



# Local Wisdom in the Oral Tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* Community as Values of Local Culture

## *An Anthropolinguistic Study*

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### ABSTRACT

Local wisdom values are values that are mutually agreed upon by community members and passed down from generation to generation. These values are manifested in a culture called oral tradition. Oral tradition is one form of culture that comes from the continuity of cultural works. This study aims to describe the local wisdom values in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community, as a form of strengthening and preserving local culture. This research used the anthropolinguistic perspective. The type of research was descriptive qualitative, involving the Ethnographic research method, which is simplified into six stages. The data were collected by observing and interviewing informants. Next, the researcher made ethnographic notes, and asked the informants descriptive questions. Then, the researcher conducted a structured interview and wrote an ethnography. The research data were in the form of elaboration and description of the value of local wisdom in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community. The results of the study indicate that the value of local wisdom influences people's minds in facing the progress of the times and multicultural differences. The research data were in the form of elaboration and description of the value of local wisdom in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community.

**Keywords:** *Oral tradition of Kanayatn Dayak, Society and culture, Value of local wisdom.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Local wisdom is the identity of a nation related to the culture in an area. The diversity of tribes and cultures in Indonesia makes local wisdom a noble value that should be preserved as a form of people's love for their beliefs. Local wisdom applies in the procedures of human life that function to maintain and manage the community's living environment. Local wisdom is a cultural product that is used as a guide for life because of the many values that can be taken. Local cultural values are superior, namely values that must be seen as social heritage (Sihombing, 2021). The value of local wisdom is the community's interpretation of life guidelines that function to direct people's behavior and attitudes (Hilman & Hendriawan, 2018).

The plurality of Indonesian society should be an integrative force that proves that there are very diverse local wisdom values. However, in reality pluralism is a problem that cannot be denied. This is caused by unfounded prejudices due to the lack of awareness and understanding of diversity. Diversity must be handled

wisely, otherwise it will be prone to conflict. Seeing the reality of pluralism that is not in line with understanding and awareness of the nature of pluralism, it is necessary to explore the values of local wisdom that exist in each region to serve as an adhesive for the unity of the integrity of the life of the nation and state.

In line with the explanation above, it is also explained that the reality exists in the *Kanayatn Dayak* people. In general, the *Dayak* people in the hill areas tend to already have a business-minded mindset and this has made changes to their way of life. Several times, it has been found that the attitude of the community is indifferent to the forms and values of traditional culture in the form of traditional ceremonies, stories, and folk songs. This attitude is mostly found in areas close to market centers and highways. This lack of caring attitude is caused by busyness with businesses that are not related to the existence of customs or especially oral traditions. Whereas the people who have moved should not leave their regional cultural customs, because regional cultural customs are provisions for understanding the values of wisdom in the life that can help national unity. The value

of local wisdom found in the *Kanayatn Dayak* community can help preserve life and prevent divisions in society as well as maintain cultural and linguistic heritage.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher carried out research on values in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the hill area. The researcher also formulated a problem formulation, namely, what are the values of local wisdom contained in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the hill area?

The purpose of this study is to describe the existence of local wisdom values contained in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community. The approach used in this research was adapted from the perspective of Anthropology. Allesandro (1997) stated that describing a culture is the same as describing a language. According to Arifin (2018), Anthropology is the study of humans and culture related to the function of language and the dynamics contained in it. It can be concluded that anthropolinguistics is an interdisciplinary study involving two different disciplines, namely, anthropology and linguistics. This is done so that the disclosure of cultural symbols can be studied more clearly. As mentioned in the previous explanation, the focus of this study is on aspects of oral tradition, namely, the existence of local wisdom values contained in oral traditions. The oral tradition which belongs to the community collectively the *Kanayatn Dayak* community functions to bind togetherness.

According to Supriatin (2012), understanding the oral tradition does not only revolve around giving a space so that the tradition can be carried out, but textually and contextually, the oral tradition must also be understood. The goal is that the values inherent in the oral tradition can be understood by people in the modern era. Sibarani (2015) stated that oral tradition is part of performance, namely language is understood in the process of communicative activities, actions, and performances, which require creativity. Language as a lingual element that stores cultural resources cannot be understood separately from the performances or activities of the language. Another study on the oral tradition focuses on the process of carrying out the traditional ceremony of the *Naik Dango* oral tradition carried out by Priskila (2010) which examines the intricacies of the *Naik Dango* oral tradition in the *Kanayatn Dayak* community. In this study, the researcher also explains the meaning contained in the *Naik Dango* tradition.

Furthermore, research on the value of local wisdom of oral tradition as a manifestation of identity was done by Sangadah and Kartawidjaja (2020). This study emphasized that there were elements of local wisdom in an oral tradition of the Manggarai community which describes the identity of the life of the people there. Using an ecolinguistic perspective, the researcher examined the

form, meaning, manifestation, and preservation strategy of the *Déré* oral tradition in the Manggarai community.

Based on the two studies on the value of local wisdom in the oral tradition above, researchers can understand the importance of studying oral traditions that can increase cultural strengthening and community self-defense from modern outside cultures that have been integrated in everyday life. Studies on cultural values and wisdom are efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of an area. As stated by Supriatin (2012), the Indonesian people are 'blind' to their original values, who forget that they do not preserve their original values, who forget the past, forget their origins, and are like people with memory loss ignoring their history. It can be said that through local wisdom, people from certain tribes and cultures can contribute to the creation of a peaceful and serene life.

## 2. METHODS

This study used the data analysis stages of the modified Spradley model. Initially, the stages of the ethnographic research model of Spradley (1997) went through twelve stages. In this study, the researchers only used five stages, namely 1) determining an informant; 2) conducting interviews with informants; 3) tasking ethnographic notes; 4) asking descriptive questions; 5) conducting analysis of ethnographic interviews; 6) writing ethnographic reports in the form of descriptive qualitative research.

The first thing the researcher did was determine the informants. Researchers collected data by conducting participatory observations to informants, in this case researchers went directly to the research location and met with informants as information providers regarding the data to be discussed in this study. There were two informants in this study, namely Mr. Fransiskus and Mr. Hendrikus. The researcher chose the two informants because he knew and understood the oral tradition that was still being carried out and extensive knowledge and in-depth explanations had been conveyed to the researcher.

After determining the informants and contacting them, the researcher conducted interviews with the informants and made an appointment. However, because the residences of these two informants are from different regions with the researchers, access to the research site took 4 hours to travel and required sufficient vehicles and costs. Thus, researchers and informants agreed to conduct online interviews. The researcher listened and listened to all the explanations given by the informants on the interview questions that the researchers had posed. In this activity, researchers conducted open interviews aimed at gathering information about research data.

After conducting an open interview, the researcher immediately made ethnographic notes in the form of a brief report regarding the information that had been

obtained from the informants who had been interviewed. In addition, through ethnographic notes, the researcher clearly noted the identity of the informants. After making ethnographic notes, the researcher asked the informants descriptive questions regarding the research information to be carried out to obtain research data. In this activity, researchers asked descriptive questions spontaneously by taking into account the realm or context of the research. The researcher asked about the traditions and local wisdom values contained in them.

Then, the researcher continued by conducting an ethnographic interview analysis. At this stage the researcher began to specify the interview in the ethnographic realm. In depth, the researcher related the realm of research data that have been obtained through the stages. The last step, the researcher wrote an ethnographic report. This research was written based on a predetermined topic, namely, the existence of local wisdom values in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the hill area. At this stage, the researcher presents the research findings in the form of a general description of the object under study, which has never been known before. In this analysis, the information obtained is more in-depth, the researcher describes the chosen research area in more detail.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research and discussion in this study include the existence of local wisdom values contained in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the hill area through an anthropolinguistic approach (see table 1).

#### 3.1. A1 The Life Story Values in the Oral Tradition of Osolatn

The life story values that are believed by the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the *osolatn* oral tradition is a place for the maintenance and preservation of oral culture. In the culture of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the *osolatn* hill area, it is a story of the origin of descendants or also called genealogy of a family that can be traced through a story or utterance by an elder in the family. The oral tradition of *osolatn* is usually spoken in the form of ordinary chat or dialogue between the gathered family. The *Kanayatn Dayak* community still holds this oral tradition as something that must be said, because with the *osolatn* tradition the *Kanayatn Dayak* community can know and gain an understanding of where they come from.

The life story values of the life story that is believed by the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the hill area is a shield for maintaining language and knowledge in the *Dayak* community. Given that the value of life stories reflected in the *osolatn* tradition is an important part of the belief system of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community.

**Table 1.** Research result data

Data Code	Oral Tradition	Value of Local Wisdom
A1	<i>Osolatn</i>	Life Story Value
A2	<i>La la'</i>	The Value of Human Relations with Nature
A3	<i>Gawe</i>	Values of Human Way of Life
A4	<i>Batalah</i>	Fortune Value
A5	<i>Barapus</i>	Value of Happy Life

This is related to the life of the community itself. The value of life stories is told using language as a means of communication for the *Dayak* community.

Sutton (2021) argued that anthropolinguistics seeks to uncover the meaning behind the use of language in culture. In line with this statement, the reflection of the value of life stories in the *osolatn* oral tradition is a manifestation of the use of language in culture. The *Kanayatn Dayak* community tries to preserve their culture by using language in the expression of oral traditions. With an understanding of the value of life stories, the *Kanayatn Dayak* people in hill areas will know the people's old beliefs or religions about a place, the origins of the *Kanayatn* world, and are also related to life activities such as farming (for example, community beliefs with *Ne'Baruakng* on origin of rice). Stick with this explanation, Sukarismanti and Samsudin (2021) stated that through anthropolinguistics, language and culture are studied in the intricacies of human life. It is very clear that the existence of a reflection of the values of the life story of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community through the oral tradition of *osolatn* underlies people's beliefs about the history of their previous life. The value of this life story also describes the fantastic and magical life between in the sky (above) and on earth (below). In his speech, the public will know the image of a life story about an ancestor or a warrior who tells the struggle experience about the place and the *Dayak* people who contributed to their courage and loyalty to the Republic.

Through the value of life stories as the value of local wisdom of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community, it is hoped that people will remember where they came from and know stories about the origin of human life. This is also related to language as a cultural intermediary which is also related to worldly affairs.

#### 3.2. A2 The Value of Human Relations with Nature in the 'Lala' Oral Tradition

Reflecting the value of the relationship between humans and nature in the *lala'* oral tradition is a kind of abstinence or prohibition for the *Kanayatn Dayak* community to eat certain types of food, abstain from doing certain jobs and not to say anything. This period of abstinence is regulated according to the traditions of the community concerned, for example, it is carried out for three days, seven days, forty-four days, and even for life.

The goal is to avoid danger, or strength can be increased, or intentions in work can be granted.

As part of the manifestation of language and culture in the life of the *Dayak* community, it reflects the value of the relationship between humans and nature aimed at better environmental management. Suhartini (2009) stated that environmental management is an integrated effort to preserve environmental functions which includes policies for structuring, utilizing, developing, maintaining, recovering, monitoring, and controlling the environment. With a reflection of the value of the relationship between humans and nature, the *Kanayatn Dayak* community believes that through taboos or prohibitions the surrounding environment will feel better. The existence of a reflection of the value of the relationship between humans and nature makes the *Kanayatn Dayak* community aware of adaptation to their residential environment.

A reflection of the value of local wisdom of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community, namely, the relationship between humans and nature is part of a procession that has been running or is ongoing. In this case, prayers were also delivered by the traditional priest who led the *lala'* traditional ceremony. According to Duranti (1997), cultures serve as a mediating system, where the *Lala* oral tradition reflects the value of wisdom between humans and the natural surroundings. Thus, the expression of a prayer or mantra that is spoken in a language known by the custom priest must relate to the human realm of the *Kanayatn Dayak*. Regarding advantages and disadvantages, the community will bring with them good things and evil things, and requests to be kept away from harm.

In the context of this research, Duranti (1997) stated that culture includes small and complex "objects", namely, all languages and specific expressions or codes used in everyday life. Through a reflection of the value of the relationship between humans and nature, the *Dayak* community tries to express gratitude by doing taboos or prohibitions for the good of the environment around their settlements. This is part of the dimension of the beauty of language, through the culture of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community and affects community activities.

### **3.3. A3 The Values of Human Way of Life in the Oral Tradition of 'Gawe'**

The reflection of the values of the human way of life in the oral tradition of *Gawe* is part of the customs of a thanksgiving party or marks the beginning of a new life, such as post-harvest *gawe*, *Gawe Balak* (early adolescence), *Gawe Panganten* (leading a new life with a family). The effort to show the value of human way of life in the culture of the *Kanayatn Dayak* people in the hill area is a good understanding.

Sitompul and Simaremar (2017) explained that through an anthropolinguistic study we not only see elements of culture, but also language and its functions as the most important means of inheriting, developing, and disseminating culture. The value of the human way of life through the oral tradition of 'Gawe' is a manifestation of the communicative and cognitive tools of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community. People's understanding of the human way of life makes people always grateful for the work that has been done with good results. People will appreciate the process of life more. In this context, the value of the human way of life is manifested by celebrations or parties that take place when there is a harvest of rice or field produce. The community will appreciate the process of life more, in this context the value of the human way of life as realized by celebrations or parties that take place when there is a harvest of rice.

Values related to the way of life of humans remind the *Kanayatn Dayak* community are about respect for human life. In the embodiment of these values, prayers or advices are also expressed directly when the event is taking place. This prayers and advices use language with its representations or information as a type of action between the cultural manifestations of the community and their thoughts.

### **3.4. A4 The Value of Fortune in the 'Batalah' Oral Tradition**

The lucky value reflected in the *Batalah* oral tradition is part of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community's understanding of the safety of life related to the name of a newborn child. The *Kanayatn Dayak* community believes that the given name is very influential on the behavior of children in the future or as adults. The belief in the value of luck related to the good behavior of children and the safety of children when they grow up is manifested by the *Batalah* oral tradition. Through the perspective of anthropolinguistics, according to Wuryandari and Rahardi (2020) there is a formal and linear relationship, namely, a formal relationship related to the structure of language or text with context (situation, social, culture) and co-text (paralinguistics, gestures, material elements), while the linear relationship relates to the flow structure of the performance flow. With this explanation, the reflection of the value of luck is part of the understanding of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community regarding language and the cultural context in their residential environment. The value of luck becomes a shield for the *Kanayatn Dayak* community to live with profits and happiness. Giving a name to a newborn child is believed to be the provision of a happy life. This is also reinforced by the statement Barroh (2017) about giving a name to a child is part of one's self-esteem and as a first impression that reflects one's personality. Therefore, the *Kanayatn Dayak* community

has an understanding of the importance of naming children which leads to a life of luck, profits, and happiness.

The value of fortune in *Batalah* that is embraced by the community has the potential as a guide for a good life in the *Kanayatn Dayak* community. Through the *Batalah* oral tradition ceremony, the traditional priest conveys a prayer or mantra related to the good fortune of the newborn child, and requests that the child be successful in life in the future. It can be said that through prayers spoken in the oral tradition of '*Batalah*', from the perspective of Anthropology, language becomes a "guide" for social life because language stops humans from acting in certain ways, namely, suggesting and applying alternative ways to relate to objects and people around them.

### 3.5. A5 The Value of a Happy Life in the Oral Tradition of 'Barapus'

The value of a happy life that is believed by the *Kanayatn Dayak* community is a public belief about eternal life after death in the world. In fact, the oral tradition of *Barapus* is carried out three days after the funeral to inform that he has passed away to eternal life.

The value of this happy life is an intermediary for the thoughts of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community regarding the next life with God. The value of this happy life is manifested by performance in prayer or mantra as an intermediary and there are offerings to achieve sacredness in prayer. As Duranti (1997) said, describing a culture is the same as describing a language. This is also related to the view of the Sapir Whorf Hypothesis, namely "Language does not only determine culture but also determines the way of thinking of the speaker".

The *Kanayatn Dayak* people believe that after death, humans will live happy eternal life. Public knowledge about this is related to people's cognitive thinking. The value of a happy life which is still being implemented is proof that the *Kanayatn Dayak* community holds fast to their views and understanding. The *Kanayatn Dayak* community tries to maintain this value as an effort to appreciate the spirits of their ancestors, or relatives who have preceded life in this world.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research, this study concludes that 1) The value of local wisdom reflected in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community is a guideline for integrated cultural attitudes in life; 2) The value of local wisdom contained in the traditions of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community is the main effort to prevent cultural eviction by outsiders.

This research is expected to be a reference for further research with more varied results and discussions

regarding the values of local wisdom in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the hill area. With this, the researcher concludes that this research expects that there will be further researchers who raise the topic of the value of local wisdom in a culture as a form of effort to preserve and strengthen national identity. Research on the value of local wisdom in the oral tradition of the *Kanayatn Dayak* community can also be useful and can be integrated into Anthropology courses that study the relationship between culture and language as a concrete example of the relativity of culture and language.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to thank the resource persons or informants, and the *Kanayatn Dayak* community in the hill area for allowing the researcher to conduct research in the area.

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