinds of local wisdom in Simalungun ethnic, the first is health. Health is an important thing to human life because during the growing process, the baby should live with a healthy life. *Mangarou totok* spell can be used as the solution for the teeth problem. Then, the second is politeness. Politeness is an attitude that should be possessed by everyone. Everyone honors other people because humans need life in harmony. In Simalungun ethnic, *mangarou totok* spell requires the patients to honor the shaman while patients do all the rules. The third is environment care. The Environments care is the responsibility of humans because the humans should live in harmony with nature. Nature is the place of the materials of *mangarou totok* spell. Through the *mangarou totok* spell, the plants should be preserved. Then, preservation is the fourth type. Preservation is the effort to maintain the materials that contain in the *mangarou totok* spell; they are betel leaves, black pepper, gambier, lime, and *sitabar* banana midrib. Those materials are very important in the practicing process of the *mangarou totok* spell. Then, the next type is cooperation. Cooperation is the teamwork between the shaman and the patient or the other participants. They have to perform the spell together respectfully. As the main actor, the shaman does his performance by the uttering of the spell, ensuring the completeness of materials, and explaining the prohibition. Then the patients or the participants must bring the *demban sayur* and do the instruction of the performance. The sixth is a commitment. Through commitment, the shaman and patient make a commitment. This is seen while they are doing their function “shaman as the main actor and patients as the participants” in performing the *mangarou totok* spell. The seventh is social loyalty. By being willing to treat the baby, the shaman shows his caring as a social human.

As a social human, the shaman considers that the baby is his family or grandchild. Beside it, the cost of treatment is not determined by the shaman. The shaman realizes that if anyone comes and asks for the treatment, he or she is in a poor situation, so, the shaman does not think about the treatment budget, but it is because of his caring.

Therefore, by treating the patient, even by the low budget, the shaman gets something.. And usually, as thanks to the shaman, the patient gives the treatment budget in a sincere heart. So the patient feels facilitated in requesting treatment to the shaman. Then, the eight is positive thinking. By believing the treatment, the patients obey all the rules and prohibitions. They prepare the materials because they hope the teeth problem can be relieved. Therefore, doing all the instructions from the shaman show that patients use positive thinking. The last is a compliment that is aimed to the Creator of the universe and to humans. Shaman utters the spell. Firstly, the shaman gives thanks to the Creator of the universe then secondly to humans.

## 5. Conclusion

The main material of *mangarau totok* spell is the *sitabar* banana midrib and betel leaves, *gambier*, lime, areca nut, and black pepper as the supporting materials. All the materials are mixed according to the Simalungun tradition. The *mangarau totok* spell contains some of the local wisdom, namely: health, polite, environment care, preservation, cooperation, social loyalty, commitment, positive thinking, and compliment. Through the *mangarau totok* spell, local wisdom as an indigenous knowledge of Simalungun ethnic could be inherited to the young generation. The *mangarau totok* spell is required to be preserved because it can give an income to society, especially the shaman, and alleviate the cost of treating the patient because the patient provides the medical expenses voluntarily or with a sincere heart.

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