



Communication Ethnography in the Clan Tradition at Batak Toba Wedding Ceremonies in Kupang City

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ABSTRACT

The Mangain tradition carries significant meaning in the context of Batak customary weddings. This ritual is not merely about conferring clan names, but is also a ritual process. It involves mapping the elements of communication, such as setting and scene, participants, ends, act, key, instrumentality, norms, genre, and analyzing the structure and patterns of communication that emerge in the implementation of the Mangain Marga tradition at Batak Toba weddings in Kupang City through a communication ethnography approach. The Mangain Marga tradition in Batak Toba weddings in Kupang City is a cultural manifestation that is extremely rich in communication symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, which function not only as a medium for conveying messages, but also as a reinforcement of social identity and a preserver of cultural values passed down through generations. Verbal communication in this tradition uses customary kinship terms that carry meanings far deeper than merely naming or stating the position of family members. Terms like tulang, hula-hula, boru, and dongan tubu clarify social roles and status within the customary structure that must be respected and upheld by every family member

INTRODUCTION

In Batak culture, there is a custom known as Mangain. Mangain is one of the traditions of the Batak people that is carried out to raise a child and convey clan lineage. This Mangain tradition is generally practiced by six Batak clans. The Mangain tradition often arises as a result of intermarriage with non-Batak ethnicities and raising children. Up until now, people outside the Batak community have known that Mangain is a custom performed before a wedding among the Batak people with individuals who are not of Batak descent. By being taken as a child and carrying out the Mangain tradition, the non-Batak individual can have a customary wedding with a Batak partner who was also born as a Batak. (Yudista Meli Henani, 2019).

The Mangain tradition holds significant meaning in the context of Batak customary marriages. This ritual is not merely about giving a clan name, but also serves as a ritual process. It marks a social transition and sanction that allows non-Batak individuals to join the Batak Toba kinship system (Simanjuntak, 2018). The Mangain process can be carried out in various situations, not only within the scope of marriage but also in social life. In practice, the Mangain ceremony consists of several ritual steps led by the Raja Parhata (narrator) and customary leaders who understand the philosophical values of the Batak Toba tradition (Hutabarat, 2017). Granting a clan name through the Mangain tradition confers both rights and customary obligations.

Here are the stages of the Mangain Marga process in the context of introducing two people from different clans who fall in love, TourToba. (2022):

1. Marhori-Hori Dinding (Initial introduction and serious intention)

Two people from different clans fall in love and decide to take their relationship to a serious level, usually towards marriage. As part of Batak customs, before proceeding further, both of them and their families must go through customary processes to maintain norms and harmony within the extended family.

2. Preparation of the Delegation Team (Dongan Sabutuha)

Usually, representatives from the party making the request (e.g., the family of the prospective bride or groom) form a delegation team called dongan sabutuha (bonded friends). This team serves as the official representative in the Mangain Marga process

3. Official Visit to the Clan's House

The delegation team visits the house of the clan to seek approval or blessing. This visit is official and conducted with full customary etiquette.

4. Marhata Sinamot

Open official discussion regarding the sinamot and other customary agreements, attended by the Big family both parties. The final result of this stage is: the agreed amount of sinamot, the list of traditional ulos and food is determined, and the date of the celebration is set.

5. Manaros Tutungon

A stage in Batak customs, especially in the marriage process or mangain marga, which means delivering or conveying what has been previously agreed upon, particularly concerning the giving of customary gifts such as sinamot (dowry), ulos, traditional food, and other equipment. It is usually carried out

after agreement at the Marhata Sinamot stage and before the traditional ceremony is held.

1. Ponomu-nomuon Stage

The groom's side will bring the prospective bride and introduce her as the future wife.

2. Martuppol Stage

Martuppol comes from the word "tumpol," which means an official engagement in front of the church and family. This is one of the mandatory stages in the Batak Christian traditional marriage process, marking the church and cultural acknowledgment that the couple will marry. Martuppol is usually held 1-2 weeks before the wedding blessing in the church.

3. Mabaruhon Situtungon

Church weddings (if Christian) are conducted by a pastor. This blessing becomes the basis for legal registration of the marriage by the state. After the blessing, the couple is legally and religiously married. Batak customary ceremonies are held in the presence of the raja parhata, family, and guests. Main activities: a. Mangulosi: giving ulos by the family to the bride and groom. Pemberian jambar: distribution of customary parts such as meat and ulosc. Tortor: traditional danced. Customary speeches: from the hula-hula (bride-giver), boru, and paranak parties

4. Paulak Une (Ulaon Paulak Une)

A return visit by the newlyweds and the groom's family to the bride's family home. This is done a few days or weeks after the wedding, as a form of respect and to maintain good relations between the families. If both prospective spouses are from the Batak ethnic group, it will proceed as described in the stages above, but if one is not Batak, they are first given a clan name (mangain).

Thus, marriage is the embodiment of a loving relationship between two individuals, the implementation of which is inseparable from the roles of parents, extended family, religion, organizations, and social status. In addition, customary law is a law that has become a habit or tradition and is sociologically highly binding for society. Therefore, if there is a violation of customary law, the offender will receive moral sanctions from their social environment (Walsito, 2017). However, in practice, the implementation of customary marriages often faces various obstacles, one of which is differences in cultural backgrounds between the couple. When the partners come from two different cultures, the potential for conflicts in values, norms, and customs becomes greater. This shows that not all cultures consistently preserve traditions that have been passed down through generations (Koentjaraningrat, 2002).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication Ethnography

The ethnography of communication is a development of the ethnography of speaking, which was proposed by Dell Hymes in 1962 (Ibrahim, 1994). The study of communication ethnography is aimed at examining the role of language in the communicative behavior of a society, specifically regarding the ways in which language is used in communities with different cultures. Communication ethnography is rooted in the concepts of language and social interaction within the framework of qualitative communication research. Its research follows the traditions of psychology, sociology, linguistics, and anthropology. The ethnography of communication focuses on cultural codes and rituals. In his first article, Hymes (1962) explained that the ethnography of speaking concerns situations as well as the use of patterns and functions of speaking as an independent activity.

Communication ethnography has become a discipline that demonstrates the processing of information in the structuring of communicative behavior, and its role in societal life. Communication ethnography takes language as a form of culture in the first and most important social situations, while also recognizing the need to analyze the code itself and the cognitive processes of its speakers and listeners. It accepts a smaller scope for linguistic description and rejects the possibility of understanding how language lives in the minds and on the tongues of its users (Saville-Troike, 1982:3-4, in Ibrahim, 1994:305). Communication ethnography has been controversial from the beginning. One of the controversies concerns its relationship with the field of linguistics as a whole. Dell Hymes, as the pioneer of communication ethnography theory, provides a clear boundary between linguistics and communication. The study of communication ethnography is not a linguistic study but a study of ethnography, and not about language, but about communication.

Coordination of Meaning Management Theory

The theory of meaning coordination management posits that communication is a process through which people understand their world and create social reality. This theory was first developed by Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen (1970), who argued that communication is central to being human and that people create their own conversational reality. Creating meaning in interaction is achieved by applying various rules based on the content of communication, stated actions, situations, relationships between communicators, individual backgrounds, and cultural patterns. For Pearce and Cronen, people communicate according to rules. Rules not only help humans communicate with others but also help interpret what others communicate to us.

The theory of coordination of meaning management is also defined as the way individuals deal with communication (Littlejohn and Foss, 2014: 175). Individuals give meaning to communication situations and to messages sent by others, as well as how they decide how to react or act in those situations. Individuals do not merely assign meaning and react, but they must also coordinate their actions with others through the process of interaction.

1. Content is the initial step where raw data is converted into meaning. In other words, content is the words used to communicate. It is important to

understand that content alone is not enough to create meaning in communication. When someone packages a message to be conveyed in communication that takes place within a friendship, the message cannot automatically be understood quickly. Conversations between friends will differ in the choice or use of words. However, if those words are chosen in a different type of communication, they will have a different meaning as well.

2. Speech acts refer to actions we perform through speaking, including praising, insulting, promising, threatening, stating, and asking. Often, when a friendship is established closely, even unusual forms of interaction can occur. For example, mutual hitting when first meeting is often done rather than shaking hands as is typical in a normal first encounter. An integral part of this theory is the speech act. Speech acts communicate the speaker's intention and indicate how communication should be carried out. Speech acts are actions we exhibit when speaking, including praise, insult, promises, threats, and questions. When the conversation becomes easy-going, it is not uncommon for mutual teasing or insults to occur. However, the reaction does not cause conflict, but instead, the interaction becomes warmer and more intimate.
3. Episode refers to a communication routine that has a clear beginning, middle, and end. At this level, we begin to see the influence of context on meaning. Pearce (1976) in West and Turner (2012, 120) argues that episodes are actually based on culture, where people bring expectations, influenced by their culture, about how an episode should be carried out. In a certain sense, episodes depict the context in which people act. They punctuate or emphasize an episode.
4. Relationship can be defined as a contract of agreement and understanding between two people in which there are guidelines for behavior. Friendship is a clear relationship between two or more people. A friendship relationship has reached an agreement. A contract can be defined as an agreement in a relationship where two people recognize the potential and limitations as relational partners. Contracts often design guidelines and behaviors. Life scripts refer to groups of past or present episodes that create a system of meaning that can be managed together with others. In life scripts, the history of relationships and interactions of each individual will influence the rules and patterns of interaction. Life scripts can be said to have similarities with each individual's autobiography.
5. Cultural patterns, each of us behaves according to the values present in society. These values are related to gender, race, class, and religious identity. Cultural patterns or archetypes can be described as "a very broad depiction of the structure of the world and a person's relationship to that structure" (Cronen & Pearce, 1981). This means that a person's relationship with the larger culture becomes relevant when interpreting meaning. Speech acts, episodes, relationships, and life scripts can be understood at the cultural level. Theorists argue that people identify with groups

METHODOLOGY

Methods and Reasons for Using the Qualitative Method

This study is a qualitative study using a communication ethnography approach. This approach is used to understand communication practices within a particular community, taking into account the social, cultural, and symbolic contexts that underlie the communication process. Qualitative research is chosen because it is suitable for exploring meanings, understanding, and in-depth interpretations of complex social phenomena, such as communication practices in the Mangain Marga tradition at Batak Toba customary weddings (Creswell, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Negotiation Preparation Stages

At this stage, communication occurs between two main parties, namely the family of the prospective bride or groom who will be given the clan name and the family that will bestow the clan name (Tulang/Parboru). This process will take place beginning with an informal meeting or the sending of a representative (Dongan Sabutuha) to convey the intention. Communication within the Mangain group will make it easier for those who wish to establish a Mangain clan. Furthermore, through communication, the goals of the Mangain group can be understood and carried out without obstacles.

2. Marhori-hori dinding

The marhori-hori dinding stage is the initial stage when the man and woman have already reached a mutual understanding and decided to take their relationship to the next level of marriage. "In this event, representatives from the man's family come to propose to the woman and ask whether the woman's family agrees or not. Then the parents directly ask their daughter whether the marriage is truly her wish or if there is any element of coercion. If the woman's family agrees to the proposal, the discussion will continue regarding the traditional ceremony, such as when it will be held, the venue, the number of invitations, the amount of dowry (mahr), and so on. In this discussion, only the immediate family attends. Therefore, whatever the outcome of the discussion at the woman's house will later be communicated to the man's family.

The Marhori-hori dinding stage is the initial step in the series of traditional marriage practices of the Batak Toba community. This stage signifies the seriousness of both parties, the groom and the bride, in taking their relationship to the level of marriage. Marhori-hori dinding literally means 'approaching the wall,' which culturally is interpreted as the initial approach of the male side to the female family through family representatives.

At this stage, the family of the groom sends a messenger as a form of respect to convey the intention to propose. The messenger's task is to ask the bride's family whether they are willing to accept the proposal. In this forum, the bride's family then directly clarifies with their daughter about her willingness to be married. This is important to ensure that the decision is made consciously, without any element of coercion. If the bride's family gives their consent, the discussion then moves on to technical matters related to the plans for the traditional wedding ceremony. Some topics that are commonly discussed at this

stage include: the timing of the ceremony, the venue, the number of guests, the amount of sinamot (dowry), and other logistical needs.

3. Marhata Sinamot

Marhata Sinamot means discussing the sinamot (dowry). Sinamot is a kind of "customary money" or a form of gift from the man to the woman in the context of marriage. Marhata sinamot is the process of negotiation or discussion between the man's family and the woman's family regarding the amount of sinamot to be given by the man as a form of respect and a symbol of responsibility toward the woman. The outcome of this stage is: the amount of sinamot is agreed upon, the list of traditional ulos and foods is determined, the date of the celebration is set, and at this time the process of mangain marga (surname exchange) is usually also decided. In this stage, both families prepare their respective customary representatives (especially from the related surnames). Then the woman's side will inform the desired amount of sinamot; at this point, a discussion between both parties will be held so that the final result is not burdensome for either side. Usually, the amount of sinamot is considered based on the woman's level of education, the family's social and economic status, the number of siblings, customary requests, and finally, the ability of the man's side. If at this stage everything has been agreed upon, it will proceed to the next stage. However, if no mutual agreement is reached, further meetings will be held until a final result is obtained from this marhata sinamot stage.

Marhata Sinamot is the process of discussion or negotiation between the families of the male and female parties for marriage, particularly to discuss customary money or sinamot. This sinamot negotiation is given by the male party to the female party as a form of respect, responsibility, and commitment to the female's family.

During the Marhata Sinamot negotiation stage, both families usually bring customary representatives, especially family members with the relevant clan, to participate in this stage. Once they are gathered in a meeting, it typically begins with the female's family stating the sinamot amount they expect. From there, the negotiation process between the two families takes place. Through this negotiation, both families deliberate to ensure that the sinamot amount determined does not burden either party, meaning the female's family will propose an amount, and the male's family will negotiate until an agreeable amount is reached.

4. Implementation Stage of the Mangain Marga Ritual

This stage will communicate the intentions of the party representing the clan; this will be delivered in the form of a speech or ceremonial presentation by family representatives or customary leaders. After the intentions of the party representing the clan have been conveyed, the next step is acceptance by the party to be honored, which will be marked by words of thanks, the offering of betel leaves, and other customary symbols. Finally, ulos (traditional cloth), rice, carp, or customary money (sinamot) will be given according to the communicated arrangements.

5. Manuros Tutungon

Manaros Tutungon in the Batak language means affirming an agreement or contract. This is the stage after everything has been agreed upon in the marhata sinamot stage, which is a stage that contains the affirmation and confirmation of the marriage intentions that have been agreed upon by both parties. In Batak customs, especially in the marriage process or mangain marga, manaros tutungon means delivering or conveying what has been previously agreed upon, particularly regarding customary gifts such as sinamot (dowry), ulos, traditional food, and other necessities. It is usually done after the agreement at the Marhata Sinamot stage and before the traditional wedding ceremony takes place.

The Manuros Tutungon stage refers to the stage of affirmation and consolidation of all matters that have been previously agreed upon, particularly during the Marhata Sinamot negotiation stage. This stage serves as an official prelude before the traditional celebration and wedding takes place and acts as an adat confirmation of the marriage commitment between both families. The Manuros Tutungon aims to revisit and reaffirm all customary agreements that have been made, ranging from sinamot, ulos, traditional food arrangements, and so on. Manuros Tutungon signifies and serves the purpose of demonstrating the seriousness and good intentions of the groom's side in continuing with the traditional marriage. At this stage, it involves symbolically or literally delivering what has been agreed upon, including sinamot, ulos, traditional foods, and other necessary items.

6. Martuppol Stage

Martuppol comes from the word "tuppol," which means a bond or promise. Martuppol signifies making a marriage promise before God and the church congregation, with witnesses from both families. This is one of the mandatory stages in the Batak Christian traditional marriage process, marking both church and customary recognition that the couple intends to marry. The Martuppol stage also serves to introduce the prospective Christian families to the existing church congregation. At this stage, it is usually a primary requirement to proceed with the church marriage blessing. Martuppol is also a stage to establish the spiritual and moral commitment of the couple who will be getting married. Here, the couple will receive guidance from the pastor on how to build a Christian household that is pleasing to God. Martuppol is usually held 1-2 weeks before the church wedding ceremony.

Martuppol originates from the word "tuppol" in the Batak language, which means 'tie' or 'promise.' Literally, martuppol means binding a marriage promise. In the context of Batak Christian customs, martuppol is an important and sacred stage in the marriage process, where both prospective bride and groom make a vow to marry in the presence of God, the church congregation, and the families of both parties who act as witnesses. This is an official recognition both religiously and traditionally that the couple truly intends to get married.

Post-Mangain Marga Social Integration Stage

1. Paulak Une (Ulaon Paulak Une)

This stage is the homecoming visit of the groom and his family to the bride's house. It takes place a few days or weeks after the wedding ceremony, as

a form of respect and to strengthen good relations between the families. This stage represents the final gesture of respect from the groom's side to the bride's family after accepting their daughter as part of the family. Paulak une also serves as a form of gratitude and completes the wedding customs. If both prospective spouses are Batak, it will proceed according to the stages mentioned above, but if one is not Batak, they will first be given a clan name (mangain) as explained in the first stage and ratified in the fourth stage.

Paulak Une (Ulaon Paulak Une) is the Closing Stage in Batak Wedding Customs, Paulak Une, or Ulaon Paulak Une, is the final stage in the series of traditional Batak wedding ceremonies. Literally, Paulak Une means "returning betel" as a symbol of a return visit from the groom's side and his family to the bride's family home. This visit is carried out a few days or weeks after the traditional celebration and wedding blessing. Although the wedding is considered legally and customarily valid, the Paulak Une stage still holds very important meaning, as it reflects ethics, respect, and the desire to maintain good relations between the two extended families that have now become one family bond.

Symbols of Communication, Negotiation, and Cultural Values in the Mangain Marga Tradition Verbal Communication Symbol

Verbal communication symbols in the Mangain Marga tradition are a very important part of preserving the cultural identity of the Batak Toba. The language used, especially traditional terms such as Tulang, Hula-hula, Boru, Dongan Tubu, Paranak, and Parboru, are not merely words for referring to kinship relationships. More than that, these terms reflect the social system and cultural values that live within the Batak community.

For example, when someone refers to another person as Tulang, it not only refers to the mother's brother but also indicates a position of honor and responsibility in the context of customary tradition. Similarly, Hula-hula plays a central role as the party giving a bride and is respected in almost every traditional ceremony. Verbal communication like this creates etiquette, builds interaction structures, and strengthens social solidarity.

Typical Toba Batak expressions are also full of meaning. They not only convey information but also values such as respect, love, responsibility, and kinship. Therefore, verbal symbols in this tradition are not just tools of communication, but part of a cultural heritage that connects generations. Verbal communication symbols are one of the main elements in the process of cultural communication. In the context of the Toba Batak society, these symbols not only serve as tools for conveying messages but also as guardians of customary values and social structures that have been passed down through generations. The Mangain Marga tradition, which involves giving a clan name to someone, usually in the context of adopting a child or establishing social status, is strongly characterized by the use of unique verbal symbols full of meaning.

Nonverbal Communication Symbols

Giving Ulos In the context of Mangain Marga, giving ulos to someone who has just been given a clan name serves as a sign of formal acceptance into the customary community. It is the Batak people's way of expressing that the person

has now become part of the social structure and has a culturally recognized identity. The ulos given is often adjusted according to the status of the relationship, such as ulos hela, ulos parompa, or ulos mangulosi, each with different meanings and purposes. What makes ulos a unique symbol of nonverbal communication is its ability to convey various messages simply through the act of giving, the choice of ulos type, and the way it is worn or draped. Without a single word spoken, an ulos can express a parent's love for a child, blessings from hula-hula to boru, or even grief and respect in a funeral ceremony. This demonstrates how deep and complex the symbolic system is in Batak culture.

In the Toba Batak tradition, communication is not only carried out verbally but also through symbolic actions rich in meaning. One of the most important and sacred forms of nonverbal communication is the giving of ulos. Ulos, as a traditional Batak cloth, is not just a textile product but also a cultural symbol that represents affection, blessings, respect, and social acceptance. In the context of nonverbal communication, the act of giving ulos can be seen as a form of communication that conveys a message without words, yet carries profound meaning within the social structure of the Batak community..

The giving of ulos during the Mangain Marga ceremony or the appointment of a clan holds a very significant meaning. Ulos is given to the person receiving the clan as a form of recognition, blessing, and acceptance according to customs and socially into the Batak community. In this process, the ulos is usually given by parties who hold a high traditional position, such as hula-hula or tulang, depending on the applicable kinship structure. The ulos given can vary in type, for example, ulos ragidup, ulos sibolang, or ulos mangiring, each of which has philosophical and symbolic meanings corresponding to the role or status of the person receiving it.

The Process of Negotiating Meaning and Cultural Values

1. Negotiation of Social and Cultural Identity

In a Toba Batak traditional wedding, especially during the Mangain Marga ceremony, there is a negotiation process of social and cultural identity that is very important. When someone who is not from the Batak tribe or does not have a Batak clan marries a Batak person, they need to be 'elevated' to become part of the Batak kinship system through the Mangain Marga ceremony. This is not merely giving a clan or surname, but an acknowledgment of the new social and cultural identity they will carry throughout their life. This negotiation concerns how a person can be accepted within the social structure of the Batak community, which has a very strong and hierarchical kinship system. They will occupy a certain position — whether as anak boru, tulang, or hula-hula — depending on their partner's position. This position is not only symbolic but also comes with social responsibilities in every traditional ceremony. Therefore, the person receiving the clan is also negotiating their identity: whether they accept Batak cultural values? Is he capable of fulfilling a role in the customs later on?

From the Batak community's perspective, giving a clan name to outsiders is also a form of collective negotiation. The community opens space to accept people from outside the Batak culture, but still maintains the existing customary values. Therefore, this process must be carried out with agreement, deliberation,

and legitimate ceremonies so that this new identity is truly recognized and does not cause conflicts in the future.

In the implementation of the Mangain Marga tradition at Batak Toba customary weddings, there is a process of negotiating social and cultural identity that is very important for both parties. This process takes place when one of the partners, usually someone who is not from the Batak tribe or does not have a marga, is officially appointed as part of the Batak kinship system through the granting of a marga.

This negotiation is not merely the giving of a name or administrative status, but more deeply involves acceptance of the value system, social roles, and customary structures that are deeply rooted in Batak culture. The person who receives a marga will occupy a specific position within the Batak social structure—such as hula-hula, paranak, or boru—and will automatically have customary responsibilities according to their position. That is why this process is called a negotiation, because both parties—the giver and the recipient of the marga—must reach a mutual understanding. The recipient of the marga needs to understand and accept Batak cultural values. Meanwhile, the Batak family also provides space to explain, guide, and accompany the individual in getting to know the customs. Besides social identity, cultural aspects are also negotiated, ranging from the use of kinship terms, the Batak language in ceremonies, to the symbolic meaning of ulos, carp, and traditional seating arrangements. All of these elements contain deep cultural values that must be understood so that they are not merely formalities. This negotiation shows that Batak culture is dynamic, open to change, yet still maintains customary values as a collective identity. The Mangain Marga tradition becomes a space for integration between the individual and the community, between the old identity and the new identity that is mutually agreed upon through a sacred and meaningful customary process.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Mangain Marga tradition in Batak Toba wedding ceremonies in Kupang City is a cultural manifestation rich in communication symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, which function not only as a medium for conveying messages but also as a reinforcement of social identity and a preserver of cultural values passed down through generations. Verbal communication in this tradition uses customary kinship terms that carry meanings far deeper than merely stating the names or positions of family members. Terms such as tulang, hula-hula, boru, and dongan tubu clarify social roles and status within the customary structure that must be respected and upheld by every family member. The language used in customary expressions, prayers (pasu-pasu), and words of gratitude contains philosophical values and social norms that strengthen respect and togetherness within the extended Batak family. These expressions also serve as a communication tool that connects old and new generations, while also affirming the continuity of cultural identity in every wedding celebration.

FUTHER STUDY

Conducting research coinciding with only one or a few wedding events may result in less varied data, as each celebration has different social and economic contexts. For future studies, it is recommended to carry out longitudinal research or multi-event studies in order to observe the consistency and variations of traditional communication patterns over a longer period of time.

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