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DOI : 10.32734/lwsa.v3i4.1151  
Electronic ISSN : 2654-7066  
Print ISSN : 2654-7058

*Volume 3 Issue 4 – 2020 TALENTA Conference Series: Local Wisdom, Social, and Arts (LWSA)*



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# Local Wisdom Of *Pantang Larang* Forbids As A Former Of Ethnics And Morals In The Society Of Batak Toba

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## Abstract

Discourse can be either spoken or written. One of the speech that can be classified into this type of verbal discourse is *pantang larang*. In Batak community, *pantang larang* known as *hata tongka*. Until now, the Batak community still obey to this expression of *pantang larang* (*hata tongka*). In fact, the existence of this expression is closely related to people's trust and it used as a norm in act in our life everyday. This expression is part of local wisdom because it is used as a rule in life (mores or ethics). To be able to reveal the relationship between discourse and local wisdom that contained in this expression of *pantang larang*, the research needs to be done. The suitable theories to be used are discourse theory and local wisdom theory. The appropriate research method used is descriptive qualitative analysis method with field observation techniques and direct interviews. The expected result is a scientific description of the relationship between the forms of *pantang larang* with the expected final goal of the speech based on the critical discourse approach and local wisdom. The results of this research will be published in indexed international journals, international proceedings, textbooks, and IPR. Moreover it can be used as a source of reference or reading books for the community, as well as teaching material for students in the collage.

*Keywords: discourse; pantang larang; local wisdom*

## 1. Introduction

As one of the cultural elements, language has an important role in everyday life. This language can be in the form of verbal, written, symbolic or sign language. In addition to the everyday language used to communicate, the Batak community have a language that used in certain contexts with the aim of warning someone, that called as *pantang larang* (*hata tongka*). *Pantang larang* is closely related to the word of taboo. Winick in (Laksana, 2009: 17) describe that taboo is a prohibition, which, if violated, leads to an automatic penalty inflicted by magic and religion (prohibition, which it violated, it brings automatic punishment due to the influence of magic and religion).

That phrases such as: *Ndang boi marsuri i tonga borngin, annon ijonohi begu*. 'You should not comb your hair in the middle of the night, then the ghosts will come to you.' This phrase is a discourse that delivered to a person who will do the ban. A person who will carry out combing activities will undo to do it, because to fear of the consequences that he will receive because he has violated these rules or norms.

If we observe from the meaning that contained in the expression *Ndang boi marsuri i tonga borngin* 'you should not comb your hair at night, then not a single word has the meaning of effect, either implicitly or explicitly. However, from the aspect of the Batak community's habits, combing activities are usually carried out in the morning, afternoon, or evening. This activity is not commonly done at the night because at the night it is usually used for resting so there is no need to comb your hair. With another word, the meaning of relationship between the first clause and the second clause simply does not exist. So that syntactically (discourse) it cannot be explained the cause and the effect of relationship between the two clauses. However, even though there is no relationship of meaning and only character superstition, people still can accept and believe and this belief is passed down by verbal to the next generation. Even though the text and the meaning of discourse are incoherent, especially in the discourse of *pantang larang* (*hata tongka*), this can be still accepted in the middle of society because the younger generation prioritizes respect for the interlocutor compared to the logic of meaning that emerges from expressions.

The expression of *pantang larang* is a part of folklore. Folklore is a part of the culture of a collective that is spread and passed down from generation to generation among any kind of collective, traditionally in different versions, either in verbal form or examples accompanied by gestures or tools (mnemonic device) (Dundes in Danandjaja, 1982: 2). Brunvand (in Danandjaja, 1982: 21) say that folklores can be classified into three major of groups based on their types, namely: (1) verbal folklore; (2) partly verbal folklore; and (3) non-verbal folklore.

The expression of *pantang larang* (*hata tongka*) in the Toba Batak language belongs to the partially verbal folklore group. This expression is classified into partly verbal folklore because it contains statements that are superstitious or if the truth is

questionable. The expression of pantang larang is a people's trust that means is always associated with the occult. However, the emergence of occult meanings when the traced (interpretation) will find a relationship between the text and the real meaning.

Every expression of pantang larang in the Toba Batak community is supported by elements of local wisdom. Local wisdom is a local cultural value that can be used to regulate the order of community life wisely (Sibarani, 2012: 113). Local wisdom is a local knowledge that is created from the adaptation of a community that comes from life experiences that are communicated from generation to generation. Local wisdom is a local knowledge that is used by local communities to survive in an environment that is integrated with belief systems, norms, culture and it expressed in traditions and myths through verbal traditions (folk tales) and works of art, such as: saga, lontar, babad, suluk, tembang, and etc (Gunawan, 2008).

## 2. Theoretical Basis

### 2.1. Local Wisdom

Although there are efforts to pass on local wisdom from generation to generation, there is no guarantee that local wisdom will remain strong and strongest to facing this globalization which offers an increasingly pragmatic and consumptive lifestyle. In fact, it can be seen how local wisdom which is full of policies and philosophy of life is barely implemented in this increasingly pragmatic life practices. The Batak community uphold the expression of pantang larang (hata tongka) to this day. Because, the expression of pantang larang is a language that invites others to act polite. If a sense of courtesy is created, so that the peace will be manifest. Indeed, there are several expressions of pantang larang (hata tongka) that are accepted by society that is getting less and less. This can be due to a lack of explanation for the various sanctions given for these pantang larang violations.

A person's character can also be formed from the expression of pantang larang (hata tongka). The characters are (1) trusted, (2) respectful and polite, (3) responsible or committ, (4) fair and honest, (5) caring and have mercy, (6) strong stance and integrity, (7) good citizens, (8) cooperation, (9) diligence and hard work, (10) discipline, and (11) self-control (Sibarani, 2014: 145).

## 3. Research Method

The method that used in this research is descriptive qualitative method, which identifies all of the expressions of pantang larang (hata tongka) that are still used in the Toba Batak community by using direct interview techniques. The results of the interview will be recorded and then rewritten and classified based on the forms of pantang larang that are commonly used such as those used for babies, children, women, boys, and for certain settings or places. Then analyzed based on local wisdom approach. Research on the expression of pantang larang is a qualitative study with a case study model. The case study is intended to reveal what character values are conveyed through the expression of pantang larang (hata tongka).

## 4. Discussion

Until now, the expression of pantang larang (hata tongka) in Batak community is still used. This expression was passed down from generation to generation by verbal. Although some of pantang larang is not logical, especially in terms of the sanctions given, because there is no real correlation between actions and the consequences mentioned, this expression is still maintained in the middle of society.

The batak community are known as a religious and cultured people. For this reason, the Batak community is always use this prohibition to teach and enforce morals in their daily life. There are 2 types of pantang larang in the Batak community based on how to do it, namely: (1) pantang larang in actions and (2) pantang larang in verbal or conversation. These two taboos are in line, because actions and words always appear together in society. Pantang larang from forbidding actions will be conveyed by words. For the Batak community, all these forms are called the hata tongka 'pantang larang'.

### 4.1. Pantang larang in Action

Pantang larang or taboo are all actions which if they are done will bring disaster to the person, either directly or indirectly (Sutarman, 2013: 16). The disaster that are often created as a result or sanctions or violations of this taboo are always connected with something which is magical. These sanctions generally take the form of misery and even death. With such frightening sanctions, people feel so afraid, so they discourage them from taking any action. In the Batak community, there is a pantang larang such as acts or actions, as in the following examples.

(1) Dang boi surion obukni poso-poso na baru tubu.

It is forbidden to comb the hair of a newborn child.

Sanctions: Causing the child to experience death at a young age. The explanation:

1. The act of combing the hair of a newborn child is not the right thing to do. This is because of a newborn child are still very clean and susceptible to disease. The child's crown is still very soft so there is a possibility that it will cut and lead to infection. If that happens, the child will get sick and it can even cause death.

2. The form of local wisdom that is conveyed through this pantang larang is prudence in acting. The character that can be formed from this local wisdom is self-control (Sibarani, 2014: 144).

(2) Unang igotil babani poso-poso.

It is forbidden to pinching the baby's cheek.

Sanctions: Causing the child hard to eat.

The explanation:

1. The act of pinching the cheeks of a baby is something that is often done, both by parents, adults, and children to a baby or a child. This action is also often performed by someone who is caring for the children. If it is an adult who is doing it, it is likely that they will be able to control their actions so that the child doesn't feel pain or cry. However, if it is children who do it, there is a possibility that it will cause the baby to cry and be in the pain. It can make the child refusing to eat because he feels the pain in his cheek.

2. The form of local wisdom that delivered through this pantang larang is an element of education. Every action that is taken must be based on the situation, place, and to whom the action was taken. This local wisdom will be create the peace (Sibarani, 2014: 179).

(3) Ndang boi diumma dakdanak ditingki modom.

It is forbidden to kiss the baby while their sleeping

Sanctions: Causing the life of the baby will be short (the baby will be death)

The explanation:

1. The act of kissing a sleeping baby can make the sleep of baby not soundly and wake him up. Usually, if the baby wakes up, he will cry and it will be difficult to make him be quiet. If the child is sleep deprived, the child can get sick and of course also die.

2. The form of local wisdom that conveyed through this pantang larang is an element of good judgment (Sibarani, 2014: 144). Everyone whos is told that kissing a child (baby) is an expression of affection. However, these actions are actually considered to be bad and can even harm the child because it was done at the wrong time. This action can actually harm the child. Element of a local wisdom self-control is also conveyed through this pantang larang

(4) Tongka do manghunduli halang ulu..

It is forbidden to sit on the pillow

Sanctions: Causing the back (butt) of the person will be growing boils

The explanation:

1. The act of sitting on the pillow, especially that which is often done by the children, is very impolite. A pillow is a place for the head while sleeping, so that it must be kept clean and in a glorified place. The children's butt are always soiled that they don't deserve to be on the pillow. So that children do not do this, they will be punished with sanctions in the form of boils on the buttoom. We know that boil is one of the most painful skin diseases is felt by the sufferer, especially if the boil is located in the certain parts of the human body, namely the back or butt.

2. The form of local wisdom that conveyed through this pantang larang is a respect and a polite. A child must be able to respect an objects that are used for good and always show the politeness. This can also form the character of discipline for the child.

(5) Ndang boi mangaraut sisilon di tingki borngin.

It is forbidden to cut the nails at night.

Sanctions: Causing the death when you were young.

The explanation:

1. The act of cutting the nails at the night is an act that must be avoided.

At this time, some Batak community have started to ignore this prohibition. Some of the community, especially the young Batak generation, began to oppose this pantang larang. They have dare to cut their nails at the night. Why is like that? In the past, cutting nails was only done during the day because it had to be done in the bright light to avoid accidents. This activity was not possible at night because there were no lights before. If the activity is carried out at night, the finger may be cut and it can cause infection which can lead to death.

The Batak community believe that those who endure the consequences of this pantang larang violation are the people who do it and the parents of the people who carry out the activity. Why can the parents of the people also receive sanctions for the actions that the children taken by? When the child's finger is cut off, the parents will feel afraid, it causes their heart beat so fast, then they fall a sick and even eventually die.

2. The form of local wisdom that conveyed through this pantang larang is elements of health and environmental care. A child should understand that cutting nails must be done at the right time to maintain the health because it is not good to lengthen the nails. That nails are not cleaned will save the germs of disease. However, the time to cut nails must also be considered. This activity is not recommended to be carried out at night, especially with very minimal lighting. This can make the clipped of fingernails. After all, evenings are a good time to rest and not to cut nails. It is hoped that the expression of pantang larang will form the character of good judgment and self-control for the Batak community.

(6) *Ndang boi simanjung tu babani pintu molom modom.*

It is forbidden to let your head leads to the door while sleeping

Sanctions: Causing will get disastrous in the form of illness and even death

The explanation:

1. The house door that serves as a way to enter and leave the house. In the past, it was believed that house owner were not good at putting the objects in front of the door because it would prevent other people from entering and leaving the house. In fact, the community is very confident that this object will prevent the sustenance that will enter the house. If objects are not allowed in front of the door, how about the human head. Some people argue that when the head is leads to the door while sleeping, it will be bypassed by a begu "ghost" that will cause the person to become sick or even die.

2. The manifestation of local wisdom that contained in this prohibition is the character of cooperation. The prohibition against turning your head leads to the door is an attempt to instill an attitude of respect and give opportunities to others and make it easier for others to do something. The message conveyed was: don't make other people's business being complicated.

(7) *Ndang boi allangon ulu ni manuk.*

It is forbidden to eat the head of chicken

Sanctions: Causing the gray hair grow quickly dan become old.

The explanation:

1. Since a long time ago, children in the Toba Batak community were prohibited from eating chicken heads. The parents will be angry when the child asks for a chicken head. They will say that the only people who can eat chicken heads are old people. According to them, eating a chicken head will cause stupid in school and make you getting old. With stupid sanctions and getting old quickly, the child feels scared thus discouraging him from eating the chicken head. We know that the head and feet in chickens store a lot of fat which is not good for body health. Therefore, parents in ancient times avoidance the children from eating the head.

2. The form of local wisdom that exists in this pantang larang is self- control. It is hoped that a child should be able to restrain himself even though he desperately wants it for his own good.

#### 4.2. *Pantang larang in Speech*

In the daily life of the Batak community, sometimes certain words should not be spoken because they are considered avoidance and if they are done it will bring disaster or wrath from others. Until now, that taboo words or abstinence are still kept from being used or uttered, as can be seen in the following examples.

(8) Ndang boi didokhon mokmok tu poso-poso na baru tubu.

It is forbidden to say fat to the newborn baby

Sanctions: Causing the baby will get thin for the rest of their life.

The explanation:

1. The Batak community in the old times still believed that around them there were creatures called begu 'ghosts'. If a child is said to be fat, then the begu around it will approach the baby and will suck the baby's blood. If this is the case, then the child will grow thin and sick for the rest his life. The people who can restore the spirit of the child is a "smart person" who can communicate with these ghost. This pantang larang expressions like this are closely related to punishment that is supernatural (Sutarman, 2013: 14).

2. The form of local wisdom that conveyed through this expression of pantang larang is a self-control. A person that is required to always be able to keep his word so it do not hurting himself or others. With self- control, peace will manifest in society.

(9) Ndang boi dohonon goarni natorasniba.

It is forbidden to called the parents name

Sanctions: Causing the mouth will be melt (rotten)

The explanation:

1. The Batak community that maintain their family's pride and prestige.

Until now, in Batak customs it is very taboo to say the name of pur

parents. Marga for the Batak community is very important and as the main identity in daily life. The mention of names usually appears from parents to children or other children of the same age in the game. Once upon a time, a child do not know the names of his father and mother, eventhough the names of his grandparents. They will mention the family name of their father and mother or grandparents when asked by others. However, now that habit has begun to change. Today, a child is brave and does not hesitate to mention the names of his grandparents, grandmothers, fathers, mothers, and the other family members who are older than him. Of course this is not very good, because this is not the culture of Batak.

2. The form of local wisdom that contained in this expression of pantang larang is a character of respect and polite. A child in the Batak community will be called respectful and polite to his elders if he can maintain an attitude by not mentioning the names and not speaking louder than his interlocutor.

(10) Ndang boi dohonon babiat di harangan.

It is forbidden to called tiger in the forest

Sanctions: Causing calamity and even death

The explanation:

1. Since the old times until now, the Batak community still believe that mentioning the name of a tiger in the forest will make the king of the forest angry and will pounce the person. So that this things do not happen, the term of babiat is changed to ompu or ompung 'grandmother'. With this title, it is believed that the tiger will behave well and will not disturb the people in the forest.

2. Local wisdom that is manifested in this pantang larang is respect or an attitude of respect for the other creatures besides humans because both of they are God's creatures. The tiger is the most powerful animal and is considered the king of the forest. If the king of the forest has to be respected, how much more does a king who leads a region.

Based on observations in the field, it can be seen that the expression of pantang larang (hata tongka) which is still used in the Batak community, especially the Batak community in Samosir Regency, is more in the form of pantang larang in the form of action, while pantang larang in the form of speech is relatively less. There are approximately 150 expressions of pantang larang that are still used in society. The use of this expression of pantang larang is differentiated, namely for children, adults (men and women), and for the certain places.

## 5. Conclusion And Suggestion

### 5.1. Conclusion

Based on the discussion that carried out on some of the expressions of pantang larang (hata tongka) that found in the Toba Batak community, it can be concluded as follows:

1. The expression of pantang larang (hata tongka) is still applied to the most of the lives of the Toba Batak community, especially those in Samosir Regency. This can be proved by the existence of about 150 expressions of pantang larang that used in the area.
2. The expression of pantang larang (hata tongka) that consists of two forms, namely the form of action and the form of speech. The expression of pantang larang is more in the form of action than in words.
3. The characters that instilled in community, especially the younger generation, are the characters which related to ethics, morals, and other characters as stated by Sibarani (2014). The expression of pantang larang was chosen as a media for the character building because it was considered very effective due to the fear of breaking it due to the sanctions that always accompany the expression of pantang larang.

### 5.2. Suggestion

1. Remember that *pantang larang* was created to instill the character, especially goodness for each person, then this expression of *pantang larang* must be maintained in the middle of society.
2. *Pantang larang is a part of local wisdom that has positive values and part of the nation's cultural products. For that, the documentation must be done.*

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