

Social Semiotic Analysis and Efforts to Preserve the Old Mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine in Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra

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Social Semiotic Analysis and Efforts to Preserve the Old Mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine in Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra

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Abstract: Social Semiotic Analysis and Efforts to Preserve the Old Spells of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine in Serdang Bedagai Regency-North Sumatra. This research aims to document and analyze semiotic studies in Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine mantra texts, especially regarding signs and markers which are believed to have spiritual power in Kuala Lama Village, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra. This research uses a qualitative approach with field data obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. The results of this research show that in the old Malay Serdang mantra, there are two main signs, namely the sound or phrase "Bismillahirrohmanirrohim" which always appears at the beginning or above the mantra sentence. The two words "Hu" have a social meaning as a place to express requests for desires, recognition of human helplessness, and special sentences in begging. The research conclusion shows that the semiotic social meaning of the old Malay Serdang mantra lies in the sound "Bismillahirrohmanirrohim," which is an expression of a request for healing to God. In the context of ethnomedicine treatment, the use of this mantra also reflects cooperation and mutual assistance between the Serdang Malay community.

Keywords: Semiotics, Mantra, Ethnomedicine

The Serdang Malay community is currently experiencing a significant impact from technological advances, especially in the Ethnomedicine treatment tradition using old Serdang Malay mantras. The role of mantras has changed from a social symbol to a means of alternative medicine. In Kuala Lama Village, North Sumatra, the inheritance of mantras from older to younger generations is experiencing problems and is at risk of extinction due to a lack of interest from the younger generation.

The development of mantra as an alternative medicine also raises concerns, because the Malay people of Serdang are more

likely to choose modern medicine than the old mantra-based Ethnomedicine. The lack of interest of the younger generation in learning this tradition increases the risk of extinction of Serdang Malay healing mantras as the number of old mantra owners decreases as they enter old age.

Social semiotic research on the old mantras of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine shows that mantras are still used, especially for diseases that cannot be cured medically. Mantras are considered a direct bridge between humans and God, without barriers, and the ritual of purity before reciting a mantra is thought to

strengthen the power of prayer. The social semiotics of this mantra expresses the spiritual meaning in the mantra text, with neat words full of praise, supplication and submission to God.

Mantra is considered the oldest literary work as one aspect of ancient culture in Indonesia which is still preserved today and is still continuously practiced by (traditional) people in various places and in many different destinations. Historically, mantras were created by one person or a group of people and involved narratives, offerings, worship, rituals and the like and thus, mantras constitute a very broad field (Daud, 2010).

Social Semiotics and the meaning of a mantra are important to know, because knowing the social semiotics or signs of how to read a mantra and the meaning of a mantra will certainly make it easier for the reader to understand and appreciate the wishes that will be conveyed through the recitation of the mantra. In particular (Sarinda, 2014) There are three meanings of mantras, namely: religious meaning, social meaning, and personality meaning.

Semiotics is the use of signs, such as sounds, words, or sentences, which have special features through the process of self-reflection and devotion. In a social context, humans interact in treatment, involving the sick, the handler as the prayer reader, and relatives as representatives of the sick. Old mantras in Serdang Malay medical texts are used to cure sick people by combining medicinal plants from the surrounding nature, recited by charmers or people who are considered experts in reading old mantras. The concept of semiotics is also understood in the old mantra text Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang.

Ethnomedicine is a branch of medical anthropology that discusses the origins of disease, causes and methods of treatment according to certain social groups. Ethnomedicine is an aspect that emerged along with the development of human culture in the field of medical anthropology, ethnomedicine gives rise to various assumptions. This branch is often called traditional medicine, primitive medicine, but ethnomedicine feels more neutral (Anderson, 1986).

Some research that is relevant to this study includes:

1. Nuraeni, et al., (2023) with the title Nosaviraka's Ritual Mantra on The Quran And Hadith: Intertextual Analysis. The research results revealed three main findings: first, there is a relationship between the Nosaviraka mantra and the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith in various parts of the mantra. Second, the Nosaviraka mantra is considered a hypogram, while the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith act as owners of transformation. Although the structure is similar, there are differences in the use of imagination. Third, there is a strong tendency that the Nosaviraka mantra reflects belief in Allah SWT which is related to the Al-Qur'an as its hypogram.
2. Sukarno, et al. (2020), with the title "Revealing the Linguistic Features Used in Mantra Pengasih (The Spell of Affection) in Banyuwang". The results of his research stated that the use of Javanese and Arabic, the structure of the opening, main part and ending, as well as figurative language such as metaphors and similes in mantras to create magical powers.
3. Badaruddin, 2018 with the title "Linguistic Features as Depicted in Tulembang Mantra". The research results show that the Tulembang Mantra is in the form of praise for supernatural or sacred things, using Basmallah and greetings as opening speeches, in the form of monologue and dialogue discourse. This mantra tends to be free in word choice, lyrics, or rhyme, but reflects recognition, hope, cleanliness, calm, and inner satisfaction.
4. Juliadi, et al. (2022) with the research title "An Analysis of Mantra Used by Sandro in Batanak at Tarusa Village". This research discusses the structure, meaning and function of the mantra used by Sandro in the Batanak ritual. The method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection through video recordings, interviews and documentation. Data were analyzed using steps such as qualitative descriptive, video

transcription, transcription analysis, and clarification of the structure, meaning, and function of the Batanak mantra. The analysis results show six components in the structure of the Batanak mantra, with two meanings (denotative and connotative) in Arabic and Sumbawa. The function of this mantra is related to the group's hope of getting rain through prayer in the ritual.

From the several research references above, overall, the research results illustrate the richness of Indonesian culture in the form of mantras, which not only show a connection with religious values, but also reflect people's beliefs, hopes and inner satisfaction in various ritual contexts.

"Old Mantera Ethnomedicine" is part of Serdang Malay culture which is currently almost extinct due to the lack of interest of the younger generation in studying and documenting it, caused by the influence of modernization. This research has an important role in maintaining and preserving Serdang Malay oral culture. Researchers are interested in examining social semiotics in the old mantras of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine to understand the function of mantras in the text. To find out the function of mantras, researchers refer to the theory of the function of oral literature (Hutomo, 1991) which states that there are seven functions of oral literature, namely (1) functioning as a projection, (2) validating culture, (3) a tool for enforcing social norms and as a tool of social control, (4) a tool for educating children, (5) providing a justified path by society so that he can be superior to other people, (6) provide a way that society provides so that he can criticize other people, and (7) a tool to protest injustice in society. The reason the researcher refers to Hutomo's theory of the function of oral literature is because mantras themselves are included in the type of oral literary work

This research aims to maintain the continuity and documentation of the history of the old mantra of Serdang Malay

Ethnomedicine, maintaining cultural heritage which has a survival function for society.

1 METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method. Qualitative methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or verbal data from the people observed. Based on the philosophy of rationalism, valid knowledge is obtained from intellectual understanding and the ability to argue logically. In empirical reality it is single (the same as positivism adherents of monism) but this reality is not interpreted from the perspective of (Muhadjir, 2011).

This research was carried out in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Kunci Subdistrict between August 2022 and August 2023. Through qualitative methods, it allows researchers to organize, criticize and clarify interesting data. Thus, this qualitative research guides researchers to obtain previously unexpected findings and build new theoretical frameworks (Endraswara, 2008).

4 This research uses qualitative data, such as text, symbols and symbols related to the social semiotics of the old mantra Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province. Data was obtained through observation, interviews with cultural figures and medical practitioners, as well as documentation studies on old mantra texts that are hundreds of years old. The primary data source comes from informants, while the secondary data source involves previous research, books, reports and documentation related to the banishment ceremony in the village. The selection of informants was based on certain criteria and the research instrument involved interview guides and data cards. Data collection was carried out through triangulation with observation, in-depth interviews, document study, and analysis of mantra texts to produce a comprehensive understanding.

1 The research location is located in Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra. This sub-district stretches on the north side, lowlands with a height of 0-36 meters above sea level, directly bordering the Malacca Strait. The area reaches 80,296 km² with 12

villages and 81 hamlets. The sub-district capital is located in Kuala Lama Village. Pantai Cermin District also has a popular beach tourist destination. The territorial boundaries include:

North : Borders the Strait of Malacca,
 East : Borders with Perbaungan District,
 South : Borders with Perbaungan District,
 West : Borders with Beringin District / Pantai Cermin District, Deli Serdang Regency.

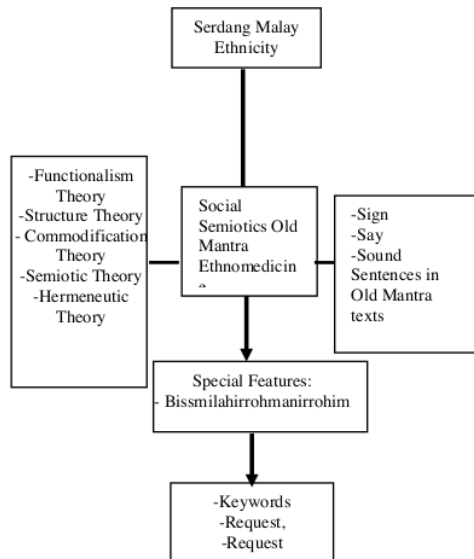


Figure 1: Chart: Research Model

13 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research show that the Serdang Malay community in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra, maintains a strong Serdang Malay culture. Traditions such as mutual cooperation, deliberation and polite language are still upheld, and rich culture and customs are preserved.

Most of the Serdang Malays in the area, including Kuala Lama Village, still observe the Tolak Bala ceremony every year. The Malay community in this village continues to practice their culture through traditional arts as a means of socializing the traditional heritage of the

Serdang Malay tribe. One of the traditions carried out is a healing ceremony, also known as Ethnomedicine, which combines healing spells with the surrounding natural plants. The old Malay Serdang Ethnomedicine mantra is the key to this treatment and is still believed to cure diseases that are difficult for modern medical science to treat.

There has been a shift in the Serdang Malay community to traditional medicine or Ethnomedicine because of diseases that cannot be treated by medical science. However, this also opens up opportunities for the forgery of the old Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine mantra. Therefore, proper understanding and analysis of studies is needed to distinguish between genuine and fake spells, as well as providing correct information to the public. Currently, Ethnomedicine treatment with the original Serdang Malay mantra is only available to the people of Kuala Lama Village.

To find out whether the mantras used in treatment are true, the old Malay Ethnomedicine Serdang mantras require proper and appropriate research and study. This includes analyzing the social semiotics contained in every old mantra of Serdang Malay ethnomedicine. In social semiotics (Sudibyo, Hamd, 2001), there are three elements that are the center of attention for contextual interpretation of the text, namely:

1. First, the problem of meaning. How do people understand the message? What information is contained in the structure of a message? So to answer this question it is necessary to do so and refer to things that have happened or are happening: such as what is used as a discourse by the perpetrator regarding something that is happening in the field of events, it is also a measure of success in deciphering signs and meanings in the form of sounds, words or sentences in this case. social semiotics old mantra Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang.
2. Second, the problem of action or knowledge about how to obtain something through talking. This can be done by pointing to the things included in the written text contained in the old mantra text of Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang, which describes the use of signs in the form of sounds, words, sentences contained in the old mantra of Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang.

3. Third, the problem of coherence, which describes how to form a pattern of speech that makes sense and can be understood and accepted by society and makes a belief trustworthy so that it is carried out.
2. Socially, this mantra reflects a request for healing from bone pain through the recitation of the old Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine mantra, which is directed to Allah as a form of request.

The process of understanding social semiotics in the old mantra Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang involves several aspects, such as:

- a. Writing Form: Examining whether old mantra texts use Jawi writing (Malay Arabic script) or not, because this writing has a special meaning among the Serdang Malay Community.
- b. Language Variations: Pay attention to language variations in old mantra texts, especially in key words such as "Bismillahirrohmanirrohim" which can be written in Jawi or Indonesian.
- c. The word "Hu..Allah": Identify the existence of the word "Hu..Allah" which has the meaning of covering, protecting and sheltering in every old mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine.
- d. Text Structure: Examining the structure of old mantras which generally consist of 5-6 lines in each text, understanding the patterns used.
- e. Chanting the Name of Muhammad: Recognizing the use of the name Muhammad as a Muslim prophet who brought major changes in the beliefs of the Serdang Malay Community, reflects the religious value in the mantra.

A. Social Semiotics

"Bismillahirrohmanirrohim"

1. Mantra for Healing Injury

Bismillahirrohmanirrohim

*I want to nawarrek so-and-so who has lost
Transversely broken longitudinally then
Come down and bargain
God's bargain is Muhammad's bargain
Offer the Messenger of Allah*

The social semiotics of the old mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine can be clearly seen in the key sentence "Bismillahirrohmanirrohim" at the top. This word has a semiotic meaning:

1. Showing supplication and submission to Almighty God (Allah), reflects human weakness and belief in the existence of divine power that controls life.

The quote (line or 2nd line) "I want to heal so-and-so's weakness" is a form of request to Allah to heal or care for someone who is suffering from bone disease. Providing care to the sick is an act of helping others and this is highly recommended. The diction *ketullangngan* (*ketulangan*) (2nd line) refers to fish bone disease. The diction *ketullangngan* (*bone*) means the suffering experienced by someone because of the condition of the fish bones. A person is said to have bones if the bones involved in the esophagus are in a transverse position. This is emphasized by the transverse diction (3rd line). The position of the transverse bones is obstructed so that they cannot descend properly (get stuck). When the bones are still in a transverse position, a person feels pain when swallowing food. Therefore, to break a bone, treatment or antidote must be given. Treatment is carried out in two ways, namely using fresh water and using a lump of rice. After being given a bargain (mantra), it is hoped that the transverse fish bone will break and can go down as in the word *membujjor* (*longitudinal*) (3rd line), and the pain suffered by a person will be cured. This is emphasized by the diction quote "turrin bisse rise bargain" (going down can go up bargaining) (4th line). This bargain is given with *tawakal* with the permission of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, and the Apostle to obtain healing (*Tawar Allah Tawar Muhammad*) (5th line) and (*Tawar Rasulullah's Majesty*) (6th line).

Overall, this sentence reflects a prayer or request for healing or Allah's help, by emphasizing belief in and respect for Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, and the Messenger of Allah. In Islam, caring for the sick is a form of benevolence, and including the name of Allah in this endeavor is considered a good step.

Social semiotics "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" in the old mantra text Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang are symbols, words, sentences and sounds that literally come from the Arabic language of the Koran, meaning "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful." This symbol implies that healing depends on Allah's

permission, not on the spell caster or other creatures. In the Serdang Malay Community Treatment Mantra, the use of "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" has a religious meaning, showing belief in God's book, the Koran.

In an interview with handler Dato Sayuti from the Serdang Malay community, the pronunciation of "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" was interpreted as follows:

- a) The prefix "Bi" means power and help, indicating the intention to act based on God's power.
- b) Bismillahirrahmanirrahim is closely related to the sentence of monotheism, namely "la ilaha illa Allah" glorifying Allah in every action.
- c) Saying "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" is an acknowledgment that Allah is the great ruler of the universe.
- d) Bismillahirrahmanirrahim contains two attributes of Allah, namely ar-rahman (Most Merciful) and ar-rahim (Most Merciful). The Serdang Malay community puts "Bismillahirrohmanirrohim" in the old Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine mantra as a sign of obedience to religion. Apart from that, the Serdang Malay people believe that this saying can protect against disturbances, such as:
 1. Ward off jinn and devils.
 2. Protects from danger and enemies.
 3. Cures various poisons and venom.
 4. Dealing with crazy disease.
 5. Reduces swelling and lumps.
 6. Treating bone disease caused by can.
 7. Cures diseases caused by toxins in the body.
 8. Wards off various types of poison, santau, and animal venom.
 9. Used to cure diseases of unknown cause.



Figure 2: The handler is reciting the Old Ethnomedicine Mantra for healing Chronic Lung disease.

The Serdang Malay community in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency still uses the Serdang Melayu Ethnomedicine Old Mantra in treatment. This was triggered by the many cases where they were declared medically incurable, prompting them to ask for healing through the handler who recited the Prayer for healing to Allah in the old Malay Serdang mantra.

The use of the old mantra Ethnomedicine can be divided into two forms:

- a. Treatment with the old mantra Ethnomedicine for medicinal purposes (Ethnomedicine).
- b. Ethnomedicine's ritual of rejecting evil to bring oneself and soul closer as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty.

The Serdang Malay people view rituals, prayers and mantras as an important part of everyday life. Spells can only be recited by experts, called charmers, and there are various types of spells such as healing spells, seagoing spells, wind summoning spells, body strengthening spells, repelling reinforcements spells, weakening spells, sailor spells, and farming spells.

Mantras have various functions in the lives of Malay people, as:

- a) "A medium of communication with Allah to grant all the wishes that the applicant needs."
- b) As local knowledge and strengthening identity so that people can survive and adapt to the environment and developments of the times.

The use of the old Serdang Malay mantra, especially in Ethnomedicine, has decreased in use over time. Some spells still survive, especially those related to medicine, although they are not as complete as in the past. Mantra legacies, such as in Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine, need to be inherited with special attention to maintaining cultural identity and heritage as concepts based on local wisdom.

Even though modernization has penetrated the countryside and affected cultural traditions, some people remain loyal to maintaining their traditions. Awareness to preserve traditional values remains, especially if society is able to respond critically to the influence of modernization and not get carried away.

Traditional leaders play a key role in protecting and maintaining cultural heritage. They have in-depth knowledge of cultural practices, rituals, dance, music, folklore, and other values that shape the identity of a society. In the context of Kuala Lama village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, the preservation of mantra heritage needs to be carried out so that it remains proof of cultural existence and can be realized with the following concept:

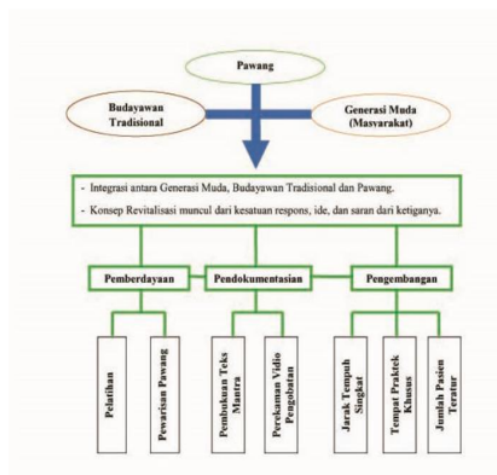


Figure 3. Revitalization of the Malay Ethnic Disease Treatment Ritual at Labu Beach

B. Social Semiotics “Hu…….”

1. Bismillahirrohmanirrohim Mantra for Healing Insanity

Hu…….

*Oh Allah, oh Allah
O Apostle, O Apostle
Ten illnesses come and ten illnesses go
Ten crazy come ten crazy go
If you don't go
I soaked you seven times*

*I'm not the one bidding crazy
God who bargains is crazy
I'm not the one bidding crazy
Prophet Muhammad who bargained crazy
I'm not the one bidding crazy*

Siti Fatimah was bidding crazy

*I'm not the one bidding crazy
Prophet Adam who bargained crazy
I'm not the one bidding crazy
Siti Hawa is the one who bids crazy
I'm not the one bidding crazy
Forty-four angels bid crazy prayer blessings
La ilaha illah, Muhammadar Rasulallah*

The second Social Semiotics in the old mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine is the word "Hu..." which has changed from Huwa Allah to Hu Allah. The word "Huwa" contains the meaning of encompassing, whole, and protection, emphasizing Allah as the Almighty God who stands alone. "Huwa" can be a door to the realm of "Rabb" or God, describing Allah as a single thing or One, beyond letters and words in the beliefs of the Serdang Malay Community.

Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi provides an interesting interpretation of the word "Hu" or "Huwa". First, he stated that "Hu" consists of the letters "ha" and "wawu", with "ha" as the main letter indicating al-Wāhid al-Haqq or One God. Second, "Hu..." is the deepest halqi (throat) letter, and "wawu" is the letter that appears when the lips meet, indicating that both include the beginning and end of the makharijul letters, as well as the dahir and inner. Third, although "Ha" is a halqi letter, its makhraj is unknown, so recognizing Allah only through this letter highlights humans' inability to understand His kaifiyyah and Ainiyyah. Fourth, the pronunciation of "Huwa" consists of two letters, emphasizing that recognition of Allah can only be achieved through a partner other than Him. Overall, social semiotics in the old mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine highlights the meaning and complexity of the word "Hu...", clarifying the concept of Oneness and the Oneness of Allah in the beliefs of the Serdang Malay Community.

The description above shows that the Social Semiotics sign on the word "Hu" in the old mantra text Ethnomedicine Malay Serdang, with the following main functions:

1. **Beginning:** Affirms that Allah, Almighty God, existed before everything on earth and this planet. This ensures God's position as something absolute and worthy of worship.
2. **Covers:** Shows that Almighty God covers, encompasses, and controls everything on this earth. Nothing moves without His permission.

3. **End:** Implies the eternity of God as the creator of the universe who will not die, disappear, or be damaged by time.

Apart from that, the authenticity of the old Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine mantra in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra can be seen from the structure and content of the mantra text. This authenticity is maintained by ensuring the presence of certain words such as "Bismillahirrohmanirohim" and "Hu" or "Huwa". The structure, function and meaning of each mantra are maintained to maintain the authenticity and sustainability of this tradition.

The social semiotic context contained in the old mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine includes:

1. **Cultural Context:** Affects the spell text depending on the type of ritual or purpose, such as differences in spell texts for traditional care rituals and death ceremonies.
2. **Social Context:** Includes social factors such as gender, social class, ethnicity, and age, which influence the perpetrator, the patient, and the community supporting the ritual.
3. **Situational Context:** Involves the time, place, and use of the mantra text during the ritual, including clothing, method of performance, and equipment used.
4. **Ideological Context:** (Sutikno, 2019) puts forward an ideological context which refers to the power or strength of thought that influences and dominates a text. Ideology is the thoughts, understandings, schools, beliefs, beliefs and values shared by society. Ideology is a sociocultural concept that determines the cultural values contained in a community. Even though the majority of the Malay people of Pantai Labu today are Muslim, pre-Islamic culture still influences their customs, especially the form of ritual ceremonies. One of them is a traditional treatment ritual. In this ritual, the spell utterance used is in the form of a request to the Creator (Allah SWT) to always be given strength, sustenance, faith, a long life, a better life, and to be kept away from all dangers, but this ritual also uses equipment and equipment that symbolizes something symbolic.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a mixture of Islamic and non-Islamic ideologies

in the ritual of rejecting evil, with the influence of pre-Islamic values and beliefs still influencing customs. In an ideological context, the traditional ritual of rejecting reinforcements reflects a combination of Islamic values and pre-Islamic cultural values, showing the adaptation and integration of Islamic teachings in the customs of the Serdang Malay community.

DISCUSSION

From the research results that have been described, ancestral culture needs to be preserved and cultivated. Cultural inheritance, especially the use of the old Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine mantra, can be realized through the following concepts:

a. Traditional Figures

- 1) Formation of traditional organizations with the leadership of traditional figures such as elders, kuncen, ustadz, and other community figures.
- 2) Indigenous organizations focus on preserving and maintaining culture through measurable activities.
- 3) The leadership of traditional leaders must be recognized and fully supported by the local community and local government.

b. Elders

- 1) Elders have a central role in managing customs in Kuala Lama Village.
- 2) Responsible for various rituals, including the Rejection Ritual, Sea Herbal Medicine, Kampung Herbal Medicine, and others.
- 3) Elders are chosen based on their chastity, wisdom and good character, as well as having in-depth knowledge of customs.
- 4) The authority of elders is revealed, and the selection of elders is carried out through whispers, inspiration, or the views of indigenous people.
- 5) The duties of the elders also include explaining the village philosophy to the community, providing an understanding of the Serdang Malay customs and culture in Kuala Lama Village.

The inheritance of mantras and local wisdom is directed through the leadership of traditional figures, such as elders, to maintain the identity and traditional culture of the Serdang Malay community in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency.

c. Kuncen

Dato Sayuti Bin Ibrahim, 82 years old, plays an important role as a kuncen in historical places such as the Jamu Kampung Area, Jamu Laut, and the location of the Rejecting the Plague ritual in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District. As a kuncen, his duties involve maintaining the blessings of these places as well as supervising traditional activities.

Apart from maintaining its sacredness, Dato Sayuti is also responsible for guiding pilgrimages and visits to holy places, giving advice to residents to comply with customs, and preserving traditions. Its role also includes regulating residents' living procedures in accordance with applicable customs. In his view, rules from both the government and customs are considered as ancestral instructions that must be respected and obeyed in order to bring goodness to society.



Figure 4: Researchers with caretaker (Kuncen) Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency (Documentation 3 July 2023)

The requirements to become a kuncen are very heavy, a kuncen must be a direct descendant of the previous kuncen, because he is considered capable of carrying out his duties, considering that kuncen children have been introduced to and taught their duties since childhood. Kuncen must be a man. This consideration was taken so that Kuncen could continue to work without being disturbed by the weaknesses of women such as

limited physical energy, menstrual periods or postpartum (Rosyadi, 2013).

Kuncen needs to be physically and mentally healthy, physically and psychologically mature, to make decisions with common sense. It is hoped that his maturity will enable him to comply with customary provisions, adhere to taboos, and set an example of obedience to society. Changing keys is a natural process related to age and ability.

The replacement process is carried out in a ceremony attended by the entire community. In the procession, objects which are used as symbols of "uncleanness" in the form of keris and spears are handed over from the old kuncen to the kuncen who has been installed (Rosyadi, 2013).

In Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, traditional figures such as Traditional Leaders, Elders, and Kuncen play an important role in preserving culture and traditions. Elders, as the dominant position, are responsible for the customary rules and cultural traditions passed down from their ancestors.

Traditional leaders consistently preserve the cultural potential and traditions of their ancestral heritage, which have been acculturated with Islamic traditions. They also actively utilize cultural potential by considering the image that is developed so that it continues to exist in the current development without losing previous cultural values.

Apart from preserving culture, traditional leaders also apply Pamali rules (Abstinenes/Prohibitions) to have a positive impact on the survival of humans and nature. Prohibitions, such as construction using cement and roof tiles, as well as prohibitions on entering sacred forests, aim to protect nature and its ecosystem.

These rules have extraordinary benefits, both for survival, the economy, welfare and community safety. Traditional ceremonies, such as building a house, Nyuguh, babarit, and earth almsgiving, are still carried out and provide benefits to the local community. The concept of kinship and mutual cooperation continues to be applied in building houses.

Mantra Tua Malay Ethnomedicine Serdang not only serves as an alternative treatment for conditions that are difficult to cure medically, but also has a significant

psychological impact. ¹ In Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra, reciting this mantra is considered important to feel close to Almighty God, especially in the fast-paced modern era and increasing loneliness and lack of affection.

Reading the Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine Old Mantra and praying is believed to have several psychological benefits, such as calming oneself, overcoming feelings of loneliness, helping in the healing process, prolonging life, and preventing depression. A study conducted by The California Mental Health & Spirituality Initiative involving more than 2,000 people with mental health problems also showed that more than 80% of them recognized the importance of spiritual aspects in their mental health.

From a psychological perspective, reading this mantra also has a positive influence in calming, reassuring and reassuring oneself about life choices. Apart from that, the binding nature of the contents of the prayer can be a reminder for individuals to remain focused on the values of the mantras and prayers they pray.

CLOSING

¹⁴ The results of this research can be concluded that there are 2 social semiotic analyzes in the ¹¹ mantra text Ethnomedicine Melayu Serdang in Kuala Lama Village, Pantai Cermin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency,

North Sumatra Province. Social semiotic analysis involves words, sentences and sounds in two main parts:

- 1) "**Bismillahirrahmanirrahim**" (1st line):
 - a) Object: Strengthening Spell.
 - b) The symbol "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" acknowledges healing by the permission of Allah, not humans or other entities.
 - c) The Serdang Malay community still believes in Ethnomedicine treatment with old mantras as a cheap and affordable alternative.
 - d) Treatment involves reciting "Bissmillahirohmannirohim" to ask God for healing.
- 2) "**Hu...**" (2nd line):
 - a) The word "Hu" has a social meaning as a place to express requests for desires, recognition of human helplessness, and special words in pleading.
 - b) This word is the key in the old Malay Ethnomedicine Serdang mantra to speed up the granting of wishes.

Furthermore, to maintain and preserve the old mantra texts of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine, efforts are needed to empower the community, document them through modern media, build oral traditions, pass them on to the younger generation, and re-copy the mantra texts into new versions using durable materials. These are 5 strategies that can be implemented to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the old mantra of Serdang Malay Ethnomedicine.

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