

Speaking Herbs: The Pragmatic Roles of Language in the Creation of Minak Pengalun in Karo Tradition

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the pragmatic functions of language and its interplay with non-verbal acts in the formulation and implementation of Minak Pengalun, a traditional herbal medicinal technique originating from the Karo culture of Indonesia. The study uses qualitative research methods, such as ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and participant observations, to reveal how verbal expressions, gestures, and symbolic rituals coalesce to safeguard cultural heritage, convey ecological knowledge, and facilitate holistic healing. Employing Speech Act Theory, the study delineates five pragmatic functions of language in Minak Pengalun: representative acts communicate ecological and procedural knowledge, directive acts direct preparation and ritual execution, commissive acts signify practitioners' dedication to cultural authenticity, expressive acts demonstrate spiritual and emotional connections, and declarative acts affirm and reinforce cultural norms. The interplay between verbal communication and non-verbal rituals, including ingredient preparation and ritual gestures, guarantees the procedural precision and cultural congruence of the activity. The findings underscore Minak Pengalun as a comprehensive tradition in which language serves as a medium for meaning-making, connecting the spiritual, cultural, and ecological aspects of Karo identity. This research underscores the significance of safeguarding both linguistic and ceremonial elements of ancient traditions amidst cultural evaluation while also promoting additional comparative studies and techniques for intergenerational transmission. The study highlights the dynamic relationship between language and action and emphasizes the importance of Minak Pengalun in preserving cultural and natural legacy.

Keywords: *Minak Pengalun, Karo tradition, pragmatics, illocutionary acts, cultural preservation*

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means for communication but a dynamic, living force that creates and reflects cultural identity, notably in ancient healing rites. It embodies cultural legacy, functioning as a conduit for expressing beliefs, evoking divine forces, and strengthening communal values. In ancient healing methods like the Karo Minak Pengalun, language takes on a performative role through sacred chants and incantations, which are closely tied to gestures and the use of symbolic objects, such as herbs (Masreng, 2017; Rahmawati ; Mawaddah, 2020; Redvers et al., 2023). This combination between verbal and non-verbal aspects generates a comprehensive ritual where meaning is not only given but enacted, expressing the cultural narratives and spirituality of the group. As indicated on the study (Masreng, 2017) The results reveal that the interplay between verbal and non-verbal elements in the Savukh Rangin ritual generates a holistic practice where meaning is not only imparted but enacted, expressing the cultural narratives and spirituality of the community. Through prayers, chants, and symbolic objects like green coconuts and silver rings, the ceremony underlines its sacred purpose while insuring the transmission of moral and cultural heritage between generations. These rituals are more than simply acts of healing; they are a significant expression of cultural identity, conserving traditions while actively altering the way people relate with their heritage and spirituality. Through the interaction of language, gestures, and symbolic activities, traditional healing becomes a strong process of meaning-making that supports and evolves cultural identity throughout generations. In the traditions of the Karo people of Indonesia, the emergence of Minak Pengalun, a unique herbal medicinal method (Aritonang et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023). Far from being a simple treatment, Minak Pengalun is a comprehensive process intricately entangled with linguistic, cultural, and ecological factors (Norrick & Ilie, 2018; Satrianegara et al., 2021; Tarigan & Dwi Widayati, 2021; Zai et al., 2024). The study further analyses how verbal and non-verbal communication (e.g., gestures) interact to build meaning, particularly in ritualized practices,

highlighting the relevance of pragmatics in understanding traditional and cultural communication systems.

Through spoken words, gestures, and the careful manipulation of herbs, this ritual highlights how language can become a vehicle for healing, tradition, and community bonding. In addition, (Ulanowski, 2023) it investigates the sacred healing techniques of the *szeptucha* from Podlasie, where spoken words, gestures, and plants are vital to the rituals. Verbal prayers and incantations, frequently merging holy and local tongues, are considered to have creative force. At the same time, gestures like the sign of the cross and the use of symbolic objects such as candles, flax, and herbs increase the ritual's spiritual link. These rituals, rooted in a blend of Christian and pagan traditions, portray the healer as a mediator between the divine and the afflicted. The research finds that although this tradition offers hope to individuals disillusioned with contemporary medicine, it is gradually fading because to the aging population of practitioners and a lack of interest among younger generations. Across the world, traditional healing systems have received increasing attention as repositories of indigenous knowledge and cultural wisdom (Anne Nathalie J. A. Aguessy, 2023; Rebuya et al., 2020). However, whereas the pharmacological aspects of such behaviours have been thoroughly investigated, the verbal and symbolic dimensions generally remain undiscovered. What roles do spoken words, symbolic actions, and cultural rituals play in the development of a traditional cure like Minak Pengalun?

In the production of a traditional cure like Minak Pengalun in the Karo tradition, spoken words, symbolic acts, and cultural rituals are intricately linked, with linguistic metaphors and ceremonial language working to elicit spiritual connections and ecological balance. This contrasts with the rituals of the Sasak society, whose oral traditions, communal rites, and symbolic gestures promote the preservation of cultural identity and social solidarity. Similarly, the Dagomba of Ghana stress spoken words and gestures in developing psychological reassurance and spiritual trust, suggesting a more individual-centered approach to healing. These contrasts illustrate the different ways traditional groups integrate language, symbolism, and ritual in their healing systems, shaped by their distinctive cultural and spiritual backgrounds. (Abukari, 2016) In the ancient medical techniques of the Dagomba in Ghana, spoken words serve not only as a channel

of communication but also as a tool for psychological comfort, where linguistic expressions lessen fear and build hope in patients. Symbolic rituals, such as the production of herbal remedies or ritual gestures, impart cultural and spiritual value, strengthening the perceived potency of therapies. Finally, cultural rituals connect spiritual, social, and physical components, emphasizing harmony between the individual and their group, therefore supporting holistic healing. Together, these factors reveal a multi-faceted approach to health, contrasting with the often clinical focus of Western medicine, which stresses the biological above the cultural and spiritual. (Setiawan & Chaer, 2025) In the Sasak indigenous culture of Lombok, spoken words, symbolic deeds, and traditional rites play a key role in preserving cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs.

Oral traditions, such as folktales, chants, and mantras, serve as a vehicle for conveying moral values and cultural identity between generations. Symbolic activities in rituals, including sacrifices and prayers, carry deeper meanings that establish spiritual relationships. Cultural celebrations, such as the "Bau Nyale" festival, not only celebrate ancestral customs but also create social solidarity and collective identity, assuring the survival of their cultural legacy amid modernization. The variations between traditional healing procedures in the Karo lineage, the Sasak group, and the Dagomba of Ghana emphasize their unique cultural perspectives. In the Karo tradition, linguistic metaphors and ritualistic language play a crucial role in expressing ecological harmony and spiritual meaning. The Sasak community, on the other hand, concentrates on oral traditions, symbolic acts, and communal rituals as crucial aspects in preserving cultural identity and promoting social cohesiveness. In contrast, the Dagomba of Ghana emphasis the psychological and spiritual components of healing, use spoken words and symbolic gestures to create trust and promote hope, deeply embedded in their cultural and spiritual frameworks. How do language and gestures combine to produce meaning and maintain cultural heritage? This study focuses on these concerns by exploring the practical role of language in Karo healing practices, which delves into the pragmatic significance of language in Karo healing practices. According to (Haviland, 2005a), gestures are strongly rooted in cultural and linguistic practices, serving as a vital semiotic link between spoken language and sociocultural contexts. For instance, gestures often incorporate iconic representations that visually resemble the objects or concepts they denote, making them potent tools for meaning-creation. Moreover, gestures represent collective memory and cultural

beliefs, enabling the transmission of social values and customs throughout generations. While this study highlights the cultural distinctiveness and integration of gestures within broader verbal systems, it also acknowledges their importance in bridging linguistic barriers through their universally identifiable patterns.

Similarly, (Haviland, 2005b) further highlights the universality and versatility of gestures in communication. This study demonstrates that gestures are more effective than vocalizations in transmitting meaning across cultural and linguistic boundaries, as they rely on iconic signals that are innately recognized. By highlighting their success in cross-cultural communication, the research indicates that gestures are crucial for individual expression and for understanding between varied groups. Additionally, the study ties the usefulness of gestures to their embodiment, showing that shared human interactions with the environment impact the universal intelligibility of gestured messages. Compared to the study of Minak Pengalun, which highlights the relevance of linguistic metaphors and ritualized language in traditional healing, these gesture-focused studies highlight a broader perspective. While Minak Pengalun focuses primarily on spoken words' ecological and symbolic qualities, the universality and embodiment of gestures offer a parallel paradigm for understanding how meaning is generated and kept. Together, these approaches highlight the different yet linked ways language and gestures contribute to cultural legacy and traditional behaviors.

Traditional medicine has long been a cornerstone of cultural identity and ecological knowledge, giving a fundamental connection between people, nature, and healing. This is seen in the rich traditional herbal practices reported in Northeast India (Kropi et al., 2024), where indigenous tribes utilize medicinal plants to cure women's health difficulties and sustain cultural identity through generational knowledge transfer. Similarly, the cultural ecosystem services of the Indian Western Himalaya (Bhatt et al., 2024) highlight how traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) sustains spiritual, cultural, and aesthetic practices that connect communities to nature, supporting the preservation of both biodiversity and cultural legacy. Therefore, the reliance on traditional and informal healthcare systems in rural West Bengal (Debsarma & Kumar, 2025) emphasizes the persistent relevance of inherited practices and ecological knowledge in determining healthcare behaviors,

particularly in contexts where formal healthcare institutions are inaccessible. Together, these findings demonstrate that traditional medicine is a health practice and a fundamental link between cultural identity, ecological understanding, and holistic well-being.

Furthermore, (Anne Nathalie J. A. Aguessy, 2023; Marques et al., 2022; Mwaka et al., 2023) As demonstrated by the Māori's Rongoā healing system, which incorporates oral traditions, rituals, and a connection to the land, and by international initiatives like South American plant medicine, where indigenous practices combine with contemporary healthcare to maintain cultural identity and enhance health outcomes, the importance of language, rituals, and local knowledge in traditional healing practices lies in their capacity to preserve cultural heritage and spirituality.. Similarly, in the Karo tradition of Indonesia, Minak Pengalun displays the confluence of linguistic, cultural, and ecological factors. By examining how these elements converge, this research builds on the premise that traditional healing practices are vital to sustaining both cultural identity and ecological knowledge, as reflected in the cultural ecosystem services of community forests, where rituals and traditional ecological knowledge preserve biodiversity and socio-ecological systems, and in the use of medicinal plants, which integrates sustainable resource use with the preservation of cultural heritage (Anju & Kumar, 2024; Bhatt et al., 2024; Jatula, 2022). To appreciate the language and cultural strata of Minak Pengalun, this study draws on different theoretical frameworks. (Eragamreddy, 2024) Pragmatics explores how speakers alter their language usage in diverse social and cultural circumstances to accomplish their communication aims. It focuses on non-literal elements of meaning, such as presuppositions, inferred meanings, and speech acts, and also how Indigenous communities integrate verbal and non-verbal communication, such as tone, gestures, and body language, to convey emotions and meaning, with pragmatics offering insights into how these elements interact contextually. It highlights that gestures often complement spoken words to increase understanding. At the same time, cultural heterogeneity in perceiving non-verbal cues underscores the significance of common cultural knowledge for effective communication. which corresponds closely with the multimodal communication evident in Minak Pengalun.

Moreover, (Fröhlich et al., 2019) offers insights into how verbal and non-verbal elements such as; gestures, handling herbs, and symbolic movements work together to construct a unified story in this tradition. (Berhe et al., 2024) While this study focuses on the role of traditional healing in mental health, it shares the broader purpose of studying how language and rituals are crucial to recovery. This connection increases the framework for understanding how multimodal communication adds to the efficacy of Minak Pengalun. Furthermore, (Jonz & Saville-Troike, 2003) gives a framework for examining how cultural norms and behaviours influence language use in Karo healing systems. (Suleiman Ajala, 2019) Similar to the Yoruba worldview, where traditional medicine intertwines with cultural expressions and beliefs, Minak Pengalun expresses the Karo people's cultural identity through its linguistic and ecological traditions. Lastly, (Cowley, 2011; Katz, 2009) The findings reveals that language in Indigenous Knowledge Systems is a dispersed and ecological activity strongly anchored in social and natural contexts. It acts not just as a medium for communication but also as a means of sustaining ecological balance, cultural identity, and social cohesiveness. Indigenous languages encode rich information about ecosystems, expressing the interdependence between people, their environment, and their cultural activities. Protecting these languages is vital for safeguarding the broader ecological and cultural systems of Indigenous communities. These points of view underline the necessity to protect Minak Pengalun as a cultural and ecological traditions, connecting it to a wider discourse on the ecological viability of Indigenous practices.

Considering the increased interest in preserving ancient knowledge systems, research generally prioritizes pharmacological or botanical aspects above linguistic and multimodal components. While earlier studies have studied the interaction of language and culture in healing traditions, none have focused especially on the pragmatic and multimodal features of Minak Pengalun. At the centre of this study, there are two interconnected questions:

1. What are the pragmatic roles of language in the creation and use of Minak Pengalun within Karo tradition?
2. How does the interaction between language and non-verbal actions (e.g., gestures, touching herbs) contribute to the meaning-making process in this context?

These questions seek to identify how verbal instructions and non-verbal acts combine to transmit cultural values, conduct rituals, and aid healing. Addressing these problems is crucial for understanding the broader implications of how language and culture preserve conventional knowledge systems. This study intends to determine the pragmatic roles of language in the development and use of Minak Pengalun and to analyse how the interaction between language and non-verbal behaviours contributes to meaning-making. By focusing on these objectives, the research fills a critical gap in understanding traditional healing techniques' cultural and language components.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design to analyse the pragmatic roles of language, rituals, and local knowledge in the formation and practice of Minak Pengalun within the Karo tradition. The research incorporates ethnographic approaches with theoretical frameworks from Pragmatics, Multimodal Communication Theory, the Ethnography of Communication, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Theory. These frameworks provide the means to study how verbal and non-verbal aspects converge to create meaning and maintain cultural heritage.

The key data sources for this research are oral histories, direct observations of Minak Pengalun ceremonies, and in-depth interviews with traditional healers and community members who perform or possess knowledge of this healing tradition. These data sources offer useful insights into the language and cultural processes that support the activity. Observations capture the combination of verbal instructions, chants, and non-verbal acts, such as gestures and the handling of herbs. At the same time, interviews disclose the practitioners' ideas on the relevance of language and rituals in promoting healing and transferring cultural values.

The research procedure follows a systematic flow to ensure comprehensive analysis. First, a literature review is undertaken to identify gaps in the research of linguistic and multimodal elements of traditional healing. Fieldwork then focuses on data collecting, including participant observation of Minak Pengalun rites and interviews with practitioners.

Data is evaluated using qualitative approaches, such as thematic coding and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), to find patterns in the pragmatic use of language and its interaction with non-verbal factors. This analysis tries to reveal how these aspects interact to form a unified cultural narrative that embodies healing practices and protects ecological and cultural knowledge.

The study is segmented into five phases to guarantee methodological precision, systematic data acquisition, and coherent analysis regarding the function of language in Minak Pengalun. This organised framework establishes a robust theoretical foundation, ensures that data is contextually rich and authentic, and permits a comprehensive investigation of verbal and non-verbal interactions in healing rituals. Additionally, it promotes a significant interpretation of findings, linking linguistic and cultural practices to heritage preservation, and aids in a well-integrated synthesis of results, underscoring the importance of Minak Pengalun in the perpetuation of Karo traditions and ecological knowledge. To achieve these objectives, the research is conducted in five key stages: (1) conducting a literature review to establish a theoretical foundation; (2) collecting primary data through fieldwork in Karo communities; (3) analyzing the interplay of verbal and non-verbal elements in healing rituals using theoretical frameworks; (4) interpreting findings to connect linguistic and cultural practices with the preservation of cultural heritage; and (5) synthesizing and presenting results to highlight the significance of Minak Pengalun in sustaining Karo traditions and ecological knowledge. This methodical approach ensures a complete understanding of how language, rituals, and local knowledge interact in traditional healing techniques (Luft et al., 2022).

DISCUSSION

This section addresses the pragmatic roles of language in the production and practice of Minak Pengalun within the Karo tradition. The analysis underlines how language, through diverse illocutionary acts, operates as a channel for conserving cultural identity, transferring ecological information, and guiding spiritual practices. Additionally, the connection between

verbal expressions and non-verbal behaviours is addressed, highlighting their importance in establishing a comprehensive and meaningful healing practice.

Pragmatic Roles of Language in the Creation of Minak Pengalun

Language plays a vital role in the production and use of Minak Pengalun, functioning not only as a medium for communication but also as a tool for cultural preservation, ecological knowledge transmission, and spiritual practice. Drawing from the speech act theory, this study explores how the illocutionary acts representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative manifest in the utterances of Karo practitioners. These activities are profoundly rooted in the language and cultural framework of the Karo tradition, impacting the processes of ingredient selection, preparation, and ritual observance. The following table shows an analysis of illocutionary acts based on the data received from five informants. Each utterance is characterized by its category, providing evidence of how language performs various purposes within the Minak Pengalun practice. This approach reveals the complicated connection between language, tradition, and the ecological environment of this cultural healing practice.

Table 1: Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in Minak Pengalun Practices

Illocutionary Act	Utterances	Data Informant	Purpose/Function
Representative	"Jeruk purut digunakan untuk menghilangkan kuman." (Jeruk purut is used to remove germs)	Informant 5	Describes the medicinal property of jeruk purut, exhibiting ecological understanding.
	"Kelapa hijau asli, apabila ditenggelamkan di ember berisi air, tangkainya ke atas." (Authentic green coconut floats with its stem pointing upwards)	Informant 4	Discusses how to recognise an authentic green coconut, providing practical information..

Directive	"Minyak ini harus dibuat pada hari baik, seperti hari aditiya dalam budaya Karo." (This oil must be made on auspicious days, such as aditiya day in Karo culture)	Informant 5	Declares cultural norms and practices for timing the oil-making process.
	"Semua bahan harus segar dan tidak boleh satupun bahan yang kering." (All ingredients must be fresh and not dry)	Informant 2	Provides advice for component selection to preserve efficacy.
	"Dari awal, bahan dicuci, dicincang, ditumbuk sampai halus, dan dimasak." (From the beginning, ingredients are cleaned, chopped, ground, and cooked)	Informant 3	Leads the preparation process for generating the oil.
	"Proses pembuatan minyak karo ini harus melihat wari simehuli (hari baik)." (The process must observe auspicious days)	Informants 2 & 5	Provides guidance on cultural timing for starting the oil-making process to guarantee spiritual alignment.
Commissive	"Saya mintakan kepada Tuhan supaya bahan-bahan ini menjadi obat." (I ask God to turn these materials into medicine)	Informant 1	Shows a commitment to preserving the efficacy of the oil through prayer.
	"Kalau bahan belum terkumpul sepuluh, minyak ini tidak akan berkhasiat." (If ten ingredients are not collected, the oil won't be effective)	Informant 1	Expresses commitment to completing the task by obtaining all essential ingredients.
	"Saya berjanji tidak akan menjual minyak ini untuk komersial." (I promise not to commercialize this oil)	Informant 5	Reflects a pledge to preserve the cultural and spiritual validity of the practice.

	"Saya berbicara dengan tumbuh-tumbuhan karena tumbuh-tumbuhan ini memiliki roh." (I talk to plants because they have spirits)	Informant 5	Describes a spiritual connection to nature, showing respect for plants.
Expressive	"Kalau hati saya emosi dan marah, minyak yang saya buat itu pasti tidak akan jadi." (If my heart is emotional or angry, the oil will not succeed)	Informant 4	Highlights the emotional balance required during the oil-making process.
	"Saya mintakan kepada Tuhan supaya bahan-bahan yang saya kumpulkan ini dijadikannya menjadi obat." (I ask God to turn these materials into medicine)	Informant 1	Reflects faith in supernatural involvement during the healing process.
Declarative	"Minyak tidak boleh dilangkahi dan harus diletakkan di tempat tinggi." (The oil must not be stepped over and must be placed on high ground)	Informants 4 & 5	Declares cultural rules that signify respect and ritual holiness
	"Jeruk purut digunakan untuk menghilangkan roh jahat." (Jeruk purut is used to ward off evil spirits)	Informant 5	Asserts the cultural belief in the protecting power of particular foods.
	"Minyak patah tulang." (Oil for broken bones)	Informant 5	Symbolic name mirrors the oil's function, boosting belief in its efficacy.

The data shown in the table indicates how the five categories of illocutionary acts representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative are intimately woven throughout the practices of Minak Pengalun. These actions not only guide the procedural

aspects of oil-making but also reflect the Karo society's cultural, spiritual, and ecological values.

Representative Acts: Conveying Knowledge and Expertise

Representative acts are visible in the practitioners' assertions regarding the qualities of components and the cultural protocols underlying the oil-making process. For example:

- The declaration that "*Jeruk purut digunakan untuk menghilangkan kuman*" (Jeruk purut is used to eradicate germs) indicates the ecological knowledge entrenched in the tradition.
- Similarly, explaining the floating features of authentic green coconut demonstrates practical competence required for assuring the oil's efficacy.

These utterances provide a framework for keeping and conveying traditional knowledge, ensuring that the practice stays authentic and effective.

Directive Acts: Guiding the Process

Directive actions are vital for guiding the steps required to construct Minak Pengalun. For instance:

- "*Semua bahan harus segar dan tidak boleh satupun bahan yang kering*" (All ingredients must be fresh and not dry) underlines the importance of ingredient quality.
- Guidance on scheduling, such as "*Proses pembuatan minyak karo ini harus melihat wari simehuli*" (The procedure must respect auspicious days), demonstrates how cultural norms impact the oil-making ritual.

These directions ensure that the oil-making process corresponds with conventional norms and spiritual concepts.

Commissive Acts: Reflecting Commitment

Commissive acts indicate the practitioners' dedication to upholding the cultural and spiritual integrity of the discipline. For example:

- "*Kalau bahan belum terkumpul sepuluh, minyak ini tidak akan berkhasiat*" (If 10 ingredients are not collected, the oil won't be effective) indicates a commitment to following specific protocols.

- "*Saya berjanji tidak akan menjual minyak ini untuk komersial*" (I pledge not to commercialize this oil) stresses the practitioner's commitment to protect the practice's authenticity.

These comments underline the ethical and cultural commitments that practitioners uphold in their role as stewards of tradition.

Expressive Acts: Demonstrating Spiritual Connection

Expressive deeds reveal the emotional and spiritual components of Minak Pengalun. Practitioners communicate their connection to the supernatural and nature through comments like:

- "*Saya mintakan kepada Tuhan supaya bahan-bahan ini dijadikannya menjadi obat*" (I beseech God to change these materials into medicine).
- "*Saya berbicara dengan tumbuh-tumbuhan karena tumbuh-tumbuhan ini memiliki roh*" (I talk to plants because they have spirits).

These expressions enhance the spiritual core of the practice, connecting it to both human and ecological ties.

Declarative Acts: Embodying Cultural Authority

Declarative activities assist to build and enforce cultural norms. Statements such as:

- "*Minyak tidak boleh dilangkahi dan harus diletakkan di tempat tinggi*" (The oil must not be stepped over and must be deposited on high ground) express respect for the sacred nature of the oil.
- The declaration that "*Jeruk purut digunakan untuk menghilangkan roh jahat*" (Jeruk purut is used to fend off evil spirits) highlights the protective meaning of the components.

These acts indicate how language is employed to maintain the sacredness of the practice and its connection with cultural norms. Language in the Karo tradition has a varied and vital role in the production and use of Minak Pengalun. By evaluating the data via the framework of speech acts, it becomes obvious that language performs pragmatic roles that transcend beyond ordinary communication. It works as a mechanism for preserving cultural history, conveying ecological knowledge, and ensuring spiritual alignment. The five

categories of illocutionary acts: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, reveal how practitioners utilize language to instruct, commit, express, and build cultural norms within this traditional therapeutic technique.

Representative acts illustrate the function of language in expressing factual knowledge and competence. Practitioners provide thorough descriptions of the qualities of components and the procedural procedures in oil-making, such as the therapeutic virtues of jeruk pursuit for eradicating germs or the method to recognize authentic green coconut. These utterances ensure the oil's efficiency and act as a tool of transmitting ecological wisdom. By stating these truths, practitioners reinforce their authority and role as stewards of cultural and ecological knowledge, ensuring that the practice remains authentic and aligned with its traditional roots.

Directive acts are crucial to guiding the preparation and usage of Minak Pengalun. These contain guidelines about selecting and processing ingredients, such as ensuring that all components are fresh and free from flaws. Practitioners often emphasize following traditional conventions, such as observing "hari baik" (auspicious days) for starting the oil-making process. These directions assure procedural accuracy and emphasize the connection between the practical aspects of therapy and the spiritual values found in the Karo tradition.

Commissive acts indicate the practitioners' dedication to the integrity of the practice. Statements like "Kalau bahan belum terkumpul sepuluh, minyak ini tidak akan berkhasiat" (If 10 elements are not collected, the oil will not be effective) indicate a great feeling of responsibility for completing the procedure with precision. Similarly, commitments not to commercialize the oil reflect a desire to preserve its spiritual and cultural purity. These acts stress the ethical components of the practice, highlighting the practitioner's position as a defender of the tradition's sanctity.

Expressive acts reveal the emotional and spiritual dimensions of Minak Pengalun. Practitioners commonly stress their reliance on heavenly direction and their spiritual connection to nature. For instance, words like "Saya berbicara dengan tumbuh-tumbuhan karena tumbuh-tumbuhan ini memiliki roh" (I talk to plants because they have souls) demonstrate a profound reverence for the environment and the notion that nature is

endowed with spiritual importance. Such expressions not only confirm the practitioner's emotional engagement but also support the cultural principles of harmony and connectivity within the Karo tradition.

Finally, declarative acts reveal how language establishes and reinforces cultural norms. Declarations regarding the sacredness of the oil, such as "Minyak tidak boleh dilangkahi" (The oil must not be trodden over), incorporate reverence and ritual sanctity inside the activity. Additionally, the symbolic naming of oils, such as "Minyak patah tulang" (Oil for fractured bones), reflects their intended purpose and encourages trust in their efficacy. These declarative acts elevate the practice from a mere procedural activity to a deeply cultural and spiritual commitment.

In summation, language in the development and use of Minak Pengalun is not restricted to its functional purpose; it embodies the cultural, ecological, and spiritual components of the Karo tradition. Each sort of illocutionary act has a specific purpose: imparting knowledge, guiding behaviors, expressing emotions, subscribing to ethical standards, and building cultural authority. Through these responsibilities, language becomes a powerful weapon for perpetuating the authenticity and vitality of Minak Pengalun, ensuring its relevance and continuity in the face of current difficulties. This approach highlights the need to keep the linguistic features of traditional behaviors as an intrinsic part of cultural heritage.

The Interaction Between Language and Non-Verbal Actions in Minak Pengalun

The production and application of Minak Pengalun in the Karo tradition are profoundly entrenched in the interplay between spoken words and non-verbal acts. Verbal statements, including prayers, directions, and declarations, are closely linked with bodily gestures, ingredient handling, and ritualistic procedures. This contact not only ensures the procedural precision of the oil-making process but also imbues it with layers of cultural, ecological, and spiritual importance. To study how words and actions work together to construct meaning, the table below shows a detailed examination of utterances from the informants and their related non-verbal behaviors. Each example emphasizes how language

directs, enriches, or coincides with physical actions to retain the integrity and authenticity of Minak Pengalun.

Table 2: Interaction Between Language and Non-Verbal Actions

Verbal Language (Utterance)	Non-Verbal Action	Informant	Contribution to Meaning-Making
"Semua bahan harus segar dan tidak boleh satupun bahan yang kering." (All ingredients must be fresh and not dry).	Selecting and inspecting fresh herbs and other materials.	Informant 2	Ensures that the physical preparation coincides with the quality criteria vocally highlighted, underlining the necessity of freshness for efficacy.
"Proses pembuatan minyak karo ini harus melihat wari simehuli." (The process must observe auspicious days).	Timing the start of the oil-making process to align with auspicious days.	Informants 2 & 5	Aligns the ritualistic timing with cultural beliefs, stressing spiritual and cultural synchronicity.
"Minyak tidak boleh dilangkahi dan harus diletakkan di tempat tinggi." (The oil must not be stepped over and must be placed on high ground)	Placing the oil on elevated surfaces and avoiding physical disrespect.	Informants 4 & 5	Physically enhances the sacredness and respect demanded by cultural norms, translating verbal pronouncements into observable deeds.
"Saya berbicara dengan tumbuh-tumbuhan karena tumbuh-tumbuhan ini memiliki roh." (I talk to plants because they have spirits).	Handling plants with care and offering gestures of respect, such as bowing or praying.	Informant 5	Demonstrates spiritual resonance with nature, when vocal acknowledgment of plant spirits is accompanied by respectful physical gestures, strengthening ecological meaning.
"Saya mintakan kepada Tuhan supaya bahan-bahan ini dijadikannya menjadi obat." (I ask God to turn these materials into medicine)	Praying while stirring or mixing the ingredients in a sacred and focused manner.	Informant 1	Combines spiritual intent with the physical act of preparation, creating a holistic ritual that links the spiritual and material parts of the process.
"Dari awal, bahan dicuci, dicincang, ditumbuk sampai halus, dan dimasak." (From the beginning, ingredients are cleaned, chopped, ground, and cooked).	Washing, chopping, grinding, and cooking ingredients using traditional tools such as mortars and pestles.	Informant 3	Demonstrates how verbal instructions are physically enacted to ensure procedural accuracy, connecting verbal descriptions to tactile processes.

"Jeruk purut digunakan untuk menghilangkan roh jahat." (Jeruk purut is used to ward off evil spirits).	Including jeruk purut in the preparation and handling it with reverence as part of the ritual.	Informant 5	Combines cultural belief in the spiritual properties of jeruk purut with its physical inclusion in the healing oil, strengthening the interplay of spiritual and material realms.
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The data reveals the considerable connection between verbal language and non-verbal actions in Minak Pengalun, showing their joint function in guaranteeing procedural precision and cultural alignment. Key discoveries include:

Verbal Directives Guiding Actions:

- The directive "Semua bahan harus segar dan tidak boleh satupun bahan yang kering" (All ingredients must be fresh and not dry) is directly related to the task of selecting and examining fresh herbs and other things. This ensures the quality and efficiency of the oil.
- The directive to follow "wari simehuli" (auspicious days) influences the timing of the process, highlighting the relationship between verbal advice and the physical observance of traditional rites.

Non-Verbal Actions Enhancing Verbal Expressions:

- Statements like "Saya mintakan kepada Tuhan supaya bahan-bahan ini dijadikannya menjadi obat" (I beseech God to change these materials into medicine) are accompanied with gestures such as stirring ingredients in a pious manner, representing the practitioner's spiritual desire.
- Expressive affirmations such as "Saya berbicara dengan tumbuh-tumbuhan karena tumbuh-tumbuhan ini memiliki roh" (I talk to plants because they have spirits) are complemented by physical gestures of respect toward nature, increasing the ecological and spiritual connection.

Verbal Declarations Reinforced by Ritual Actions:

- The statement "Minyak tidak boleh dilangkahi dan harus diletakkan di tempat tinggi" (The oil must not be stepped over and must be placed on high ground) is validated by physically placing the oil in lofty areas, stressing its holiness.

Holistic Framework of Meaning-Making:

- The interplay between language and action generates a comprehensive practice where verbal instructions provide structure, and non-verbal acts deepen meaning. This dynamic relationship sustains the cultural, spiritual, and ecological elements inherent in the Karo heritage.

The connection between language and non-verbal movements in Minak Pengalun is a cornerstone of this ancient healing method, ensuring the cohesion of its spiritual, cultural, and ecological elements. Verbal expressions serve as a guide, while non-verbal movements bring these expressions to life, producing a dynamic interplay that aids the meaning-making process.

Verbal instructions are intimately related to non-verbal acts, assuring procedural precision and compatibility with cultural norms. For instance, orders such as "*Semua bahan harus segar dan tidak boleh satupun bahan yang kering*" (All ingredients must be fresh and not dry) are translated into precise procedures of picking, washing, and preparing herbs. Similarly, the emphasis on "*wari simehuli*" (auspicious days) indicates how word expressions determine the scheduling of ceremonies, tying the procedure to cultural and spiritual values.

Expressive deeds further highlight the strong link between words and physical gestures. Statements like "*Saya mintakan kepada Tuhan supaya bahan-bahan ini dijadikannya menjadi obat*" (I beseech God to change these materials into medicine) are typically synced with the physical act of stirring or arranging ingredients, suggesting a religious desire. This synchronization enhances the practitioner's connection to the divine, imbuing the entire procedure with spiritual meaning. Additionally, professions of regard for nature, such as "*Saya berbicara dengan tumbuh-tumbuhan karena tumbuh-tumbuhan ini memiliki roh*" (I talk to plants because they have spirits), are matched with gestures of deference, indicating the ecological and spiritual coherence of the practice.

Declarative behaviours promote cultural norms with comparable physical activities. For example, the statement "*Minyak tidak boleh dilangkahi dan harus diletakkan di tempat tinggi*" (The oil must not be stepped over and must be placed on high ground) is substantiated by activities that physically protect the integrity of the oil. This highlights how

verbal and non-verbal elements work together to sustain cultural values and protect the sacredness of the therapeutic technique.

The combination between language and non-verbal acts transforms Minak Pengalun from a routine exercise into a powerfully symbolic ritual. Language offers the structure and goal, while physical acts validate and enrich these statements, ensuring that the practice is both successful and meaningful. This dynamic interaction maintains the Karo identity, ecological knowledge, and spiritual traditions, protecting the integrity of Minak Pengalun in the face of modern challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyses the pragmatic roles of language and the interaction between language and non-verbal acts in the design and application of Minak Pengalun, a traditional healing method strongly anchored in Karo culture. The findings demonstrate that language functions as more than a communication tool; it plays a key role in preserving cultural history, conveying ecological knowledge, and ensuring spiritual harmony. By analyzing illocutionary acts, it is obvious that language in Minak Pengalun performs various functions, which are: representative acts express ecological and procedural knowledge, directive acts guide the planning and execution of the process, commissive acts illustrate practitioners' commitment to ethical and cultural norms, expressive acts illustrate spiritual and emotional relationships, and declarative acts define cultural authority and sanctity. Together, these pragmatic functions contribute to sustaining the authenticity, effectiveness, and holiness of the practice.

The study also reveals the subtle connection between verbal expressions and non-verbal actions in Minak Pengalun, illustrating how meaning is co-created through synchronized linguistic and physical manifestations. Verbal instructions influence non-verbal behaviors, such as ingredient selection and ritual timing, whereas non-verbal acts, such as courteous gestures, and ingredient handling, verify and improve verbal responses. This contact assures that the practice is operationally accurate and deeply steeped with cultural and spiritual value. The combined functions of language and action develop Minak

Pengalun into a comprehensive practice that protects Karo cultural identity and ecological wisdom

Despite these discoveries, further research is needed to enhance our understanding of Minak Pengalun and its larger ramifications. Comparative investigations with different traditional healing approaches could show commonalities and distinctive characteristics of language and non-verbal interactions across cultures. Exploring the impacts of modernity and commercialization on the linguistic and ceremonial components of Minak Pengalun would provide significant insights into how traditional practices adapt to current difficulties. Additionally, ecological linguistics could explore how information about plants and the environment is encoded in the language used by practitioners, contributing to discussions on environmental sustainability. Finally, investigating how younger generations perceive and acquire the practice could inform intergenerational transfer and cultural preservation measures.

In the final analysis, this study reveals the vital function of language and its interplay with non-verbal behaviors in sustaining the cultural, ecological, and spiritual components of Minak Pengalun. By shedding light on these interactions, it highlights the necessity of keeping both linguistic expressions and ritualistic behaviours as crucial components of Karo cultural legacy. This foundation allows future research to explore the evolution of traditional practices in a rapidly modernizing society.

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