



Politeness in the Mamongkot Traditional Ceremony of the Bayu House of the Simalungun Batak Ethnic Group: A Normative Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the values of politeness and courtesy in the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu traditional ceremony of the Batak Simalungun community in North Sumatra. This ceremony is held as an expression of gratitude and a request for blessings from God when someone moves into a new house. This tradition not only has spiritual significance but is also imbued with social and moral norms that guide community behavior. This study used a qualitative approach with a normative-descriptive method, conducted through observation, interviews with traditional leaders, and literature review to understand the symbolic meaning and function of traditional values in social life. The results show that politeness is reflected in polite speech, modest dress, and respect for traditional elders. Politeness is seen as a behavioral guideline that maintains social harmony and demonstrates respect for others. Meanwhile, politeness is evident in the form of mutual cooperation, caring, and the provision of food or ulos (traditional clothing) to guests as a symbol of love and blessings. These values not only serve to strengthen social relationships but also serve as a form of spiritual devotion to God and ancestors. The Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony plays a crucial role as a character education tool, instilling values of respect, empathy, and solidarity in the younger generation. Amidst the tide of modernization, the values of politeness and courtesy remain relevant as a moral foundation for building an ethical, harmonious, and civilized society.

Keywords: politeness, traditional ceremony, mamongkot rumah bayu, Simalungun Batak ethnic, normative study

Kesopansantunan dalam Upacara Adat Mamongkot Rumah Bayu Etnik Batak Simalungun: Kajian Normatif

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas nilai-nilai kesopanan dan santunan dalam upacara adat *Mamongkot Rumah Bayu* pada masyarakat Batak Simalungun di Sumatera Utara. Upacara ini dilaksanakan sebagai ungkapan rasa syukur dan permohonan berkat kepada Tuhan ketika seseorang akan menempati rumah baru. Tradisi tersebut tidak hanya memiliki makna spiritual, tetapi juga sarat dengan norma sosial dan moral yang menuntun perilaku masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode normatif-deskriptif, yang dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara dengan tokoh adat, dan studi pustaka untuk memahami makna simbolik serta fungsi nilai-nilai adat dalam kehidupan sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesopanan tercermin dalam tutur kata yang halus, cara berpakaian yang sopan, serta penghormatan terhadap tetua adat. Kesopanan dipandang sebagai pedoman perilaku yang menjaga keharmonisan sosial dan menunjukkan penghargaan terhadap orang lain. Sementara itu, santunan tampak dalam bentuk gotong royong, kepedulian, dan pemberian jamuan atau *ulos* kepada tamu sebagai simbol kasih dan doa restu. Nilai-nilai ini tidak hanya berfungsi mempererat hubungan sosial, tetapi juga menjadi bentuk pengabdian spiritual kepada Tuhan dan leluhur. Upacara *Mamongkot Rumah Bayu* berperan penting sebagai sarana pendidikan karakter yang menanamkan nilai hormat, empati, dan solidaritas kepada generasi muda. Di tengah arus modernisasi, nilai kesopanan dan santunan tetap relevan sebagai fondasi moral untuk membangun kehidupan masyarakat yang beretika, harmonis, dan berkeadaban.

Kata kunci: kesopansantunan, upacara adat, mamongkot rumah bayu, etnik Batak Simalungun, kajian normatif

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a nation rich in cultural values and traditions passed down through generations (Hasanah & Andari, 2021). Customs, social structures, and norms governing societal behavior reflect this diversity (Iin Turyani et al., 2024). Two key moral values that shape the character of the Indonesian nation are politeness and courtesy (Hardiyanto et al., 2024). In addition to being demonstrated in daily life, these values are symbolically represented in various traditional ceremonies performed by communities in various regions (Nia et al., 2025). The Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony, performed by the Batak Simalungun people in North Sumatra, is one such ceremony imbued with values of politeness and benefit.

The Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony is performed as a sign of gratitude and a request for blessings when someone moves into a new house. Etymologically, mamongkot means "to enter" or "to open," while rumah bayu means "new house." This ceremony is not only a symbolic celebration of home ownership, but also a form of respect for God and ancestors for the abundance of blessings. Each stage of the ceremony reflects the social, moral, and spiritual norms of the Simalungun people, where the values of politeness and courtesy are essential to interactions between residents. Through dress codes, polite speech, welcoming guests, and providing hospitality, the community demonstrates respect and empathy, reflecting refinement and social sensitivity (Sari & Septiani, 2020.).

In Simalungun tradition, politeness is understood as behavior that reflects respect, good manners, and adherence to customary norms. Politeness extends beyond speaking softly to oneself and encompasses one's position according to one's social role and standing. Meanwhile, "sanjanaan" (companionship) signifies generosity, compassion, and concern for others (Sendana et al., 2024). These values are evident when homeowners share food, provide ulos (traditional clothing) as a sign of love, and welcome guests with hospitality. Thus,

politeness and courtesy form the basis of social harmony in Simalungun society.

From a normative perspective, these two values constitute moral norms that serve to regulate human behavior to conform to prevailing social and customary order. (Sumarti, 2020) Custom serves as an unwritten law with social and spiritual power. Violations of norms of politeness and courtesy, such as speaking impolitely to elders or being indifferent to guests, are considered customary violations that can diminish the family's dignity. Therefore, the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony also serves as a means of strengthening the community's moral and ethical values through traditional symbols and rituals.

In addition to being a spiritual ritual, this ceremony serves as a means of character education passed down to the younger generation. Through participation in traditional processions, children learn firsthand the importance of respecting their elders, maintaining good manners, and developing empathy for others (Mahesa et al., 2022). This learning process occurs naturally through role models, not solely through formal instruction. Thus, traditional ceremonies are an effective means of instilling moral values and developing individuals with noble character.

However, the values of politeness and courtesy are currently under threat from modernization and globalization. Modern lifestyles, with their tendency toward individualism, have led to a decline in public interest in traditional traditions (Triwirandi et al., 2021.). Many young people view traditional ceremonies as outdated and irrelevant. In fact, the values they embody are crucial for maintaining social balance and strengthening humanitarian ethics. Politeness teaches respect and self-control, while courtesy fosters solidarity and social awareness. Both are essential moral foundations in modern life.

Therefore, the study of politeness and courtesy in the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony has both academic and social value. This study aims to explore and explain how these two values are



manifested in traditional actions and symbols, and how these norms remain relevant in contemporary life. This research uses a normative-qualitative approach, analyzing the symbolic meaning, behavioral codes, and customary ethics based on observations and interviews with community leaders. The analysis aims to understand the function of politeness and courtesy as moral guidelines that maintain social harmony.

Through an understanding of these values, it is hoped that the community will revitalize awareness of the importance of custom as a source of ethics and national identity. The Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony is not only a cultural heritage but also a reflection of a value system that guides people to live with respect, care, and civility. By preserving the values of politeness and courtesy, the Batak Simalungun people not only preserve their ancestral heritage but also strengthen the moral identity of the Indonesian nation amidst increasingly complex changes.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a normative-descriptive method (Nazira et al., 2023; Razak, 2017). This approach was chosen because it is able to explain the moral values and social norms contained in the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu traditional ceremony of the Simalungun Batak ethnic group. Through a normative approach, the study examines the rules, etiquette, and ethical meaning of politeness and courtesy in the implementation of traditional ceremonies.

The descriptive method is used to describe the implementation of the ceremony in a realistic and systematic manner based on facts in the field. The study was conducted in Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra, with the main data sources coming from traditional leaders, homeowners, and community participants in the ceremony.

Data were collected through direct observation of traditional processions, in-depth interviews with informants, and library research of literature related to Simalungun culture. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively by interpreting the

meanings that emerge from traditional practices and cultural symbols. To maintain the validity of the data, the researcher used source triangulation and upheld research ethics, such as respecting local customs and maintaining the confidentiality of informants. With this method, the research is expected to be able to describe in depth the application of the values of politeness and courtesy as the norms of life of the Batak Simalungun people.

RESULT

The values of politeness and courtesy in the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu traditional ceremony not only have social and moral dimensions, but also reflect the life philosophy of the Simalungun Batak people, known as the principle of *habonaron do bona*, meaning "truth is the foundation." This principle emphasizes that every social action must be based on truth, honesty, and justice. In the context of traditional ceremonies, politeness and courtesy are not merely ethical behavior, but rather concrete manifestations of the values of truth and balance held dear by the community.

Politeness in these ceremonies can be seen as a form of self-awareness of social position and moral responsibility. Everyone is expected to know when to speak, how to behave, and to whom to show respect. For example, when speaking to traditional elders, one should use polite language, low intonation, and bow the head. This attitude reflects the hierarchical values of Simalungun society, which teach respect for elders and submission to customary rules. In this regard, politeness serves as a means of maintaining social harmony by placing each individual according to their role within the community.

Meanwhile, the value of charity demonstrates a strong social sensitivity within Simalungun culture. The act of mutual assistance and sharing during ceremonies reflects the spirit of mutual cooperation that remains strong within the community. In preparation for the ceremony, the community works together to cook, set up the venue, and even contribute to the costs of the event.

This attitude signifies that Mamongkot Rumah Bayu is not merely a personal matter, but rather a shared responsibility that strengthens communal solidarity. The concept of charity in Simalungun culture extends beyond material giving, but more broadly encompasses empathy, caring, and a sincere desire to help without expecting anything in return.

Furthermore, at a symbolic level, each element of the ceremony carries a meaning closely related to the values of politeness and charity. For example, the gift of an ulos (traditional cloth) to the homeowner serves not only as a gift but also as a symbol of love and blessings from relatives. The respectful presentation of the ulos illustrates how relationships among community members are nurtured with love and appreciation. Similarly, the dishes served are not simply a feast, but also a symbol of hospitality and gratitude. In the Simalungun view, sharing food strengthens social bonds and breaks down the barriers between host and guest.

In a modern context, the values of politeness and courtesy embodied in this traditional ceremony remain highly relevant. Modernization and globalization often bring about changes in social behavior, with individualism and pragmatism becoming stronger. However, traditions like Mamongkot Rumah Bayu serve as a reminder that harmonious social life can only be achieved if society upholds moral values such as respect, empathy, and caring. By upholding the values of politeness, people are taught to respect differences, exercise self-control, and uphold honor in speech and action. Meanwhile, the value of courtesy fosters an awareness that true happiness is not solely derived from material possessions, but also from the ability to share and do good to others.

Field observations also show that the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony serves as an important platform for strengthening the cultural identity of the Simalungun people. Many young people actively participate in the procession, whether as committee members, dancers, or

participants in traditional prayers. Through this direct involvement, they learn about the noble values of their ancestors. This demonstrates that customs are not static, but rather dynamic and adaptable to the times. Traditional ceremonies are still performed with their original meaning, but are adapted to the context of modern life without losing their moral substance.

From a socio-cultural perspective, politeness and courtesy are also crucial factors in maintaining social cohesion. Simalungun customs position humans as interdependent social beings. Therefore, violations of politeness or courtesy are often not only considered personal mistakes but can also tarnish the reputation of the family or clan. For example, disrespectful behavior toward guests during a ceremony can be seen as lowering the family's dignity, while a reluctance to share can sever social ties. Thus, norms of politeness and courtesy serve as a social control system that fosters collective awareness to maintain collective honor and harmony.

Beyond social values, politeness and courtesy also have profound spiritual significance. In the Simalungun community, human life is always connected to spiritual powers, whether derived from God or ancestors. Therefore, every action must be based on good intentions and respect to receive blessings. During traditional prayers (tonggo), participants not only ask for safety for the homeowner's family but also express gratitude for the life they have been given. Politeness in prayer and politeness in sharing symbolize harmony between humans and the Creator.

Interestingly, several interviews with traditional leaders revealed that changes in modern lifestyles do not necessarily mean the elimination of traditional values. In fact, many interpret politeness and courtesy in new, more contextual forms. For example, polite speech is now also manifested in the ethical use of social media, while the value of courtesy is embodied in social activities such as modern mutual cooperation (gotong royong) or collective donations. This



demonstrates that traditional values can transform with the times without losing their moral essence. From this discussion, it can be concluded that the politeness and courtesy in the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony are not merely customary ethics, but rather the moral foundation that underpins the social and spiritual life of the Simalungun Batak people. Both serve as a reflection of noble character, a source of social solidarity, and a mechanism for controlling individual behavior. These values shape the character of a civilized society, fostering mutual respect and empathy for others.

Therefore, preserving traditional ceremonies such as Mamongkot Rumah Bayu is crucial for maintaining the sustainability of the nation's cultural and moral values. This ceremony serves as a concrete means of reinstilling the values of politeness and courtesy, which are fading in modern life. By practicing these values, the Simalungun people not only preserve their ancestral heritage but also make a significant contribution to the formation of an Indonesian society with character, ethics, and civility.

DISCUSSION

The Mamongkot Rumah Bayu traditional ceremony in the Simalungun Batak community is not only a ceremonial tradition for moving into a new home, but also a means of transmitting moral, social, and spiritual values that have been passed down through generations. Through its implementation, the community reaffirms the importance of two core values in social life: politeness and courtesy. These two values serve as ethical guidelines that govern individual behavior in interacting with others, with nature, and with God.

These two values serve as important mechanisms of social control in the Simalungun community. Politeness maintains harmony and dignity, while courtesy strengthens social solidarity. Violation of either is considered a form

of disrespect for custom and can disrupt social balance. Thus, custom serves as a moral law that guides society to live in harmony, respect, and with mutual appreciation.

CONCLUSION

Politeness is reflected in dress code, gentle speech, and respect for traditional elders and others. Politeness in the Simalungun context is not merely a matter of formality, but rather a form of self-awareness to position oneself appropriately according to social standing. Meanwhile, courtesy is manifested in empathy, generosity, and mutual cooperation, evident in the giving of hospitality, the giving of ulos (traditional cloth), and the community's collective effort to help the homeowner. The value of courtesy teaches that happiness is not measured by material possessions, but by the ability to share and care for others.

Beyond its social function, the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony also has a strong spiritual dimension. Through traditional prayers (tonggo) and symbols such as ulos (a traditional cloth) and banquets, the community expresses gratitude and requests blessings from God and ancestors. Politeness and courtesy here are not only directed toward humans but also serve as a form of respect for divine powers.

In the contemporary context, the values of politeness and courtesy embodied in this ceremony remain relevant to modern life. Amidst globalization, which often fosters individualistic attitudes, traditional traditions serve as a reminder of the importance of morality, empathy, and respect. The Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony serves as a means of character education based on local culture, instilling noble values in the younger generation through real-life examples.

Overall, it can be concluded that the Mamongkot Rumah Bayu ceremony reflects the personality and cultural identity of the Simalungun Batak people. The values of politeness and courtesy contained within it form the foundation

of a harmonious, ethical, and civilized social life. Preserving this ceremony means maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity, between humans and their neighbors, and between humans and the Creator.

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