



**11th AMER International Conference on Quality of Life**

Al Meroz Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand 28-30 Apr 2023

**Local Wisdom in Cultural Ceremony of Angkola Indigenous Community**

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**Abstract**

Language is the foundation of human verbal connection. Discourse in language occurs when the actual meaning of what someone says extends beyond a single sentence. Interpreting a discourse requires an examination of speech acts from the speaker. Members of the Angkola Batak ethnic group in Sumatra, Indonesia, conduct speech acts during *mangupa* cultural ceremonies where the utterances contain inferred meanings. This study seeks to discover these meanings as they replete sound advice and local wisdom. By employing textual documentation, observation, and interviews, it is discovered that phonologic, pragmatic, and semantic discourses explain the utterances in the *mangupa* cultural ceremony.

Keywords: Discourse; Inference; Local Wisdom; *Mangupa*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v8i24.4659>

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**1.0 Introduction**

*1.1 Discourse as a tool to understand language*

In linguistics, the discourse component has a multidimensional grammatical hierarchy. *Discourse* is a language that expands beyond simple sentences (Song, 2010). Analyzing a discourse must be distinct from the complexity of knowledge and social realities (Yule, 2020). Language is used to express ideas and information in daily life and depict a group of people and their culture (Mahmud, 2019). Hence, language is indicative of a community's identity and social relationships. In addition, discourse is closely related to the use of language; it is concerned not only with the use of language forms but also with the functional relationship between these forms and humans as users. This functional method can be delivered verbally or in writing and has two components: the transactional function and the interactional function (Brown et al., 1989). The transactional function involves the transfer of content, whereas the interactional function involves the expression of social ties and personal opinions by speakers and listeners. In this context, the delivery of the stated material is referred to as a reference, but the personal attitudes of speakers and listeners are known as *inference*.

Discourse analysis investigates the relationship between speakers and the significance of the speech they generate (Song, 2010). In this context, *the inference* is essential for comprehending the cognitive processes underlying the formation of something with a deeper meaning than what was stated. Inference creates a mental environment related to the events recounted by using the attributes of the physical world (Suvorova, 2020). In social settings, people express their emotions through the various daily rituals that constitute a culture. People frequently use language to demonstrate how their culture is represented during traditional ceremonies, mainly using

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v8i24.4659>

inference phrases. Therefore, traditional ceremonies and discourse analysis go hand in hand when understanding the deeper meaning of culturally presented teachings of virtue and wisdom.

### 1.2. Discourse in Mangupa Traditional Ceremony

Critical discourse analysis, which considers the object's situation and where the language is used, is one technique to study linguistics. Critical discourse analysis raises issues regarding uttered language, which has social consequences in the context in which it is spoken, regardless of the topic (Fairclough, 2013).

Indonesia is a unified state of thousands of tribes and languages, and each region has its own customs, culture, and set of rules or principles. The Angkola Batak people inhabit the agricultural land of South Tapanuli in North Sumatra. Geographically, the indigenous population of South Tapanuli represents twelve percent of the entire population of the province. In terms of culture, South Tapanuli's adherents to tradition perform the *mangupa* ceremony at every traditional event to seek blessings from The Creator. The *mangupa* ceremony consists of the following components (Lubis, 2018): (1) *pangupa*, which is a set of dishes containing rice, vegetables, fish, and one type of livestock (chicken, goat, or buffalo); (2) people who are fed; (3) the *pandok hata*, or speaker, who is a close relative of the person being fed; and (4) traditional leaders who understand how to implement this traditional ceremony.

According to the perspectives of Brown et al. (1983) regarding the relationship between humans and language, the food placed in the *pangupa* is considered a form of reference. In contrast, the speakers' words during the ceremony constitute a form of inference – that will be investigated in this study. This study then seeks to understand how inference explains the relationship between utterances and the form of the referent they refer to in *the mangupa traditional* Angkola Batak indigenous community ceremony.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Discourse analysis is inseparable from pragmatic studies in linguistics, whose two most influential scholars are Austin and Searle (Mabaquiao, 2018). They suggest that speaking is equivalent to performing bodily actions such as issuing commands, asking questions, and giving advice. In addition, they argue that words in a language do not necessarily conform to truth standards, but are nonetheless genuine since they transcend their literal meaning. Thus, language can exceed its precise translation. Discourse analysis examines what a speaker intends to say, how to interpret what they intended, and how to offer diverse perspectives and understandings. Consequently, according to Paltridge (2021), discourse analysis is the connection between language and its social and cultural context. In this case, human communication through language creates cooperation, which impacts mutual understanding. Yet, mutual understanding in this form of communication varies among cultures (Fairclough, 2013; Mahmud, 2019); for instance, the style of communicating and perceiving information among the people of South Tapanuli is different from that of the people of Aceh. Hence, speech act appears to refer to the study of the communication and interpretation mechanisms of a culture's language hierarchy.

### 2.1. Speech act

Speech acts are fundamental in discourse analysis. With the use of illocutionary devices, the meaning of an utterance is considered not only in terms of the linguistic structure, but also in terms of the surrounding context, which contributes to the insight value of speech activities (Drid, 2018). Hence, speech acts are utterances that generate discourse and are considered to be social activities. It is feasible to interpret speech by evaluating utterances and relating them to local performative styles and the contextual meaning of these utterances inside an activity (Ogborn, 2020). In other words, the geographical location of the speaker correlates with the illocutionary meaning of the utterance.

Meanwhile, culture can be understood as the institutional framework of a communal group. Fairclough (2013) argues that the creation and symbolization of a certain set of beliefs is a component of every culture. Thus, the way a cultural group communicates is determined by how that group perceives the world. Speech can either assist or constrain social movement within a culture (Fairclough, 2013). Which is why, culture serves as a discourse structure within an institutional framework when conducting speech acts. This sequence may include settings, objectives, themes, social ties, etc (Hymes, 2020). Speech itself must comply with three types of norms (Sbisà, 2018), namely (1) constitutive rules, upon which the performance of illocutionary acts depends; (2) maxims, which are based on rational motivations and must be followed in order to perform good speech acts; and (3) objectivity, in which the total truth of spoken utterances intersects directly with the socio-cultural situation and context of the community.

### 2.2. Inference in discourse analysis

In order to correctly comprehend a discourse, it is essential to perform an analysis of both complicated occurrences and social processes (Yule, 2020). The meaning that can be deduced from this additional layer of complexity is known as inference. According to Suvorova (2020), the term "inference" refers to a cognitive framework used to derive knowledge from an entire activity. When it comes to spoken language, having an understanding of inference implies being able to articulate the illocutionary meaning that is derived from what is stated. In linguistics, Suvorova and Polyakova (2018) investigated modern inference as part of their research. An individual can form conclusions based not only on what is spoken but also on what is witnessed, felt, and emotionally experienced. In addition, it is necessary for understanding and correctly interpreting what someone says that the physical setting, social background, mental world, and responsibilities of the individuals involved in communication are considered (Paltridge, 2021).

According to Brown and Yule (1986), the common understanding of the term "inference" refers to the process that the reader (or listener) must go through in order to get from the literal meaning of what is written (or said) to what the writer (or speaker) intended to convey. In other words, the process occurs in listeners or readers who must investigate the literal meaning of what is written or spoken

to determine what the writer or speaker intended to convey. Inferences are classified into one of three categories according to the role that they play in the interpretation process: (1) inferences that function as missing links; (2) inferences that function as non-automatic linkages; and (3) inferences that act as filling gaps or discontinuities in interpretation. The missing links can be divided into two categories: those that are overlooked automatically and do not require additional time and those that are overlooked but do not automatically and require additional time. The missing link, which is the same as an inference but requires more time to demonstrate, only sometimes occurs. This link occurs because an inference requires more time to be understood. Brown and Yule (1986) concluded that even if a text does not contain a formal link, the reader or listener can still understand the meaning of the text. The process of locating this missing connection differs from drawing an assumption about it. Inference cannot be drawn from the elements of a text if there is no apparent connection between those elements. Despite this, an inference is drawn if the relationship does not occur naturally. This inference can apply to different interpretation types, including pragmatic, semantic, and phonological.

### 2.3. *Mangupa traditional ceremony*

The people of South Tapanuli partake in a ritual known as *mangupa*. According to Harahap (1991), this custom originated from an ancestor's belief in the presence of a supernatural substance, described as an absolute and powerful entity that controls the entire universe, including the path that an individual's life takes. The people living in South Tapanuli perform the *mangupa* ceremony regularly, which is structured after the stages of human life development. This practice is done in the hopes that the potent substance will ensure the well-being and prosperity of humans. The significance of an event, such as a birth, marriage, the bestowing of a social title, the moving into a new house, the acquisition of a fortune, etc., determines the level of the *mangupa* ritual that must be performed. The celebration of *mangupa* is comprised of three primary elements: (1) the *pangupa*, which consists of a set of foods that is handed down from generation to generation; (2) the beneficiaries of the *pangupa*, who are given food; and (3) the *si pandok hata*, who speak during the ritual. Each of these elements is significant in its own right. According to Amri (2018), the culture of the *mangupa* possesses a philosophical significance. It comprises messages transmitted through *pangupa* materials to encourage rewarded individuals to accept it as a way of life. The materials for the discourses in this study are utterances involving the *si pandok hata*. At this ceremony, there will be at least seventeen speakers, and their participation will be determined by the nature of their connection to the individuals receiving the *pangupa*.

## 3.0 Methodology

To answer the study objective, the researchers employed a qualitative descriptive technique in accordance with a discourse analysis methodology. This method was chosen because it is consistent with the area of linguistics and allows for a comprehensive examination of a text or utterance. Moreover, qualitative descriptive approaches have been utilized in previous studies on cultural ceremony of the South Tapanuli communities (Amri, 2018; Pane, 2020; Daulay, 2021). The data is obtained from literature review on Angkola Batak traditions, textual documentation, observation on five wedding ceremonies, and interviews with the individuals who conducted speech acts during the ceremonies. The limitation of the data is the observation were held only in wedding occasions, although *mangupa* and the speech acts could occur in all sorts of gratitude celebrations.

The research followed these steps. After completing the literature review, the researchers moved on to data collection. The researchers recorded the text of the *mangupa* ceremony utterances found in reference materials on the customs and culture of South Tapanuli. The Angkola Batak-language original text has been translated into Indonesian. This text will become the primary research data for analysis purposes. In addition, researchers observed the *mangupa* ceremony's activities at three weddings on three separate occasions. This observation occurred during ten days of fieldwork. Observed speeches were documented and subsequently compiled as secondary research data. This secondary data was used to support the original, previously documented text. After that, the researchers conducted interviews with three *pandok hata*, or speakers during the ceremony. This interview information was also classified as secondary data. The technique of collecting data through text documentation, observation of the activities at ceremonies, and interviews with speakers was chosen because it has been applied to similar research (Daulay, 2021), which examines the interpersonal meaning of the *mangupa* ceremony. The data analysis was then performed using a discourse-based method.

## 4.0 Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. *Key speakers during mangupa cultural ceremony*

The *Dalihan na Tolu* is the philosophy of the Angkola Batak indigenous community. A historical overview indicates that the *Dalihan na Tolu* way of life demands the existence of at least three clans for the foundation of a village. According to their respective positions, the three clans portray the role of *kahanggi*, *anak boru*, and *mora*. *Dalihan na Tolu*, which is believed, practiced, and passed down from generation to generation, establishes the principles for living in a village based on how things often operate there.

*Dalihan na Tolu* translates as 'three burners' in the form of three stones that serve as the base or platform for a cooking pot. The Batak Angkola people equate tranquility with the stability of the three stones. If one of the three stones defects, the pot above it will flip. In order to restore the stone's stability, another stone must be placed beneath it. Using this analogy, the ancestors of the Angkola people established a customary institution with three sets of responsibilities – *kahanggi*, *mora*, and *anak boru* – as well as additional roles that act as stone supports, namely groups of elders and kings known as *hatobangon* and *harajaon*.

The creation of a traditional institution known as *Dalihan na Tolu*, which, according to customary law, is an informal council that governs every aspect of the daily lives of the three groups – *kahanggi*, *mora*, and *anak boru* – and conducts traditional ceremonies, is accompanied by the development of a speech system based on the order and kinship between the three groups. Each group has its duties and obligations in an indigenous community. For example, some documented text pointed to the terms *somba marmora*, *manat-manat markahanggi*, and *jana elek maranak boru*. They refer to the interaction between the duties and responsibilities of these groups. *Mora* is where one can receive good wishes, honor, and charisma. If people disregard their *mora*, they will suffer and lose the good fortune, honor, and charisma that are rightfully theirs. This belief has long been common knowledge of the Angkola Batak community from ancient times. Meanwhile, *anak boru* is a group where people seek assistance and support in performing rituals. They are responsible for planning and coordinating ceremonies held by their *mora*. They work relentlessly to ensure the flawless delivery of every occasion.

In addition to the attribute of *dalihan na Tolu*, there are other groups with more advanced practices, namely the elders and the kings. The elders, called *hatobangon*, are chosen based on the clan population of a specific location. In principle, each clan in a location has one or two *hatobangon*, and the number follows the number of clan families residing in the village. More surnames suggest a more significant number of *hatobangon*. They are regarded as wise men capable of managing cultural traditions.

Furthermore, above *hatobangon* stand the kings called *raja*. *Raja Pamusuk* is identical to the modern-day village chief. If a family intends to undertake a traditional ceremony under the premise of negotiations, the conversations will be forwarded to *Raja Pamusuk* for further consideration. Meanwhile, *Raja Panusunan Bulung*, who is in charge of rules and traditions, remains the highest leader in the community, with more authority than *Raja Pamusuk*. This person often only speaks as a decision-maker by the end of ceremonies.

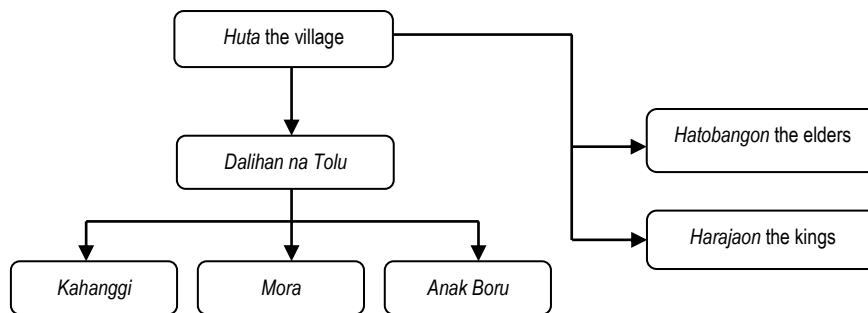


Fig.1: The key speakers in *mangupa* cultural ceremony

#### 4.2. Speech acts at *mangupa* cultural ceremony

The *mangupa* speeches at the observed wedding ceremonies were produced by at least seventeen different people. The finding was reached based on the number of people linked to the host who attended the ceremony. On the other hand, this number could be far more significant because numerous people may hold the same position within a family. For instance, if the host's three brothers are present at the event, all three will give speeches. The same principle applies to all other types of family ties. These speakers can be divided into four categories: the messenger, the responder, the master of ceremony, and the respondent. As a request from the host, the messenger's speech includes illocutionary force; hence, this speech delivers wisdom and guidance to the bride and groom as the listener. According to McDonald (2022), the illocutionary force of communication is determined by an understanding between the speaker and the listener. In order to bring the ritual to a successful close, it is necessary for each component of the *dalihan na tolu* to deliver speaking acts that are in line with the others. Given that the speech of the second speaker builds upon the foundation laid by the first speaker, the speech of the third speaker builds upon the foundation laid by the first and second speakers, and so on.

Table 1. Role of speakers in *mangupa* cultural ceremony

Role	Name	Position
The messenger	<i>Pandongkon hata</i>	The extended family <i>dalihan na tolu</i>
The responder	<i>Pangalus hata</i>	The elders <i>hatobangon</i> and the kings <i>harajaon</i>
The master of ceremony	<i>Paralok-alok</i>	The representative



Fig.2: The key speakers in *mangupa* cultural ceremonies (a) the kings *harajaon*, (b) the elders *hatobangon*, and (c) the extended family *dalihan na tolu*

During the *mangupa* ceremony, the virtuous spirit is brought up in conversation the majority of the time. The translated source data of the *mangupa* speech are evaluated using a discourse-based methodology in this article, which addresses the *mangupa* speech. Only the speeches (Table 2) that have inference value from the spoken text and carry counsel for the bride and groom and have inference value from the spoken text are included in the analysis. These speeches frequently carry the community's local wisdom teachings.

Table 2. Discourse analysis of speech acts in *mangupa* ceremony

Speaker	Speech Act	Translation	Inference
The elders <i>hatobangon</i>	<i>Mata guru siseon</i> <i>Sinur na pinahan gabe na niula</i> <i>Horas tondi madingin</i> <i>Sayur matua bulung</i> <i>Songon bona ni hayu mur tu ginjang</i>	<i>Reading the eyes, the teacher, and the heart</i> <i>Develop what is nurtured to become the virtue</i> <i>Glory to the righteous spirit</i> <i>Vegetables are always leaves</i> <i>Like a wood getting high to the top</i>	Semantic discourse
The kings <i>Raja Pamusuk</i>	<i>Marsitijur adop ginjang</i> <i>Manyuan linta di juluan</i> <i>Mangkail di huali</i> <i>Martijak di pangkal tangga</i>	<i>Spitting upwards</i> <i>Breeding leeches upstream</i> <i>Fishing in the cauldron</i> <i>Stand at the base of the stairs</i>	Pragmatic discourse
The kings <i>Raja Panusunan Bulung</i>	<i>On sude hata ni adat, padan ni ompunta na jumolo jumolo sundut i di ari na sadari on dipasahat tu badan simanaremunu.</i>	<i>These are all words of our tradition, the promise from our grandfathers before, on this day they are delivered to your body.</i>	Pragmatic discourse
The master of ceremony <i>Paralok-alok</i>	<i>Habang ma Langkupa</i> <i>Na songgop tu mali-mali</i> <i>Donokkon ni simartulan</i> <i>Diungkap ma pangupa</i> <i>Dihananaek ni mata ni ari,</i> <i>Anso dipasu-pasu Tuhan.</i>	<i>Fly the bird of Langkupa</i> <i>Which perched on the tree of mali-mali</i> <i>Close to the thee of Simartulan</i> <i>Open the pangupa</i> <i>On the rising of the sun,</i> <i>To be blessed by God.</i>	Phonologic discourse
The extended family <i>dalihan na tolu</i>	<i>Jaru au peda sian bagian kahanggi, mangudurhon ma au di hata ni dangkang nangkinani, bope songoni antong, topi ni baiyon pandan ma da topi nai marduri-duri, manjagit ma tondi dohot badan di hata na denggan hata na uli.</i>	<i>Likewise, I am from the kahanggi line, please include me in what my elder sister said earlier. If that's the case, the corner of the eyes will have thorny edges, accept the righteous spirit to the body in good words, beautiful words.</i>	Semantic and phonologic discourses

In response to the speech acts from *dalihan na tolu* addressing the bride and groom, the words of the elders *hatobangon* and the kings *harajaon* have a persuasive effect. The uttered speeches are all complimentary. At the end, when all ceremony attendees have finished speaking and the leader *Raja Panusunan Bulung* has closed the ceremony, it is the groom's turn to react with illocutionary remarks to the previous key speakers. After receiving instructions from the leader, the master of ceremony utterances with illocutionary power defines who would speak to manage the ceremony's structure. The bride and groom, along with their relatives, the elders, and the kings *dalihan na tolu* return to the main room of the host's house. Due to their respective roles, they are seated in the conventionally set sequence. The master of ceremony ensures that all groups are present in the room so the *mangupa* ritual could begin.



Fig.3: During the *mangupa* ceremonies (a) the leader *Raja Panusunan Bulung* delivered speech to the bride and groom and (b) the groom responded to the advises given

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The persuasiveness and depth of advice in the *mangupa* cultural ceremony of the Angkola Batak indigenous community depend on each speaker's role. In a broader sense, the illocutionary force can be categorized as follows: requests, expectations, explanations, agreements, inquiries, responses, orders, and prohibitions. During the *mangupa* ceremony, it is possible to make a variety of inferences in order to determine meanings and relationships between phrases in speech acts. For example, phonological inference can discover the relationship between the two expressions if done correctly. Meanwhile, pragmatic inference is suitable to efficiently establish the relationship between a speech and its surrounding context. These two types of inference contribute to conveying the interpretation of the *mangupa* ceremonial speeches. Moreover, inferences from semantics and the informal environment can also be used to explain statements.

In the traditional *mangupa* ceremony, it has been discovered that the choice of meaning for each item in the *pangupa* set is not as restrictive as the literal meaning. Each component of the *pangupa* depends on the speaker's ability to make beautiful expressions by

connecting the components to their intended meaning. Therefore, there is a need for further research surrounding this ritual in order to uncover the full extent of concealed meanings in the *mangupa* ceremony.

## Acknowledgements

TALENTA Universitas Sumatera Utara supports this research under contract number 34D/UN5.2.1.7/PPM/2022.

## Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This research added to the breadth of linguistic studies, particularly on discourse analysis, emphasizing the strength of speech acts during cultural wedding ceremonies in Batak Angkola indigenous community. Similar studies could be employed in other traditions which value and perform speech acts in their rituals.

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