



## **A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ORAL TRADITION *TAWA TASAPO*: WHEN WORDS CAN BE A MEDICINE**

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### **Abstract**

*Tawa tasapo* is one of the examples of oral tradition that persists in traditional medicine in Solok Regency. This research aimed to see linguistics meaning of language in *tawa tasapo*. The analysis was done by the application of Leech theory of meaning that divide meaning into seven types of meaning: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflective, collocative, and thematic meaning. This research used descriptive-qualitative method with simple mathematic to determine the finding of this research. After analyzing the data, it was found that connotative meaning and social meaning as the dominant used in this research. The result was influenced by Minangkabau and Islam culture.

**Key words:** Meaning analysis, oral tradition, *tawa tasapo*

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Oral tradition is not only a form of communication, but it also can be identified as a mirror of the social life and culture of its speaker; it contains values of norms or religion of the society, it mirrors the way of life of people, or it shows the local wisdom of certain region where it is preserved. Thus, oral tradition is including but not limited only to communicate.

One form of narrative oral tradition that still growing well is *mantra* (spell), or local people in Solok call it as *tawa*. This article only focuses on *tawa* in term of medicine. In this case, the object is *tawa tasapo*. Lord (1995) stated that oral tradition is one of the cultural products that developed orally before humans know lettering. However, in this millennial and post-modern era in which written tradition is already going well, people still believe in *mantra*. People still go to the shaman to heal their selves. This research is important to know how the power of language can give the perspective to the society, so they believe language as the main cause of them to be cured. This phenomenon is necessary to be analyzed

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scientifically in linguistics fields because it has strong relationship with the language used and its impact to the way of live of people.

Some previous studies investigated the existence of oral tradition through linguistics approach. Kunene, Guidetti, and Colletta(2017) did another study of oral tradition entitled “A cross-linguistic study of the development of gesture and speech in Zulu and French oral narratives”. The analysis used multimodal to see the comparative development of oral narrative of bilingual speaker between adult and children. The focus was to see the differences in speaking oral tradition between two different natives in two different generations.

Stephen (2010) studied about an endangered oral tradition of the North Atlantic Farose *Skjaldur*. He focused on the style, structure, content and its relation to the value that this oral tradition brought to the life of society, especially in nursery rhymes. Wulandari (2017) did the other analysis. She analyzed traditional medicine in Javanese through lexical usage in naming the ill and its relation to the medication culture of Javanese people. The analysis dealt with morphological study and its relationship with anthropological linguistics.

Renaldi, Syafrial and Rumadi(2018) investigated the structure and magic medicine category in Teluk Pinang Village Indragiri Hilir Regency, the focus of the research was on the structure of the utterance of the shaman and what is the meaning behind putting the utterance in that structure. Raodah (2018) analyzed the structure of *mantra*Caninrara for Makassarnese community. The focus of the research was on the sound, metaphors, meaning and the structure of that *mantra*. Qori’ah, Azhari, and Arsyada (2018) did the other closest research about *mantra*Ujub-ujub in Malang through functional semiotic approach and its relation to social value in the society. Thus, both of the analysis studies *mantra* in many different approaches.

This research was done under semantics study to see the types of meaning in *tawa* transcription including conceptual, thematic and associative meaning. Oral tradition in form of *tawa tasapo* is never been analyzed yet because each medication system in Solok Regency have different text of *tawa*. Not to mention, different shaman is having different transcription of *tawa*. This research tended to figure out “what are the linguistics characteristics that can be found in *tawa* language in Solok Regency so that it can give the perspective, ideology and way of life of its native in doing the medical activity”. The research question of this article is as follows: (1). what are linguistics meaning of the language used in *tawa tasapo*, and (2). what is the dominant type of meaning found in *tawa tasapo*.

The analysis follows the theory of meaning of Leech. According to Leech (1981:9-23) there are seven types of meaning. The first one is denotative meaning or conceptual meaning (Rosa, 2013). It is also called denotative or cognitive meaning, is considered the base meaning in linguistics study. The principles of contractiveness and constituent structure-paradigmatic and syntagmatic exes of linguistic structure-manifest at this level i.e. conceptual meaning can be studied in terms of contrastive features. The word ‘boy’ can be (+human, +male, -adult).

The second one is connotative meaning. Connotative meaning is the communicative value that expresses a thing by means of other. Connotations are varying from age to age, from society to society. For example, the word ‘dog’ can

represent the meaning of 'loyalty'. The next one is social meaning. It is the meaning like what is communicated of the social circumstances of language. Example: the meaning can be depends on the politeness strategy in a region.

The other type is affective or emotive meaning. It is more like what is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker through language. The meaning tends to be negative, for example the meaning of the word 'mother' for those who are motherless. Then, reflected meaning that can be defined like what is communicated through associations with another sense of the same world. For example in the word, 'gay' nowadays tends to change into 'homosexuality'.

The next type is collocative meaning. Collocative meaning is what is communicated through associations with word. For instance the word 'pretty' is collocated with woman, meanwhile the word 'handsome' is always used to indicate a man. The last one is thematic meaning. It means what is communicated by the way in which the message or organized in terms of order and emphasis. Thus, these types of meaning were be used to analyzed the language of *tawa tasapo*.

## B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research belongs to a descriptive-qualitative research. According to Santosa (2017) qualitative research is shown by its characteristic to get the understanding some aspects of social life, its methods generate words rather than number of data analysis. The term of this research can be descriptive, inductive, intuitive, and ethnographic. In this research, researcher used descriptive qualitative research because it described a phenomenon in the human behavioral. This study not only revealed that phenomenon but also explain it in details by depth-interview with the native user (Gay, 1987)). However, this study also use simple mathematic in the calculation of findings. This research described the types of meaning of oral tradition in form of *tawato* see the types of linguistics meaningand the dominant type used in the language of that oral tradition.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Data Analysis and Research Finding (tentative)

*Al-Fateeha*

*DatangEngkaudaribulosongsong, kembalikebulosongsong,  
Datangengkaudarijelatangmiang, kembalikejelatangmiang,  
Datangengkaudaribukikkehkembalikebukikkeh,  
Datangengkaudaribukik sari ramokembalikebukik sari ramo,  
Datangengkaudaribukikkayutanankembalikebukikkayutan  
Datangengkaudarihutanrimborayokembalikehutanrimborayo,  
Datangengkaudarisetanmatoaiekembalikesetanmatoaie,  
Dikembalikan Allah, dikembalikan Muhammad, dikembalikanRasulullah,  
Laillahailallahmuhammadarrasulullah (7x)  
Allahuakbar (7x)*

**Table of Lexical Meaning**

No.	Words	Conceptual (denotative) Meaning	Associative meaning
1.	<i>Engkau</i> (you)	To whom we are talking to	Ibilih (evil)
2.	<i>Bulo sonsong</i>	Horripilation (the erection of hairs on the skin due to cold, fear, or excitement)	<i>Sarang Ibilih</i> ( the nest of evil)
3.	<i>Jelatang miang</i>	Something that can make your skin irritated	<i>Sarang Ibilih</i> (the nest of the evil)
4.	<i>Bukik Keh</i>	A hill that named ‘Keh’	<i>Tampek tingga Ibilih</i> (the evil’s home)
5.	<i>Bukik Sari Ramo</i>	A hill that named “Sari Ramo”	<i>Tampek tingga Ibilih</i> (the evil’s home)
6.	<i>Bukik Kayu Tanam</i>	A hill that named “Kayu Tanam”	<i>Tampek tingga Ibilih</i> (the evil’s home)
7.	<i>Hutan Rimbo Rayo</i>	A forest named “Rimbo Rayo”	<i>Tampek basamayam Ibilih</i> (a place that consists of many evils)
8.	<i>Mato aie</i>	Water springs	<i>Tampek basamayam Ibilih</i> (a place that consists of many evils)

*Tawa tasapo* is a tawa used for the diseases caused by *Ibilih* (satan or evils). It is believed that human are prohibited to go to some restricted areas in the certain time. This tawa is as a result for those who break that prohibition. Surrounding people believe that when *satan* feeling disturb by humans, it will cause some disease.

The word “*engkau*” (you) is the pronoun used to indicate second person singular or plural. In this text, it refers to *ibilih* because this tawa is aimed to *Ibilih*. The word *bulo sonsong* in line 3 have denotative meaning as goose bumps (the erection of hairs on the skin due to cold, fear or excitement). However, it is not the meaning of *bulo sonsong* in *tawa tasapo*. It is understood as the nest of *Ibilih* (evil) that *manyapo* (gives the patient illness). It belongs to connotative meaning because it is believed that *Ibilih* is coming from fear and frightened, which have the same characteristics as *bulo sonsong*. Therefore, the meaning of utterance “*datang engkau dari bulo sonsong, kembali ke bulo sonsong*(if you come from *bulo sonsong*, please be back to *bulo sonsong*) is to chase away the evils to their nest, which are fear and frightened.

*Jelatang miang* in line 4 literally means everything (commonly a plant) that can irritate human’s skin. In *tawa tasapo* it also means the nest of the evil. It caused by evil and *jelatang miang* have the same characteristics to make irritation. Thus, *jelatangmiang* is one of the representatives of the sources of *Ibilih* that cause the illness.

The other words like *Bukik Keh*, *Bukik Sari Ramo*, *Bukik Kayu Tanan* and *Hutan Rimbo Rayo* mean several hills named *Bukik Keh*, *Bukik Sari Ramo*, and

*Bukik Kayu Tanan* and a jungle named *Hutan Rimbo Rayo*. They are well known as the house of evil because all of which share the same characteristic as the evil's place. *Ibiilih* (evil) is living in big trees, big stones, and unexplored places. Thus, *BukikKeh*, *Bukik Sari Ramo*, *Bukik Kau Tanan*, and *Hutan rimbo rayo* are the house of evils because commonly more likely to settle in unexplored places that consist of many big stones and big trees.

The last word that share connotative meaning is *mato aie*. *Mato aie* (water spring) denotatively means places that produce water sources. In *tawa tasapo*, water spring indicates the last place of *Ibiilih*. They (satan) likes to reside in that place because of its characteristics which are moist and dark. Thus, water spring in this text is not only about the source of water but also connotatively, it is as the place of evils to reside.

The first social meaning is generated from *Al-Fatehaa*. *Al Fatehaa* belongs to a social meaning because it is a part of the belief of society. *Al-Fatehaa* as the *Ummul-Qur'an* is the cure for every illness. It should be read in *tawa tasapo* because the disease is coming from *Ibiilih* (evil) that will be afraid and be perished by the mother of their holy book. Thus, the meaning of this utterance is understood as a part of culture and it can be analyzed as social/stylistic meaning.

Social meaning is also shown by utterances in lines 10, 11 and 12. In lines 11 and 12, the meaning is in term of a great capitulation to Allah and Muhammad as the prophet of Allah. Capitulation is a part of social culture in the society because they believe they believe everything is coming and be back to Allah as the God. It is supported by line 12. *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the greatest). It also shows their belief of God because God is the greatest that He can do everything including giving them a healthy. Thus, these three utterances show the faith of shaman and the society around.

### Finding of the research

Table of Finding

No	Types of Meaning	Frequencies	Percentages
1.	Conceptual	0	0%
2.	Connotative	7	63.6%
3.	Social	4	46.4%
4.	Affective	0	0%
5.	Reflective	0	0%
6.	Collocative	0	0%
7.	Thematic	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the table, it is found that connotative meaning as the first dominant type that found in nine-*tawa tasapo* in the medical culture of Solok Regency. It has been calculated that more than a half percentage of meaning is connotative meaning. It is found 7 utterances that belongs to connotative meaning over 11

utterances as whole. The second majority meaning is social meaning. There are 4 utterances (46.3%) which belongs to social meaning.

## 2. Discussion

The discussion focuses on why connotative meaning and social meaning appear to be the primary types of meaning in language of *tawa* in medical culture in Solok Regency. The fact that Solok Regency is a part of Minangkabau and Muslim culture is influenced the choice of word in the language used by the society.

Firstly, connotative meaning is the highest percentage meanwhile conceptual meaning as the lowest one in is the fact that Minangkabaunese always try to avoid the directness during the conversation. Unlike another language such as Bataknese or Javanese that well known with their openness, spontaneity and aggressiveness (Suciati and Agung, 2016). As Oktavianus (2015), stated Minangkabau people are not straightforward in using a language. They prefer indirectness in the use of language. One of the proof is Minangkabaunese have *bahaso malereang* (indirect language) as part of guiding of speaking. As Roosyidah (2009) claimed this language is used the indirect expression addressed to some people that the speaker prohibited to talk in straight way, for example between *mamak-kamanakan* (uncle and nephew) or *mintuo-minantu* (mother and son in law). This way of life influence language is also influence the choice of words of the speaker.

Moreover, Minangkabau people tend to use metaphorical expression and proverb even in their daily conversation. They express a word by means of others. As Lakoff (1980:56) claimed that most of our normal conceptual system is metaphorical structured; that is most concepts are partially understood in terms of other concepts. Minangkabaunese more likely use an expression that shares the same characteristic with the word in purpose. For example like Oktavianus (2015) explains the word “*ula*” (Snake) can represent human that behave and habit like a snake that only spread poison to others. Thus, the dominant of using connotative meaning is caused by the way of life of people in Solok Regency that try to avoid directness in language used. Therefore, connotative meaning dominates the other types of meaning caused by the way of life of its speaker in using a language.

Secondly, social meaning is as the second dominant type of meaning is social meaning. In social meaning, commonly is filled by the religion culture of society like almost all of the *tawa* ended with blessing identity “*aku dalam kandungan kulimah La illaha illallah*” or some of which input the surah from holy book to the text. It also caused by the ideology of Minangkabaunese ABS-SBK “*Adat Basandi Syara’, Syara’ Basandi Kitabullah*” (Adat should be based on religion, and the religion should be based on holy-book Al-qur’an). Novalinda, Novita and Rajma (2018) in their research state that everything in Minangkabau should be adjusted to Islamic law as the religion of the people. The ABS-SBK is becoming the base of any activity in Minangkabau, including governmental

system, marriage system, healthcare system, and all aspects of way of life. As Abdullah (1966), it represents the ideal behavior of people.

In spite the fact that medical word-based is a part of culture, its language cannot be avoid from the influencing ABS-SBK. The word choice is based on the belief of Islam as *syara*, and Al-qur'an as the holly book. Thus, the language used is commonly based on Islam language like the speaker as the servant of Allah as the God in Islam belief and the main decider, the use of *Al-Fateeha*, 30 juz and 144 ayahs of Al-Qur'an etc. Therefore, many social meanings found in *tawa* are because socio-culturally, people are living under the ideology of ABS-SBK.

#### D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

There are two types used in the texts. They are connotative meaning, social meaning. The factors are the geographical and socio-cultural impact of society in Solok Regency. Geographically, the choice of word is influenced by the location of Solok in highland. It helps the analysis of meaning from word around the highland, such as stone, water spring, and hill. Socio-culturally, the dominant types of meaning occurs because language style and way of life of people in Solok Regency under Minangkabau culture.

This study primarily studied the meaning analysis in language of *tawa* and the reason of dominant types found in that finding. There has been limitation in this research to see how the well existence of the oral tradition across generation. Moreover, deeper analysis in the future maybe studied under another field in linguistics, such as the cognitive-stylistics of people in using the language. In addition, to complete this study further analysis in seeing the inter-relationship between language and culture, especially word medical-based culture might be needed in linguistics research.

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