

## Taboo as Oral Discourse and Cultural Code: Performative Communication of Moral and Ecological Values in Bugis Society

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### Abstract

This study aims at examining the phenomenon of taboo in Bugis society through an anthropolinguistic perspective. Taboo is understood as a prohibition or taboo transmitted orally, functioning as a social, religious, and ecological mechanism to regulate behavior and to maintain communal harmony. By using a qualitative approach within the paradigm of linguistic ethnography, this research involved 12 key informants in Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of taboo texts. The analysis was conducted through data reduction, thematic classification, and anthropological interpretation. The findings reveal four main dimensions of Bugis taboo: (1) religious integrating local customs with Islamic teachings; (2) social emphasizing ethics of mutual assistance and norms of interaction; (3) health-related particularly prohibitions concerning pregnant women and children; and (4) ecological functioning as local knowledge for natural resource conservation. Bugis taboo is shown to function not merely as an oral tradition, but also as a performative speech act that regulates behavior, instills moral values, and preserves local wisdom. These findings affirm the contribution of taboo as an important component of intangible cultural heritage while enriching cross-cultural studies of taboo.

**Keywords:** taboo, Bugis, anthropolinguistics, oral tradition

### 1. Introduction

Taboo is an integral part of the Bugis oral tradition. In Bugis society, the term taboo is known as *Pamali*. Serving as a social mechanism for regulating behavior and maintaining harmony in community. As a form of social prohibition, taboos reflect cultural values passed down through generations. These restrictions, rooted in tradition and often reinforced by myth, serve to uphold community norms. Taboo has been around and believed by the majority of Indonesian people since long ago (Rachma et al., 2024).

In an agrarian maritime society like the Bugis, oral tradition plays a vital role as a primary instrument for maintaining balance between humans, the cosmos, and the environment. The prohibition system not only protects individuals from physical harm but also reflects cosmological knowledge about the rhythms of nature, the cycles of time, and the relationship between humans and supernatural or spiritual elements. Traditional societies possess certain characteristics that distinguish them from modern societies (Khaerunnisa & Muliana, n.d.). Oral tradition functions as a cultural regulator that works through language to organize community harmony, enforce social norms, and ensure the sustainability of local knowledge.

Furthermore, oral tradition is the foundation of cultural identity, passed down across generations. It shapes how people think, behave, and interpret their social reality. In this context, language is understood from both a structural perspective and through its social

and symbolic functions, which maintain collective values, beliefs, and experiences. Therefore, studying oral tradition, including taboos, is crucial for understanding how societies construct moral structures, regulate social relationships, and maintain cultural continuity in the face of social change. Pemali is a taboo that is still widely believed by some people (Sukmal et al., 2022).

Local wisdom in the form of Pemali has become part of the guidance in living life to create a good order of life (Syahfitri et al., 2019). Taboo, as a form of traditional prohibition, is one of the most significant cultural instruments in Indonesian society, including the Bugis, because it operates at both the linguistic and value system levels. Conceptually, taboo can be understood as normative cultural utterances containing normative content that structure the behavior of community members through the authority of tradition. Within an anthropolinguistic framework, taboo does not stand as mere prohibitions, rather as a form of cultural communication that integrates language, beliefs, and social structures into a single semiotic whole. The argument is clear: taboo persists not because of rational authority such as formal law, but because of the symbolic and performative power of the language used to convey these prohibitions.

From a socio cultural perspective, taboo function as a social control mechanism that regulates relationships between individuals, maintains community harmony, and enforces customary rules without the need for formal authorities. In view (Hymes, 1972) Communication ethnography emphasizes that each community has its own way of using language to regulate its social structure. Taboos are one such tool: they teach ethics, control actions, and mediate social relations, particularly in sensitive areas such as pregnancy, work, social interactions, and ecological rhythms. Thus, taboos constitute a form of "unwritten yet binding cultural rule" because they operate through the legitimacy of tradition and collective belief.

From a cultural ecology perspective, studies have shown that traditional taboos can function as ecological adaptation mechanisms rooted in a society's cosmological views. For example, Conservation Ecology explains that prohibitions against certain species in traditional societies may be rooted in mythological beliefs or religious symbols (Landim et al., 2023). From a cosmological perspective, taboos demonstrate how traditional societies view the world as a unity between humans, nature, and transcendent forces. Many taboos relate to natural rhythms, time cycles, and the boundaries of sacred spaces, or ecological balance. This demonstrates that taboos contain cosmological reasoning that is inseparable from the worldview of local communities. From a symbolic anthropological perspective, these prohibitions are not a form of irrationality, but rather a mechanism of ecological adaptation conveyed through linguistic symbols for easier compliance.

Taboos are also a form of ancestral knowledge preserved through short narratives to facilitate intergenerational transmission. This local wisdom is preserved through oral communication rather than written text, serving an educational role. View (Duranti, 1997) emphasizes that language is the primary medium for storing and transferring cultural knowledge, and taboos are a concrete example of how society constructs social knowledge through language.

Many aspects can be studied regarding the relationship between language and culture, one of them is the phenomenon of taboos. Taboos play a crucial role in language and they are often linked to the semantic studies as they are thought to influence changes in word meaning (Sumarsono, 2012). Sumarsono notes that speakers often substitute taboo terms with innocuous words, which subsequently develop taboo meaning themselves.

In anthropolinguistic studies, taboos are viewed as linguistic phenomena imbued with cultural and social meaning. Taboo is a system of ancient prohibitions of religious and ceremonial attitudes that characterize a certain stage of social development of peoples (Khairullina et al., 2020), including the Bugis community, manifested in the form of prohibitions or taboos transmitted orally and believed to have the power to influence the social and spiritual lives of individuals and communities.

There are several terms used to refer to the study of the relationship between language and culture, including Linguistic Anthropology (Duranti, 1997) and Anthropological Linguistics (Foley, 1997). In an effort to develop interdisciplinary studies that integrate linguistics and cultural anthropology.

Thus, an anthropolinguistic study of Bugis taboos is not only crucial for understanding the linguistic structure and cultural context of these prohibitions, but also for exploring the social and cultural values they embody. This research is expected to contribute to the preservation of oral traditions as part of a rich and valuable cultural heritage..

Modern linguistic studies have highlighted the distinctive nature of taboo language, distinguishing it from ordinary speech. Taboo expressions tend to have a low frequency in everyday use but are highly memorable because they evoke strong emotional responses. This is in line with the research of (Sulpizio et al., 2024), which shows that taboo words in several languages have consistency in linguistic and psychology, so it is easier to remember and more influential in forming behavior. If it is related to Bugis taboo, the short, rhythmic, and repetitive form of prohibitions serves to strengthen collective memory and facilitate the internalization of values. Within an anthropolinguistic framework, this phenomenon demonstrates how language is not only as a means of communication but also a means of binding, regulating, and reproducing sociocultural values.

Anthropology, as a discipline grounded in fieldwork and field sites, has long recognized the important intersection of locally grounded theory with more abstract “global” or “universal” theorization. Periodic review articles written from Southeast Asian or other geographical perspectives highlight the “zones of theory” emerging out of particular localities or regions (Thompson & Sinha, 2019)

The research (Dini et al., 2024) taboo plays an important role in maintaining the norms and customs that apply in society. However, due to modernization and global influence, the adherence to taboos is declining, especially among younger generation who increasingly regard them as myths or irrational beliefs.

In this context, it is important to re-examine the role of taboos in shaping the character and cultural identity of the Bugis people. Taboo functions not only as a means of regulating behavior but also as a means of in-depth moral and social education. For example, the research by (Basri et al., 2017) taboo arranges matters relating to the survival of ecosystems and marine biota, such as taboo catching fish or harvesting seafood around the coral reefs, in pasi, and catching marine animals that are seen as the embodiment of Mbo.

Furthermore, the research conducted by (Widiawati et al., 2024) suggests that society perceives these prohibition as sacred taboos, ensuring public compliance. The content of these taboo utterances aligns with Islamic principles, reflecting a crystallisation of the religious teachings practiced by the community.

One of the most common taboo dimensions found in various societies is food prohibitions, particularly those related to pregnant and breastfeeding women. A systematic review of (Köhler et al., 2018) in Southeast Asia shows that food taboos during pregnancy can serve a protective function by reducing certain health risks, also the potential to cause

nutritional deficiencies if it unbalanced. This is reinforced by a cross cultural meta analysis (Maggiulli et al., 2022) found that food taboos, although it is often associated with traditional beliefs, it still has significant medical implications. This finding is relevant to the Bugis taboo, which prohibits the consumption of certain foods, such as young eggs (*uritan*) for girls or pregnant women, as well as the prohibition on consuming ice, which is believed to harm the fetus. Thus, taboos can be understood both as cultural constructs and as forms of local knowledge regarding maternal health passed down through generations.

To date, studies on cultural taboos and prohibitions in this world have primarily focused on the dimensions of spiritual beliefs and social functions (Wu, 2024); (Beers Fägersten et al., 2024); (Khairullina et al., 2020). Several studies in Indonesia have also highlighted the function of taboos as social control and character formation, but they tend to stop at the descriptive level without an indepth analysis of the linguistic structure and ideological values underlying the practice (Sibarani, 2013); Danandjaja, 1984). Thus, there is still a research gap in the form of a lack of studies that integrate an anthropolinguistic perspective to interpret how language, culture, and belief systems are intertwined in the practice of Bugis taboos. This study aims at filling this gap by offering an analysis of Bugis taboos through an anthropolinguistic approach, which highlights the linguistic, social, religious, and ecological dimensions in an integrated manner.

Internationally, taboo studies have focused more on taboo language from a psychological linguistic perspective and socio ecological regulation. While these studies provide a conceptual framework for the role of taboos in cultural life, they do not specifically examine taboos based on oral traditions, such as taboo, particularly those tied to syntactic structures, speech patterns, and ethnographic conventions unique to Bugis society.

Furthermore, almost no previous research has employed a full anthropolinguistic approach that combines analysis of language, social practices, performativity, and cultural context within a single, integrated methodological framework. Understanding taboo as a traditional communication system requires a comprehensive analysis of how taboo are spoken, who speaks them, when they are used, and how social relations shape their interpretation. This lack of an approach highlights a significant gap in taboo studies.

Another gap lies in the lack of empirical documentation based on linguistic ethnography, even though this method is the standard in research on language as a cultural practice. Previous studies failed to present data obtained through participant observation, in-depth interviews, or analysis of actual speech practices, thus failing to depict the dynamics of production, transmission, and reinterpretation of taboos in contemporary Bugis society.

This study attempts to fill this gap by combining linguistic ethnographic analysis and performativity theory to examine how Bugis taboo works as a cultural code and traditional communication system that simultaneously produces religious, social, moral, and ecological values. This approach positions taboo not just as an object of folklore, but as a performative discourse that contains regulative and educational power in society. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in the integration of anthropolinguistic and performative approaches in analyzing the oral text of taboo as a cultural communication practice that plays a role in maintaining social and ecological harmony. The results are expected to broaden the horizon of anthropolinguistic studies in Southeast Asia and enrich the discourse on language, culture, and ethical communication from a global perspective.

This research redefines Bugis taboos not as mere folklore or traditional prohibitions, but as a cultural communication system that operates through linguistic, pragmatic, and

semiotic mechanisms. This novelty arises because previous research has tended to be dominated by a classical folklore approach (Brunvand, 1998), cultural anthropology (Koentjaraningrat, 2009), or religious and customary studies that only emphasize symbolic meaning and moral values. This research has not analyzed how taboos function as performative speech acts, as conceptualized by (Austin, 1962) and furthered by (Searle, 1979) which directly shapes social action through speech.

From an anthropolinguistic perspective, this study addresses a significant gap by integrating a theoretical framework (Duranti, 1997) which position the language culture action relationship in taboo analysis. While Duranti emphasizes the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and action, this framework has not yet been systematically applied to the traditional prohibitions of Bugis society. . Thus, this research contributes new insights by demonstrating how taboo linguistic structures, such as *rekko* conditional patterns, threat markers, and moral metaphors, function as essential tools for social control and cultural reproduction.

In addition, this study expands the taboo analysis which generally uses a framework *cultural taboo* ( (Douglas, 1966); (Tambiah, 1969) by incorporating theory indigenous communication systems and ritual speech which is developing in contemporary cultural communication studies ( (Hanks, 1996); (Ahearn, 2012)). By comparing these concepts, the research shows that taboo is not just a “prohibition”, but is a customary communication code (cultural code) that has a similar regulative power to the taboo mechanism in societies in Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and Africa.

The novelty of this research lies in its anthropolinguistic-performative approach, which positions Bugis taboo not as passive folklore but as a cultural speech act containing social and ecological power. A linguistic ethnographic approach is used to uncover how taboo language operates in a social context, shaping morality, and maintaining the balance between humans and nature. This integration of linguistic, social, and ecological dimensions produces a new model of cultural performance analysis, expanding anthropolinguistic studies in Southeast Asia and enriching theories of cultural communication based on local knowledge.

This research occupies a strategic position among folklore studies, traditional communication studies, and linguistic anthropology, providing a novel contribution through the analysis of taboos as speech practices that shape social behavior. Unlike previous research that only highlighted the belief, symbolic, or moral aspects of taboos, this study is based on an anthropolinguistic framework that simultaneously integrates language, social practices, and cultural context. Thus, this research goes beyond simply describing traditional prohibitions but also analyzes how taboos operate as a communication system with performative power in regulating actions, negotiating social relations, and reproducing cultural values.

This study fills literature gap by examining the linguistic structure, pragmatic patterns, and semiotic mechanisms that ensure adherence to taboo in Bugis society. Using linguistic ethnography, this research demonstrates how taboos are produced in everyday interactions, how cultural authority influences their utterances, and how society interprets the moral and spiritual consequences of these utterances. This approach provides a dynamic picture of the role of taboos as a living instrument of social regulation that continually adapts to changing times.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the global discourse on indigenous communication systems, ritual speech, and taboo as cultural regulation, fields that

historically dominated by research from Africa, Oceania, and South Asia. By presenting ethnographic data from the Bugis community, this study broadens the scope of international scholarships, demonstrating that while Bugis taboo share universal functions with global practices, they maintain unique linguistic and cultural characteristics. This is where this research serves as a bridge between local Indonesian traditions and international academic debate.

While taboos are widely researched in Southeast Asian culture, most studies only focus on social and religious dimensions. In Indonesia, research by Danandjaja (1984) and Sibarani(2015) remains predominantly descriptive, lacking integration of linguistic analysis and ecological values comprehensively. Consequently, a research gap exists that centers on language to understand how taboos function as mechanisms for value inheritance, social regulation, and ecological conservation. . This study addresses this gap by offering an anthropolinguistic perspective to Bugis taboos, integrating linguistic, social, religious, and ecological dimensions into a single analytical framework.

The purpose of this study is to examine Bugis taboos as a form of cultural speech act that represents the religious, social, health, and ecological values of the Bugis people through an anthropolinguistic approach. Through this anthropolinguistic approach, this study is expected to broaden understanding of the role of language in building and maintaining local cultural value systems in Indonesia.

## 2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a linguistic ethnography paradigm, which aims at understanding the meaning of Bugis taboos through an anthropolinguistic perspective (Spradley, 1979). This approach was selected because taboos are cultural phenomena present as both oral traditions and active social practices. . The study was conducted in Malangke District, North West Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi, a Bugis community with a strong oral heritage. Research subjects included 12 primary informants selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (a) aged 40 or older; (b) recognized by the community as tradition bearers, such as traditional or religious leaders; and (c) having firsthand experience in practicing taboos or witnessing their violation.. This study used participatory observation (Spradley, 1980), the researcher engaging in the community's daily life or the traditional activities to record taboo practices. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted using Bugis and Indonesian languages to explore local knowledge, meanings, and experiences of informants related to taboos. Documentation consisted of recording the text of the taboo in Bugis, translations, and field notes on its social context. Data analysis was conducted through three stages: Data Reduction, by sorting the 6 most relevant and frequently mentioned taboo data by informants; Thematic Classification, by grouping taboo based on religious, social, health, linguistic, and ecological dimensions; and Anthropolinguistic Interpretation, namely interpreting the meaning of taboo *i* through the relationship between language, culture, and social values according to the theoretical framework (Duranti, 1997, Foley, 1997).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Findings

This research presents the results of a data analysis on the forms and practices of taboo speech in Bugis society, gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation. This analysis focuses on how taboo functions as a living cultural

communication system, which not only reflects the community's social and moral values but also actively upholds them through performative speech acts. Each finding is described thematically to demonstrate the patterns of relationships between linguistic forms, social functions, and cultural meanings, which simultaneously shape the moral and ecological consciousness of the Bugis community.

### 3.1.1 Religious Dimension

#### Datum 1

*"Pamali lolang rekko arawenggi."*  
*Larangan berkeliaran saat petang*  
*Prohibition of roaming around at dusk*

The "*Pamali lolang rekko arawenggi*" data consists of an explicit prohibition sentence structure through the performative form taboo ('don't' or 'forbidden'), followed by the verb *lolang* ('wander around') and the time adverb *rekko arawenggi* ('in the evening'). This utterance uses a declarative pattern with a directive function, where the speaker not only conveys information, but also carries out social actions in the form of warnings or controlling behavior. In a situational context, this utterance usually appears in interactions between parents and children near dusk, when activities shift from the public to the domestic sphere. This context reflects the function of taboos as a performative and indexical speech act, which marks the transition of sacred time (*bali sumanga*) where the human world and spirits are believed to intersect. From a social perspective, this taboo serves as a social control mechanism to instill discipline in space and time, keeping children from getting lost or experiencing disturbances during the dusk transition. Meanwhile, culturally, this prohibition contains the value of cosmological balance in Bugis society, where evening is understood as the boundary between light and darkness, two symbolic elements that mark the balance between the human world (*awa se're*) and the spirit world (*awa tenrita*).

This data demonstrates the function of taboo as a normative medium: speech not only conveys messages but also acts as a regulatory speech act that must be obeyed. The phrase "*rekko arawenggi*" (when it's dusk) serves as a time marker with symbolic meaning, as dusk is considered a transitional time between light and darkness, the human world and the supernatural world, making it vulnerable to danger.

From a magico-religious perspective, the Bugis believe that spirits become more active at dusk. Therefore, wandering outside may invite supernatural disturbances. Beyond these spiritual beliefs, the taboo instills moral-social values such as parental obedience, discipline in time management, and the importance of evening family unity. Pragmatically, this taboo protects the community members from tangible risks, including low-visibility accidents, getting lost, or encounters with wild animals.

Parents pass down these taboos to their children as a form of moral education and supervision. Rather than simple prohibition, these utterances serve as traditional educational tools to foster behavior aligned with collective norms. In terms of oral tradition, these expressions are typically delivered in the context of everyday interactions with firm intonation, reinforcing their authority and social binding power as norms.

#### Datum 2

*"Pamali rekko ana' dara tudang ri babang e riwettu massupajang juma'." massempajang*  
*Larangan anak gadis duduk di depan pintu pada saat sholat Jumat*  
*It is forbidden for girls to sit in front of the door during Friday prayers. Girls are forbidden to sit in the doorway during Friday prayers.*

The utterance “*Pamali rekko ana’ dara tudang ri babang e riwettu massupajang juma’*” forms an explicit prohibition structure with the keyword Taboo? as a performative marker that functions as a directive. The elements *rekko* ('if') and *riwettu massempajang juma'* ('during Friday prayers') clarify the time requirement, while *ana’ dara tudang ri babang e* ('the girl sits in the doorway) states the prohibited behavior. This demonstrates the characteristics of a performative speech act with social implications: the utterance not only informs the prohibition but also enacts moral control over the behavior of young women. In a situational context, this taboo is typically uttered by parents or grandmothers to girls on Friday afternoons, precisely when men are heading to the mosque. Socially, this prohibition functions as a symbolic and moral protection mechanism, ensuring girls do not become the center of public attention during men's prayers and emphasizing the traditional Bugis boundaries of social space between men and women. Culturally, this prohibition reflects the core principles of *siri' na pacce*, shame and social empathy, that fundamentally underlie Bugis women's ethics. Within this framework, body position and seating directly reflect family honor, reinforced by the belief that Friday is a sacred, spiritual and masculine moment.

The data suggests the taboo on sitting in the doorway during Friday prayers is a reflection of religious and moral values, as the act is considered inappropriate and disruptive to the sacredness of worship. This prohibition instills in girls an awareness of good manners, gender decency, and respect for religious norms. Furthermore, this prohibition has a social value, fostering orderly behavior, respect for the worship space, and upholding ethical interactions within the community.

Pragmatically, this taboo functions to regulate the physical and social space during worship practices, helping to ensure that worship proceeds devoutly and without disruption. In social practice, this prohibition is typically conveyed orally by parents, elders, or religious teachers, serving as a means of moral and religious education for the younger generation.

### 3.1.2 Social Dimension

#### Datum 3

“*Pamali rekko balibola makke’bu’ bola na de’ na olli ki nappa lao to’ki baling i.*”

*Larangan ketika tetangga sedang membangun rumah dan tidak memanggil kita namun kita tetap datang membantu*

*Prohibition when a neighbor is building a house and doesn't call us but we still come to help*

*Etiquette dictates that we refrain from assisting with a neighbor's house building unless specifically asked to help.*

The Bugis utterance “*Pamali rekko balibola makke’bu’ bola na de’ na olli ki nappa lao to’ki baling i*” is a performative prohibition that functions as a directive speech act to regulate social behavior during community cooperation. This taboo is invoked in an individual attempt to help a neighbor in building a house without explicit invitation, serving as a warning to uphold social ethics. Socially and culturally, this restriction reinforces the core value of *siri'* (self-respect/honor), *lempu'* (honesty/integrity), and *sipakatau* (mutual respect) to maintain communal harmony. Ultimately, this taboo acts as a social control mechanism, ensuring interpersonal relationships based on respect for personal space, rights, and individual honor.

This data present a performative form of prohibition, where the expression directly affirms community norms members must adhere to. Specifically, the prohibition is against spontaneously helping a neighbor who hasn't formally requested assistance, an act interpreted as a violation of local social etiquette.

This data emphasizes the values of politeness, respect, and social boundaries within Bugis society. Helping a neighbor is permissible only when formally invited or requested; acting otherwise is considered a violation of social order, as it may imply an attempt to overridethe autonomy of others. Consequently, this taboo reinforces moral-social values that emphasize self-restraint and adherence to collective norms, and an awareness of social hierarchy in community interactions.

From a religious or metaphysical perspective, violating this taboo is often believed to invite misfortune to both the perpetrator and their family. Thus, this prohibition also serves as a mechanism to reinforce compliance. Pragmatically, the prohibition preserve as communal harmony among residents toreduce social conflict, such as jealousy, quarrels, or resentment.

In social practice, this taboo is transmitted performatively through the oral teachings of elders or community leaders who advise the younger generation on ethical interactions with neighbors, ensuring the continuity of Bugis ethical standards and social norms across generations.

#### **Datum 4**

*"Pamali rekko tau mattampu' mangelle'-elle'/manguja' tau e."*

*Larangan ibu hamil mengejek atau menghina orang*

*Pregnant women are advised against mocking or insulting others .*

The Bugis words "*Pamali rekko tau mattampu' mangelle'-elle'/manguja' tau e*" serve as a performative prohibition with a directive structure, functioning as a speech act for moral control. Contextually, this taboo warns pregnant women against mocking or insulting others, as it is believed that such behaviorwill negatively impact the fetus or the baby's future. Socially, it acts as a moral control mechanism to instill linguistic politeness and emphasizes the mother's responsibility as a figure who carries life. Culturally, this prohibition embodies the Bugis values of *siri'* (honor), *pacce* (empathy), and cosmological balance, where pregnancy is seen as a sacred period requiring purity of intention, speech, and behavior.

This data demonstrates performative prohibitions (taboo), meaning the utterances do not merely provide information but also serve to regulate and emphasize expected or avoided behavior. The phrase "*mattampu' mangelle'-elle'/manguja' tau e*" (mocking or insulting someone) refers to social behavior that is culturally considered taboo for pregnant women.

This data reflects a 'religious-magical' value system rooted in the Bugis belief that pregnant women's negative words or taunts may bring misfortune or negatively affect both the unborn child and the social collective. This taboo also emphasizes the importance of protecting the fetus and the mother's safety while preserving the communal harmony.

This taboo emphasizes the ethics of social interaction and character building, teaching pregnant women to be mindful of their words, be gentle, and avoid conflict. It also reflects the strengthening of social solidarity, as the polite and cautious behavior of pregnant women supports stable relationships within the community.

#### **3.1.3 Health Dimensions**

##### **Datum 5**

*"Pamali rekko lalo ki ri monrinna tau mattampu' e."*

*Larangan lewat di belakang ibu hamil*

*Prohibition of passing behind pregnant women*

The utterance "*Pamali rekko lalo ki ri monrinna tau mattampu' e*" taboo constitutes a performative prohibition utilizing a conditional structure (*rekko* 'if') and a directive action verb (*lalo* 'walk/pass') to regulate social behavior. This taboo forbids someone from passing behind a pregnant woman to prevent harm to the fetus or complications during childbirth. Socially, it enforces a standard of respect or ethical cautions toward pregnant women as the expectant mothers.. Culturally, this embodies the Bugis concept of mappasitinaja, a cosmological pursuit of balance and harmony between the physical, spiritual, and environmental realms where every physical action has spiritual resonance.

This taboo serves to regulate the behavior of community members. The phrase "*lalo ki ri monrinna tau mattampu' e*" (passing behind a pregnant woman) marks a specific prohibited object and demonstrates community attention to positions and actions considered taboo within the pregnant woman's environment.

Within the context of religious-magical values, the Bugis community believes that passing behind a pregnant woman can have negative effects on both the fetus and the mother, such as bringing bad luck or supernatural interference. This value also emphasizes the importance of protecting the pregnant woman and the fetus' safety. From a moral-social perspective, this prohibition teaches the community to be respectful, maintain ethical interactions, and avoid actions deemed impolite or potentially harmful.

These taboos serve as protective mechanisms, as simple actions such as not passing behind a pregnant woman prevent physical and psychological discomfort and maintain social harmony within the community. In social practice, these prohibitions are usually passed down orally by parents, traditional elders, or community leaders, thus becoming part of normative and cultural education that emphasizes caring for and protecting vulnerable generations.

#### **Datum 6**

*"Pamali rekko ana' dara manre tello' iyaro mapecae/ tello' te'jaji (engka mopi ko bebbua na manu'e)."*

*Larangan anak gadis memakan telur yang belum keluar dari perut ayam*

*It is forbidden for girls to eat eggs that have not yet come out of the chicken's stomach.*

*Girls are forbidden from eating eggs that are still inside the chicken's stomach.*

The taboo utterance "*Pamali rekko ana' dara manre tello' iyaro mapecae/tello' te'aji*" serves as a performative prohibition, utilizing taboo lexicons as a normative marker to regulate the action verb *manre* (eating). The conditional structure signal by *rekko* ('if') emphasizes its directive function: preventing certain behaviors through traditional speech . Contextually, this prohibition specifically warns young girls against eating unlaid eggs, as such act considered inappropriate and believed to negatively effect fertility or beauty. Socially, this taboo functions to instill self-control, modesty, morality, and shame regarding the body and food to young women.Culturally, this reflects Bugis symbolism regarding the purity and balance of the female body and its connection to family honor (*siri'*); becauseunlaid eggs are perceived as "incomplete" or "impure," their consumption is seen as a violation of the moral order.

This taboo is rooted in the community's empirical awareness of the potential biological risks associated with consuming food that is not fully developed or processed. Eggs that are still inside the hen's body have not undergone normal physiological processes, such as proper shell formation and protein maturation, which have the potential to contain harmful microorganisms. This practice reflects a traditional health knowledge system, arised

from the community's collective experience of the negative consequences of consuming food that is not yet fit for consumption.

Furthermore, this social taboo specifically targets young women, whom the Bugis community view as being in a critical physiological transition toward adulthood. By regulating their dietary intake, the community seeks to protect their reproductive health and bodily equilibrium, ensuring they are physically and biologically prepared to fulfill their future social roles.

Thus, this taboo is not simply a baseless belief, but rather as a form of traditional knowledge that serves as a public health protection system through cultural regulation. The values it embodies demonstrate that the Bugis people possessed a preventive awareness of nutritional and food hygiene aspects long before modern health concepts became widely known.

### 3.1.4 Ecological Dimensions

#### Datum 7

*"Pamali rekko uleng Muharrang i jokka mabela, mattaneng."*

*Larangan masyarakat suku Bugis bercocok tanam dan melakukan perjalanan jarak jauh pada bulan Muharram*

*The Bugis people are prohibited from planting and traveling long distances during the month of Muharram. In some Bugis traditions, people avoid planting or traveling far during the month of Muharram.*

This taboo lexicon functions as a directive marker, emphasizing both the normative and sacred dimensions of the utterance. Historically, this is rooted in the Bugis agrarian society, the prohibition identifies the month of Muharram as a period with restricted major activities to avoid spiritual imbalance or misfortune. Socially, this taboo regulates the collective rhythm of life by postponing major economic activities in honor of the religious and reflective moment of the Hijri New Year. Culturally, this prohibition reflects a Bugis cosmological worldview where harmony is maintained through the alignment of time, action, and destiny, where each month has its own "social energy."

This taboo takes the form of a performative prohibition, using language to directly regulate social behavior. The designation of *uleng Muharrang* (the month of Muharram) marks a sacred period during which profane activities, such as *jokka mabela* (long-distance travel) and *mattaneng* (farming) are restricted. Culturally, this prohibition is rooted in the meaning of Muharram as a sacred month in Islam, time for prayer, abstinence, and reflection. Socially, this taboo served as a mechanism for control and protection, urging people to defer risky activities for both physical and spiritual safety. As an oral tradition, usually uttered by elders to the youth before Muharram. This taboo illustrates how Bugis values and belief systems are articulated and preserved through linguistic heritage.

#### Datum 8

*"Pamali rekko anana e de'pa na tuo isinna na jokka hadere' i acara massarapo botting."*

*Larangan untuk anak yang giginya belum tumbuh dan menghadiri acara pembuatan panggung pengantin*

*Prohibition for children whose teeth have not yet grown and attending the bridal stage making event*

*Infants who have not yet grown their first teeth are prohibited from attending the construction of the bridal stage*

These data indicate a normative and sacred directive function, emphasizing speech acts control behavior. Contextually, parents or traditional elders invoke the taboo to prohibit

infants or small children from attending a certain stage of the wedding ceremony, because it is believed to disrupt the energy balance between the child's world and the adult world. Socially, this prohibition serves as both a protective mechanism for children, who are viewed as physically and spiritually vulnerable, as well as a form of respect for the marriage ceremony's sacred symbols of unity and maturity. Culturally, this taboo embodies the Bugis concept of balance and purity (*mappasitinaja*), reinforcing the belief that every stage of life has its own social and ritual space distinctions.

The data "*rekko anana e de'pa na tuo isinna na jokka hadere' i asara massarapo botting*" in Bugis tradition contains a complex ecological knowledge system regarding the synergy between the human body and ritual social space. Literally translated as prohibition against children without teeth attending construction of a bridal stage." Behind this simple linguistic form, carries a profound ecocultural meaning, rooted in the Bugis cosmological view of the connection between humans, space, and natural energy. In Bugis view, children without teeth are viewed as being in "pre-ecological" stage, a phase of life that is not yet biologically or spiritually equipped to engage with sacred spaces such as the massarapo botting procession. In Bugis symbolism, the emergence of teeth marks the phase of biological maturity and the body's readiness to receive world energy, as teeth represent the balance of natural the four natural elements: earth, water, wind, and fire. Thus, the presence of an "incomplete" body in a ritual space is believed to disrupt the delicate spiritual energy balance sought during the ceremonial process.

Ecolinguistically, this prohibition acts as an ecological linguistic regulation that governs the intricate relationship between humans and their environment, both social and spiritual. The expression "taboo *rekko...*" in this context transcends not merely as a verbal statement, but as a symbolic mechanism to maintain ecological order in society. Language becomes a medium for conveying ecological ethics, where each prohibition serving as a critical conservation code of values passed down orally from one generation to the next. The prohibition against children who have not yet grown teeth from participating in the ritual of making a wedding stage is, in essence, a societal strategy to safeguard the ecology of the body and space, preventing human interactions within the social system from disrupting the harmony of the cosmos.

From an anthropolinguistic perspective, this taboo reflects a profound balance system between human *sumange'* (life force) and the potent social energy contained in the ritual space. The presence of individuals who are not yet considered spiritually mature is believed to be insufficient for balancing the sacred vibrations (*ade' mappakaraja*), thus potentially causing disharmony within the ceremony's essential symbolic order.

Thus, this taboo can be understood as a concrete manifestation of the ecological wisdom of the Bugis people in maintaining harmony between biological, social, and spiritual elements. It does not only function as a form of magical prohibition, but as a system of ecological ethics that regulates the boundaries of human interaction with their environment. This taboo utterance is a representation of a cultural ecological narrative that emphasizes the connection of language to the balance of life, where every utterance is not merely a means of communication, but an instrument for maintaining the cultural ecological system. Values such as these show that the Bugis people have possessed a high ecological awareness since ancient times, which is articulated through a system of language and symbols, and continues to function today as a means of preserving the balance between humans, nature, and the cosmos.

### 3.2. Discussion

Religious Dimension of Bugis taboos, such as the prohibition on farming and long-distance travel during the month of Muharram (*taboo rekko uleng Muharrang i jokka mabela, mattaneng*), demonstrate the integration of local customs and Islamic teachings. Religiously, Muharram is one of the holy months (*asyhur al-hurum*) revered in Islam. These prohibitions reflect the syncretism of Bugis culture, which makes taboo as a means of respecting religious teachings. A study (Suwannarong et al., 2024) taboos on wildlife across ethnicities; taboos are used for social regulation, health, environmental protection; prohibitions are based on spiritual beliefs and customs. Thus, Bugis taboo demonstrates that taboos serve as a means of internalizing religious values that unite custom and religion.

The second dimension in this research is the Social Dimension, within Bugis society, the taboo against helping a neighbor with house building without a prior invitation (*taboo rekko balibola makke'bu' bola na de' na olli ki nappa lao to'ki baling i*) reflects specific cultural values of the Bugis community regarding mutual cooperation. While mutual cooperation is a foundational Indonesian value (Koentjaraningrat, 2009), but in the Bugis context, social assistance remains governed by customary norms requiring legitimacy or formal invitation. Thus, taboo act as a social control mechanism that balances solidarity with the ethics of politeness.

Bugis taboo language is characterized by a concise, rhythmic structure, often pairing with the particle *rekko* (if/when) followed by a fatal consequence, such as *mattaneng* (wretched). This pattern enhances memory retention and internalizes the message. According to (Sulpizio et al., 2024), taboo words possess linguistic and emotional characteristics that make them more memorable and highly effective for behavioral regulation. This aligns with (Duranti, 1997) anthropological concept that language functions not only for communication but also for constructing and reproducing social reality. Thus, Bugis taboo can be understood as performative speech acts (Austin, 1962) that not only prohibit but also create social and moral consequences.

In the health dimension of Bugis society Several Bugis taboos relate to prohibitions against pregnant women, such as prohibitions on consuming ice, young eggs (*uritan*), or insulting others during pregnancy. These prohibitions symbolically reflect community concern for the health of the mother and the fetus. Found that food taboos during pregnancy in Southeast Asia often serve as a protective function, despite the potential for nutritional risks (Wu, 2024). Also emphasizes that food taboos can have complex health implications, it depends on the socio-cultural context. Thus, Bugis taboo regarding to pregnancy are not merely spiritual prohibitions, but forms of local knowledge related to reproductive health that are passed down through generations (Maggiulli et al., 2022).

From a health perspective, taboos function as preventative local knowledge passed down through generations to maintain public hygiene and health. For instance, the prohibition against pregnant women eating ice or young girls eating unlaid eggs refelcts an empirical understanding of maintaining bodily balance and disease prevention. In this context, taboo serve as an indigenous health knowledge symbolically packaged for easy community acceptance. From an ecological perspective, taboo plays a role in maintaining the balance between humans and nature. Restricting farming at certain times or protecting sacred areas demonstrates a traditional ecological ethics that regulates the rhythm of human activity according to natural cycles.

Despite ongoing modernization and globalization, many Bugis taboos (*pali'*) persist in community life. This resilience aligns with findings from (Labonté et al., 2023), which show

that traditional practices related to maternal health and cultural proscription remain relevant even with adaptation. In the Bugis context, taboo (*pali'*) serves a dual function: as ancestral heritage and as an instrument for moral, health, and social education.

The customs and behaviors of a tribe are part of Indonesia's collection of cultural markers that must be preserved. One product of these customs is taboo, an unwritten rule or teaching created by the ancestors of a region with a specific purpose and meaning. Regional taboos/prohibitions are anonymous because they are spread by word of mouth. Many communities believe in these taboos or prohibitions, including the Bugis people. The Bugis people do not only consider these taboos or prohibitions as a legacy from their ancestors, but also truly embrace them as teachings and guidelines for their daily lives.

Taboo also functions as ecological mechanisms; for example, prohibitions against planting during certain months or children wandering around at dusk. These serve to protect individual while maintaining environmental harmony. These practices emphasize that taboos in traditional societies play a crucial role in natural resource conservation. Thus, Bugis taboo represent as a form of local ecological knowledge (LEK), passed down orally to regulate human activities to be in harmony with environmental conditions (Landim et al., 2023)

Beyond education, the contents of societal taboos or prohibitions in society serve as customs, behavioral guidelines, or taboos. Some are explicable and aligned with certain Prophet's hadiths, while others cannot be explained yet are strongly believed. Despite the changing of times, some of these taboos or prohibition still exist and have genuinely manifested in real-world occurrences. That is why taboos or prohibitions are considered rules of life for certain communities who believe in them, as they have seen examples of cases resulting from their violation.

The results of the study indicate that Bugis community's taboo system are more mere customary prohibitions, rather they are cultural knowledge system encompassing interrelated social, religious, health, and ecological dimensions. From a social dimension, they serve as a social control mechanism that maintains order and harmony in interpersonal relationships. This is seen in linguistic expressions such as "taboo rekko balibola makke'bu' bola na de' na olli ki nappa lao to'ki baling i" that emphasize the importance of respecting the rights of others and maintaining social etiquette. From a religious dimension, these taboos merge Islamic faith with local traditions, such as the avoidance of working or traveling long distances during the month of Muharram, which reflects a cautious attitude and respect for sacred time. These values align with Koentjaraningrat's (2009) concept of moral and religious value systems as guidelines for cultural behavior.

Thus, the main findings of this study confirm that taboos are multidimensional cultural institutions that integrate social, moral, health, and ecological values into a single, living semiotic system. Taboos function not only to prohibit but also to educate, preserve cultural values, and maintain the balance between humans, the divine, and nature.

This research also confirms that taboos operate as cultural codes that combining customary values, Islamic teachings, community health, and ecological ethics. This demonstrates the multidimensional nature of taboos as living local knowledge. By integrating linguistic ethnographic methods, this research provides an analytical model that holistically links speech, social context, and cultural practices. This approach expands the scope of anthropolinguistic studies in Indonesia, which have rarely examined traditional prohibitions as normative communication systems. This contribution demonstrates that taboos have a relevant regulatory function in modern life, while enriching the academic

discourse on the relationship between language, culture, and the sustainability of local knowledge.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study shows that Bugis taboos are more than mere traditional prohibitions, they constitute a local knowledge system that functions as religious, social, health, and ecological dimensions. Taboos related to the month of Muharram and afternoon prohibitions reflect a syncretism between Bugis customs and Islamic teachings. The social dimension taboos regarding cooperation and social interaction emphasize ethics and legitimacy in community relations. Meanwhile, health-related taboos for pregnant women and girls, serve a protective function for reproductive health. Furthermore, ecological prohibitions concerning farming and land use or certain activities, demonstrates the taboo's contribution to environmental conservation and ecosystem balance. Thus, Bugis taboos represent as an anthropolinguistic phenomenon that integrates language, culture, religion, and ecology into a unified social practice. The results of this study broaden understanding in the field of anthropolinguistics by demonstrating that oral texts such as taboos function not only as verbal expressions but also as performative speech acts that impact social, health, and ecological regulation. This research also enriches the study of cross-cultural taboos by adding a perspective from Southeast Asia that is still rarely discussed in the global literature.

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