

The Types of *Taur-taur* Folk Song in Simalungun Culture

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ABSTRACT

Taur-taur, as a form of vocal art expression of the Simalungun community holding a cultural richness that needs to be preserved. The main focus of this research is on five types of *taur-taur*, namely *Taur taur bahtonang*, *taur taur simbandar*, *taur taur Balok ganjang*, *Taur taur urdo-urdo*, and *Taur taur tangis-tangis*. Each type of *taur-taur* has unique characteristics whether in terms of melody, lyrics, or social functions within the Simalungun community. Through a qualitative approach, this study finds that *taur-taur* has distinctive features that set it apart from other forms of folk singing. Musical analysis using Crishty's theory and Merriam's ethnomusicology theory provides a deeper understanding of the vocal techniques and symbolic meanings contained within *taur-taur*. This research concludes that the preservation of *taur-taur* is crucial for maintaining Indonesia's cultural diversity. One of the preservation efforts that can be undertaken is to introduce *taur-taur* to the younger generation through music education.



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1. Introduction

In the rich tapestry of Indonesian music, *taur-taur* Simalungun stands as a captivating gem. As a folk music genre, *taur-taur* has accompanied the Simalungun people for generations. Amidst the dazzling lights of modern music that increasingly dominates, *taur-taur* is slowly being eroded and forgotten. Yet, behind its simple melody and poetic lyrics, *taur-taur* holds immense cultural and historical values worth preserving.

Folk music, in simple terms, is musical expression born and developed within a community, without going through professional music production. This music is usually passed down from generation to generation and becomes an integral part of people's daily lives. The lyrics often tell stories about everyday life, the natural environment, love, or societal events.

The Simalungun community the author refers to is a group of people or human beings bound by customary law agreed upon together and have become one of the ethnicities in Indonesia. In this research, the author specializes in ethnic Simalungun who live in Sondi Raya Village, Raya Sub-district, Simalungun Regency.

The Simalungun people, who inhabit the North Sumatra region, possess a rich and diverse culture. One of their most prominent cultural expressions is music. *Taur-taur*, as one of the folk music genres of Simalungun, has become an integral part of the cultural identity of this community.

This paper will delve deeper into five popular types of *taur-taur* among the Simalungun people, namely *simbandar*, *bahtonang*, *balogganjang*, *urdo-urdo*, and *tangis-tangis*. Through this discussion, it is hoped to provide a deeper appreciation for the beauty and values contained in *taur-taur* Simalungun, and to encourage efforts to preserve it amid the tide of globalization.

1. Method

The method refers to an approach to addressing work-related issues that helps in understanding the subject matter relevant to the field of study (Koentjaraningrat: 1985). In this context, the method pertains to the technical aspects of how researchers carry out their studies. Research methods are systematic steps for gathering and analyzing data, designed to provide knowledge or solutions to problems through trustworthy and valid procedures.

This research adopts a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytic design. This method allows researchers to describe in depth and analyze qualitative data, such as interviews, observations, and documents. The qualitative approach covers interactive aspects, including ethnography, phenomenology, case studies, grounded theory, and crisis studies. Concept and historical analysis were also conducted to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

2. Results and Discussions

This research reveals the richness and diversity of *taur-taur* types found in Simalungun society. Definitions and classifications of *taur-taur* have been successfully identified, providing a clearer picture of these unique forms of oral cultural expression. The subsequent discussion will analyze the preservation efforts that have been and are being undertaken for *taur-taur*, as well as the challenges faced in maintaining this tradition.

Taur-taur, more than just folk music, is a rich repository of knowledge filled with Simalungun cultural values. Its poetic and profound lyrics not only entertain but also serve as an effective learning medium. Through *taur-taur*, the Simalungun people have passed down moral values, ethics, history, and local knowledge from generation to generation. Each verse is a life lesson relevant to their socio-cultural context. Thus, *taur-taur* is not only an integral part of Simalungun cultural identity but also plays a vital role in preserving oral traditions and traditional knowledge.

Folk songs are cultural expressions that grow and develop naturally in the community. Passed down orally from generation to generation, folk songs use simple and easy-to-understand language (Lestari: 2012). The lyrics, which are chosen based on shared preferences, reflect the values, experiences, and lives of the people.

In folk songs, the lyrics are usually not just one but can take various forms depending on the atmosphere felt by the singer. In singing *taur-taur* there is a tonal ornamentation called *inggou*. According to Saragih (1998), *Inggou* is the gut instinct and personality of the Simalungun people which is interpreted into the melody, verse and singing style of Simalungun songs. High range tones are

used in *taur-taur* that symbolize feelings of joy such as in *balog ganjang* and low range tones are commonly used in songs that symbolize sadness of the heart.

Here are 5 types of *taur-taur* that are the main types that exist from the various types of *taur-taur* that exist:

- a) *Simbandar* : is considered the most significant and ancient Simalungun folk song compared to other folk songs. It is a song that Simalungun people traditionally sing in various settings, such as while contemplating, working in the rice fields, or during other activities. The song is particularly associated with moments of sadness or frustration.
- b) *Bah tonang*: literally means a calm stream. usually sung by the community when they are walking to the rice fields where they cross a calm river. the lyrics of *bahtonang* are usually about the beauty of nature.
- c) *Balog ganjang*: is a *taur-taur* that is sung someone misses their partner. It is told that in the past when a young man missed his partner who was in the next village where the village was separated by a large mountain so that in singing *balog ganjang* the tone used was high and with a loud voice so that it was heard through a large mountain.
- d) *Urdo-urdo*: *urdo-urdo* is a lullaby. sung by a mother to put her child to sleep so she can do her work. The lyrics contain good wishes for the child.
- e) *Tangis-tangis*: *tangis-tangis* is a *taur-taur* used to express sadness at the loss of a loved one. The tone used is usually in the lower register which expresses sadness.

Taur-taur, especially *taur-taur simbandar*, is the most important or oldest Simalungun folk song compared to other folk songs. Usually, the Simalungun people sing this *taur-taur* song anywhere, when contemplating, when working, in the middle of rice fields, in the river and in all activities, when someone feels sad or upset. In addition, this *taur-taur simbandaris* always performed when there is a big party of the Simalungun people such as the *rondang bittang* party or the *pasombusihol* event.

But following the times that not only have an impact on technological development but also on the life or social community that is increasingly advanced which has an influence on the culture of the Simalungun community, which is increasingly eroded and undergoes several changes that eliminate the identity of the culture itself and experience extinction. This can be seen in the small number of Simalungun people who know and can sing Simalungun folk songs,

Text, are language behaviour rather than music sound, but they are an integral part of music and there is clear-cut evidence that the language used in connection with music differs from that of ordinary discourse (Merriam: 1960, 187). Lyrics in *taur-taur* are spontaneous or there are some types of *taur-taur* using pantun. Here are two examples of *taur-taur* lyrics.

Taur-taur urdo-urdo

Urmale dayok e
Snilahayam
Come here chicken

Urmale Dayok...
Snilahayam
Come here chicken
Uur..... dayok.....
Sliaaaahaaayyyaaaam
Come here chicken
Marganjang pe hamdanikku anggikku
Tumbuhlah tinggi anakku
Grow higher my child
Ulang sukkot bukkulan
Tapi jangan tinggi samapai atap rumah
But don't grow higher than the roof top
Marbaggal pe gan hamdanikku anggikku
Cepat lah kau besar anakku
Grow bigger my child
Ulang sukkot I labah
Tapi jangan sebesar pintu
But don't get bigger than the door
Uuurmalee... daayook....
Snilahayam
Come here chicken

This song is used to put the child to sleep so that the mother can go to work or do household chores. The chicken in this lyric is used to scare children who do not want to sleep. by calling the chicken the child will sleep. In the lyrics of this song many figures of speech are used such as expecting children to be tall but not too tall. the meaning here also means expecting children to always be humble and not arrogant.

Taur-taur tangis-tangis:

Bapaaa
Bapak
Father
Pos maggatni uhurmu
Teganya dirimu
How dare you
Namana dikkon au
bapakku Meninggalkan aku
Leave me alone
Huja maholi au lao
Kemanaulah aku pergi
Where am I going
Mangindahi ham
Mencari dirimu
Looking for yourself
Bosurr magattni au
Kenyanglah aku nanti
I'll be able to bread and butter
Mangabingabing niombah taon

Memangku-mangku anak kita ini
Ourchild
Bapaa Bapak
Father
Balosi ham au sahali nari
Jawablah aku sekali lagi
Answer me once again
Bujur ni e ham sado kahon
Baik sekali bapak selamai ni
How kind my husband
Borit ni in par tadding mon
Sakitnya aku yang kautinggalkan
It is hurts me that you leave

In the lyrics of *taur-taur tangis-tangis* it can be felt how a wife who must lose her beloved husband. The wife laments her situation which is left with their young children. In these lyrics she conveys her sadness and longing.

Language clearly affects music in that speech melody sets up certain patterns of sound which must be followed at least to some extent in music, if the music-text fusion is to be understood by the listener (Merriam: 188). The melody and rhythm of speech in a particular language can create unique sound patterns, which are then reflected in musical compositions. When, music and text are combined, it is important for listeners to perceive the harmony between the two. This can be seen in various music genres where lyrics and melodies complement each other to express emotions and tell stories. For example, in traditional music, the use of tones and rhythms is often influenced by the way people speak in that language.

Discussion

Culture is dynamic, which is always moving. This movement occurs as a form of effort so that culture remains. Music as one of the elements of culture has also changed, both in the form of presentation and function. Music does change, but with the exception of cultural accident, it changes within what seems to be a culturally determined framework (Merriam: 297).

Taur-taur Simalungun, a rich cultural heritage, is now facing significant challenges due to the dominance of modern music. The existence of *taur-taur*, an integral part of the tradition and identity of the Simalungun community, is increasingly overshadowed by contemporary music that is more popular among the younger generation.

However, efforts to preserve this tradition continue to be made to maintain the presence of *taur-taur* in community life. One of the strategies implemented is to perform *taur-taur* during religious events in churches. During major occasions, such as Christmas or Easter celebrations, *taur-taur* is often showcased, providing a deep traditional atmosphere within the spiritual context. In this setting, the type of songs used is usually *taur-taur simbandar*, but with lyrics adapted into spiritual songs that praise God. This approach not only revitalizes the tradition but also strengthens the community's faith.

Additionally, to reach the younger generation, *taur-taur* is being taught in schools as part of extracurricular activities. This program targets students at the junior high and high school levels, with the hope of instilling a love and pride for local culture. Through this education, it is expected that students will not only recognize and understand *taur-taur* but also be able to preserve it as part of their identity amidst the growing currents of globalization.

One of our authors has started to mobilize schools in the Serdang Bedagai area by providing extracurricular activities in the form of traditional Simalungun songs. In addition, students of the ethnomusicology program who take vocal music practice are also introduced to this simalungun vocal art. She also created a talent search contest focusing on Simalungun vocal singing.

With these various efforts, it is hoped that *taur-taur* Simalungun can continue to thrive and adapt, remaining relevant in modern community life without losing its essence and meaning.

3. Conclusion

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that *taur-taur* is not just traditional Simalungun music, but also a cultural heritage full of meaning and noble values. Its poetic and profound lyrics serve as an effective learning medium, teaching various aspects of life such as morals, ethics, history, and local knowledge.

Taur-taur is not only entertaining, but also plays an important role in maintaining the oral tradition and traditional knowledge of the Simalungun people. Thus, *taur-taur* is not only an integral part of the Simalungun cultural identity, but also has great potential to be developed as a relevant learning resource in the context of modern education.

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