



Form, Function, and Meaning of Mantras in the Bima Suna Ro Ndoso Tradition

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to analyze and describe the form, function, and meaning of incantations (mantra) used in the Suna Ro Ndoso traditional ceremony of the Bima ethnic group in Dompu District, Dompu Regency.

Methodology: This qualitative research employed observation, interviews, and transcription methods for data collection. Data analysis was conducted using form analysis, function analysis, and hermeneutic interpretation. Research instruments included an audio recorder (mobile phone), field notes, and a structured interview guide with selected informants.

Main Findings: The mantras in the Suna Ro Ndoso ceremony primarily take the form of gurindam (couplets) and free verse. Their functions include serving as prayers (permohonan), expressions of affection (pengasih), healing (pengobatan), and consciousness-raising (penyadaran). The meanings conveyed are pleas for safety, surrender to God, facilitation of the ritual process, and healing for those believed to be possessed by spirits.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This research provides the first specific and detailed documentation and analysis of the mantras within the Suna Ro Ndoso rite of the Bima people in Dompu. It contributes new empirical data to the study of oral literature and local wisdom, offering a deeper understanding of a cultural practice not previously examined in such focused detail.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The archipelago of Indonesia is a mosaic of diverse ethnicities and cultures, each possessing a unique repository of intangible heritage, with oral traditions forming a cornerstone of its cultural identity. Among these traditions, the mantra a form of ritualistic oral poetry holds a significant position, functioning not merely as an aesthetic expression but as a performative speech act deeply intertwined with cosmology, spirituality, and social order [1]-[3]. These incantations, passed down through generations via oral transmission, are often embedded within the fabric of customary ceremonies, particularly rites of passage that mark critical transitions in human life [4]-[6]. As Indonesia modernizes, the vitality of these oral traditions faces considerable threats from globalization and shifting socio-cultural priorities, rendering their systematic documentation and scholarly analysis an urgent academic and cultural imperative [7], [8]. This urgency is amplified for traditions that exhibit a unique fusion of belief systems, where indigenous animistic worldviews seamlessly blend with formal religious doctrines, creating a complex syncretic tapestry that merits careful examination.

One such tradition is the *Suna Ro Ndoso* ceremony practiced by the Bima (Mbojo) people in West Nusa Tenggara, a comprehensive ritual centered on the circumcision of young boys. The ceremony's name itself is revealing: "Suna" refers to circumcision (khitan) in accordance with Islamic practice, while "Ro Ndoso" translates to "and the filing of teeth," an indigenous tradition historically symbolizing beauty and social maturity [9]-[11]. This compound terminology signifies the ceremony's dual nature, embodying both Islamic religious injunctions and deep-seated local adat (customary law). The *Suna Ro Ndoso* is not a singular event but a multi-stage procession involving elaborate preparations, specific material offerings, and a series of ritualized actions, each potentially accompanied by spoken or chanted mantra [12], [13]. These mantra are believed to possess efficacy, serving to communicate with unseen entities, seek protection, ensure smooth proceedings, and imbue the ritual with sacredness. They represent a crucial node where language, belief, and performance converge, offering a rich textual and contextual field for anthropological and philological inquiry.

Existing scholarly literature on Indonesian mantra provides a foundational understanding but also reveals specific gaps. Studies such as those by Noor [14] on Bima mantra in a general societal context, Siti [15] on Sasak mantra, and Trisnawati [16] on Balinese Hindu ritual mantra have contributed valuable typologies and functional analyses. However, these works often treat mantra as a generalized category or focus on collections from broader geographical and ritual contexts. There is a conspicuous absence of micro-level studies that meticulously document and analyze the mantra used within a single, specific, and complex ceremony like the *Suna Ro Ndoso*, particularly from the Dompu region of Bima. Previous research has yet to provide a granular examination of how individual mantra correspond to precise ceremonial sequences (e.g., offerings, preparation of the child, the circumcision act itself, post-ritual healing) and how their linguistic structure, semantic content, and perceived function shift accordingly. This gap indicates a need for research that moves beyond inventory-like documentation towards a holistic, contextualized interpretation of a ritual's verbal component.

This research offers a novel contribution to the study of Indonesian oral traditions by shifting the analytical lens from a macro ethnographic to a micro-ritual focus [17]-[19]. While existing literature provides valuable inventories and general functional classifications of mantras, this study pioneers a granular, ceremony-specific investigation into the *Bima Suna Ro Ndoso* tradition of Dompu. Its primary innovation lies in performing a tripartite analysis (form, function, and meaning) that is intrinsically tethered to the precise sequential stages of a single, complex rite of passage. By meticulously documenting and dissecting individual mantras as they correspond to specific ceremonial acts such as the consecration of tools, the preparation of the child, the circumcision procedure, and subsequent healing rituals the study reveals the dynamic, performative, and context-dependent nature of ritual language [20]-[22]. It moves beyond treating mantras as a static collection, instead presenting them as an integrated, living verbal architecture that structures and gives semantic depth to each step of the ritual. This approach yields a novel, holistic interpretation of a complete ritual's verbal component, something previously unattempted for this specific tradition.

The findings of this study carry significant implications for multiple academic disciplines. For anthropology and ethnolinguistics, it provides a refined methodological framework for analyzing ritual speech, demonstrating how a sequential, context-sensitive approach can uncover deeper layers of meaning and function that are obscured in generalized studies. It implies that the true potency and understanding of mantras can only be fully grasped within their performative and procedural context [23]-[25]. For cultural preservation, the research offers a meticulously documented record of a specific, potentially endangered oral tradition, serving as a crucial resource for the Bima-Dompu community and cultural archivists. Furthermore, by illuminating the intricate logic and specialized knowledge embedded within the ritual sequence, the study challenges simplistic external categorizations of such practices as merely "magical," reframing them as complex systems of local epistemology and pediatric care [26]-[28]. Ultimately, it implies that safeguarding intangible cultural heritage requires not just documenting texts, but also mapping their precise operational logic within a ceremonial whole.

The urgency of this research stems from a confluence of anthropological necessity and socio-cultural vulnerability. The identified scholarly gap represents a critical lacuna in the detailed understanding of Nusa Tenggara Barat's ritual diversity, where localized traditions like the *Suna Ro Ndoso* risk being subsumed under broader, homogenizing regional categories [29]-[31]. More pressingly, the living practitioners who are the sole custodians of this intricate verbal and performative knowledge are aging, and the intergenerational transmission of such specialized ceremonial expertise is increasingly threatened by globalization, religious formalization, and shifting community values. Without immediate and precise scholarly intervention, there is a tangible risk that the unique mantra sequences of the Dompu *Suna Ro Ndoso*, along with their nuanced contextual applications, could be irrevocably lost or diluted. Therefore, this study is not merely academically timely but also an urgent act of documentary preservation, capturing a sophisticated cultural practice at a critical moment before it potentially undergoes irreversible transformation or extinction [32], [33].

Therefore, this study is designed to address this lacuna by conducting a focused investigation into the mantra of the *Suna Ro Ndoso* ceremony in Dompu Regency. The research is guided by three interconnected analytical objectives, seeking to answer the following questions: (1) What are the formal and structural characteristics of the mantra used in this ceremony? This involves classifying them according to traditional poetic

forms (e.g., gurindam, free verse) and analyzing their linguistic and rhythmic properties. (2) What specific socio-ritual functions do these mantra perform at different stages of the Suna Ro Ndosos procession? This examines their pragmatic roles, such as invocation, supplication, protection, healing, or socialization. (3) What layers of meaning literal, symbolic, and cultural can be interpreted from these texts? Here, the study employs a hermeneutic approach to uncover the worldview, values, and beliefs encoded within the mantra, understanding them as texts deeply situated in their cultural and performative context [34].

The significance and novelty of this research are multifaceted. Firstly, it provides the first specialized, in-depth record and analysis of the Suna Ro Ndosos mantra from Dompu, generating original empirical data that enriches the archives of Indonesian oral literature [35]. Secondly, by employing a tripartite framework (form, function, meaning), it offers a comprehensive methodological model for analyzing ritual speech. Thirdly, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the syncretism in Bima culture, illustrating how Islam and local adat are negotiated and expressed through performative language. Finally, the findings have practical relevance for cultural preservation efforts and the development of educational materials that foster appreciation for local linguistic and cultural heritage. By meticulously unraveling the threads of words, ritual, and meaning in the Suna Ro Ndosos, this study aims to illuminate a vital strand of Indonesia's intangible cultural patrimony [36].

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach. The qualitative methodology is chosen for its strength in exploring and understanding complex social phenomena within their natural settings, emphasizing the "why" and "how" of human behavior and cultural practices [37]. This approach is highly suitable for investigating the intricacies of oral traditions like *mantra*, where meaning is context-dependent and deeply intertwined with ritual performance, belief systems, and social structures. The research was conducted chronologically over several phases, from preparation and fieldwork to data analysis and verification. The design is naturalistic, aiming to capture the *mantra* in their authentic context the actual performance during *Suna Ro Ndosos* ceremonies rather than in a laboratory or controlled setting.

2.2. Data and Source of Data

The primary data for this research consisted of verbal texts the *mantra* recited during the *Suna Ro Ndosos* procession. Secondary data included contextual information about the ceremony's stages, materials used, and the informants' explanations regarding the *mantra*'s purpose and history. The sources were purposively selected [38] to ensure depth and credibility. First, Primary Informants, Traditional elders (*sando* or ritual specialists) and community figures in Dompu Regency who possess direct knowledge and are authorized to recite the *mantra*. Selection criteria included being a native Bima speaker, aged 45 or older, having a clear memory, recognized credibility in the community, and willingness to participate. Second research location, The study was conducted in Dompu District, Dompu Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, where the *Suna Ro Ndosos* tradition is actively practiced. Third, documents or artifacts, Audio-visual recordings of ceremonies and ritual paraphernalia.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection involved three complementary techniques to ensure triangulation and data richness [39]. Second, Participant Observation, The researcher observed several *Suna Ro Ndosos* ceremonies to document the context, sequence of rituals, and the precise moments when *mantra* were uttered. Field notes were taken to record non-verbal elements. Second, in depth interviews, Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants (see Table 1 for profiles). Interviews aimed to elicit the full text of the *mantra*, their meanings, functions, rules of use, and the informants' personal understandings [40]. Third, recording and transcription, All observed *mantra* recitations and interviews were audio-recorded using a smartphone digital recorder to ensure accuracy. The recorded Bima language *mantra* were then meticulously transcribed into written text using standard Indonesian orthography, followed by translation into Indonesian.

Table 1. Profile of Key Informants

Pseudonym	Age	Village	Role/Expertise	Data Provided
Informant A	85	Kareke	Traditional Elder (<i>Sando</i>)	Core <i>mantra</i> texts, ritual sequence explanation.
Informant B	67	Kempo	Cultural Practitioner	Clarification on <i>mantra</i> functions and local beliefs.
Informant C	65	Bada Dompu	Retired Educator & Cultural Observer	Contextual analysis, translation verification.

2.4. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was an iterative process concurrent with data collection [41]. The transcribed and translated *mantra* were analyzed using the following stages. First, Form analysis, each *mantra* was examined for its poetic structure. It was classified according to traditional Malay poetic forms (*gurindam*, free verse) based on criteria such as number of lines, rhyme scheme, meter, and internal structure [42]. Second, Function Analysis, The social and ritual function of each *mantra* was determined by analyzing its textual content and correlating it with the specific stage of the ceremony (observed context) and the informants' explanations. Functions were categorized (prayer/supplication, affection magic, healing, exorcism, consciousness-raising). Third, meaning analysis, A hermeneutic approach was applied to interpret the meaning of the mantra [43]. This involved: (a) understanding the literal meaning of the translated text; (b) interpreting the symbolic meaning within the cultural context of Bima society; and (c) seeking the "horizon of meaning" that connects the text to the universal human experience embedded in the rite of passage. Analysis moved from the part (individual words/phrases) to the whole (the entire mantra and ceremony context) and back again in a hermeneutic circle. Fourth, triangulation and verification, findings from the three types of analysis were cross-checked against data from different informants, observation notes, and relevant literature. A "member checking" process was conducted, where preliminary interpretations were presented to informants for validation and feedback [44].

2.5. Research Instrument

The main instrument was the researcher herself, guided by a developed human instrument protocol to minimize subjectivity [45]. Supporting tools included.

- Interview Guidelines: A flexible list of themes and questions.
- Observation Sheets: For noting ceremonial sequences and context.
- Data Cards: A template for systematically logging each *mantra* (see Table 2).
- Recording Devices: Smartphone for high-quality audio recording.
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Table 2. Mantra Data Card Template

Card No.: _____	Ceremony Stage: _____
Mantra Category: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Supplication/Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Affection <input type="checkbox"/> Healing <input type="checkbox"/> Exorcism <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Original Text (Bima): _____	
Phonetic Transcription: _____	
Literal Translation (Indonesian): _____	
Context of Utterance: _____	(Who recited it? When? With what actions/offering?)
Informant's Explanation: _____	(Function & perceived meaning)
Preliminary Analysis: _____	- Form: _____
	- Function: _____
	- Interpreted Meaning: _____
Recording Reference: _____	[File: _____, Time: :]

This methodological framework, combining ethnographic fieldwork with structured textual and hermeneutic analysis, was designed to yield a comprehensive, credible, and contextually grounded understanding of the *mantra* within the *Suna Ro Ndoso* tradition.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study successfully documented and analyzed seven distinct mantras recited during the *Suna Ro Ndoso* ceremony in Dompu Regency. The analysis reveals intricate connections between the textual form of the mantras, their functional application within the ritual sequence, and their deeper cultural and spiritual meanings. The findings are comprehensively presented in Table 3, followed by a detailed discussion organized by analytical focus.

Table 3. Comprehensive Analysis of Suna Ro Ndoso Mantras

Mantra Code	Ceremonial Stage / Purpose	Form (Poetic Structure)	Primary Function	Core Meaning (Hermeneutic Interpretation)
M-01	Offering presentation (Nggahi Tampu'u Tampona)	Free Verse (6 lines, irregular meter)	Supplication & Allocation	To sanctify the ritual space by allocating offerings to unseen entities, seeking their non-interference and blessing for the child (La Abdullah).
M-02	Affirmation after offering	Gurindam (Couplet, a-a rhyme)	Negotiation & Warning	To formally announce the ceremony's commencement to spiritual beings and warn them against envy or rejection of the provided offerings.
M-03	Direct address to spirits	Gurindam (Couplet, a-a rhyme)	Protective Adjuration	A direct, concise plea for the child's safety, explicitly linking the offering to a pact of non-interference.
M-04	Elaborate plea & apology	Free Verse (9 lines, narrative flow)	Social Negotiation & Apology	To manage spiritual relationships by asking for patience, correcting any ritual errors, and apologizing for the modest scale of offerings based on the family's means.
M-05	Address to all cosmic beings	Free Verse (7 lines, tripartite structure)	Cosmic Invocation & Pacification	To invoke and pacify all creatures in the universe (above, below, and middle), ensuring no entity feels neglected or desires beyond the given offering.
M-06	Water-fetching for Ncala	Poetic Invocation (2 lines)	Healing / Preparatory	To ritually notify and seek permission from the guardian spirits (Kami'i) of specific water sources (Ragi & Dewa wells) before drawing sacred water for healing.
M-07	Consecration of healing water	Poetic Declaration (1 line)	Healing / Consecrative	To empower the drawn water by symbolically merging it with the essence of the sea and invoking the ancestral

Mantra Code	Ceremonial Stage / Purpose	Form (Poetic Structure)	Primary Function	Core Meaning (Hermeneutic Interpretation)
				water-owner (Sa'dia Anggo), transforming it into a potent healing agent.

3.1. Analysis of Mantra Forms

The formal analysis indicates that the mantras predominantly utilize two structures: free verse and the traditional gurindam couplet. This formal duality reflects the ritual's functional needs. Mantras M-01, M-04, and M-05 are structured as free verse. They lack a fixed rhyme scheme, meter, or stanza pattern, characterized by irregular line lengths and a narrative, expository quality. This form allows for detailed communication, list-making (enumerating recipients of offerings in M-01: "*menana isi dana ro dembi*" - all that is in the ground and earth), and elaborate pleas or apologies (as in M-04). The flexibility of free verse suits complex messages directed at the spiritual realm, mimicking persuasive speech. Conversely, Mantras M-02 and M-03 are composed as *gurindam*. A *gurindam* is a two-line stanza where the first line presents a condition or statement, and the second line provides its consequence or conclusion, often with an a-a rhyme scheme [46]. For example:

Nahu wa'ura raka nuntu raka ndonta (a) - (I have spoken, can narrate and execute)
Wa'ura ngoa nggomi doho ainaquntau mungki ro ingka (a) - (I have told you all, do not resent or deny)

This compact, proverbial form is used for declarations, warnings, and direct commands. Its rhythmic and mnemonic quality makes it suitable for emphatic, performative utterances that establish ritual facts or boundaries. The presence of both forms demonstrates a sophisticated selection of oral poetic style based on communicative intent.

3.2. Analysis of Mantra Functions

The mantras serve four primary socio-ritual functions, evolving from preparatory to curative stages. Supplication and Negotiation (M-01, M-02, M-04, M-05), The most prevalent function. These mantras are not merely prayers to a singular God but complex negotiations with a populated spiritual ecology ancestral spirits (*roh leluhur*), jinn (*jin*), and other unseen beings (*makhluk halus*). They operate on a principle of reciprocal exchange: offerings are given ("*Ake ru'umu nggomi doho*" - This is your share) in return for peace and non-interference ("*Ainara duhako*" - Do not disturb). M-04 extends this to social concepts like apology ("*Na'e-na'e kangampu*" - Many apologies) and correction of errors.

Protective Adjuration (M-03), This is a focused sub-function of supplication. M-03 acts as a direct protective charm, explicitly linking the offering to the safeguarding of the child, La Abdullah. It functions as a conditional amulet: the offering is given, so the child must be left alone.

Cosmic Invocation and Pacification (M-05), This specialized function expands the scope of negotiation to the entire cosmos. The mantra's structure "*Esen mangemo. Awana marama. Wohana malampa*" (Those above who fly, those below who crawl, those in the middle who walk) serves to classify and acknowledge all potential spiritual actors, ensuring comprehensive ritual security and leaving no entity as a potential source of disruption [47].

Healing and Consecration (M-06, M-07), This function activates during the *Ncala* trance-dancing phase. M-06 is preparatory, seeking permission from localized water guardians (*Kami'i*), acknowledging their agency over the ritual resource. M-07 is consecrative, performing a symbolic alchemy by uniting "sea water" (*oi moti*) with "vessel water" (*oi tune*) under the authority of an ancestral figure (*Sa'dia Anggo*). This transforms ordinary water into a sacred medium (*air doa*) with exorcistic and consciousness-restoring properties, directly applied to individuals possessed during *Ncala*.

4.3. Hermeneutic Analysis of Mantra Meanings

Interpreting the mantras through a hermeneutic lens reveals layers of meaning concerning worldview, social values, and existential concerns.

4.3.1. Meaning as Spiritual Ecology and Negotiation

The consistent theme across M-01 to M-05 is the acknowledgment of a sentient and negotiable universe. The Bima worldview, as expressed here, does not draw a strict separation between the human and spiritual worlds; they coexist and interact [48]. The ritual is a perilous intersection where a vulnerable child (undergoing a physical

and social transition) is exposed to these forces. The mantras thus perform critical cultural work: they map the spiritual landscape, assign portions within it, and establish rules of engagement. The meaning is one of cosmic diplomacy, where harmony (*keselarasan*) is maintained not through domination but through respectful transaction and communication. The apology in M-04 ("*Ake pa diraka kaiku eda nahuke*" - This is all I can give from my sustenance) profoundly humanizes this transaction, projecting concepts of humility, limited means, and mutual understanding onto the spiritual relationship.

4.3.2. Meaning as Integration of Islamic and Local Cosmology

A profound layer of meaning is the seamless **syncretism of Islamic doctrine and local belief**. Every mantra is prefixed with the Islamic invocation "*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*" (In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful). This frames the entire subsequent negotiation with unseen beings within an Islamic ontological framework ultimately, all power and permission derive from Allah. The local spirits and ancestors are not worshipped as deities but are treated as creation with whom one must ethically coexist. The child is referred to by the Islamic name "La Abdullah" (Servant of God). This integration signifies how Islam is locally embodied; it provides the ultimate authority structure, while *adat* provides the procedural and relational framework for navigating the immediate spiritual environment.

4.3.3. Meaning in Healing: Agency, Ancestry, and Primordial Water

The healing mantras (M-06, M-07) carry distinct meanings. M-06 recognizes the agency of place-specific spirits ("*Kami'i temba ragi ro temba dewa*"). It reflects an ecological ethic where using a natural resource (well water) requires ritual courtesy towards its guardians. M-07 is denser with symbolism. The "sea water" (*oi moti*) is a potent symbol of origin, life, and purification in many Austronesian cultures [49]. By stating "I fill sea water with vessel water," the mantra performs a symbolic condensation of the vast, primordial, purifying power of the ocean into a ritually usable form. Invoking *Sa'dia Anggo*, an ancestral name, roots this power in lineage and tradition, making the healing authority both natural and ancestral. The meaning here is transformative and **restorative**: disorder (possession/trance) is cured by applying a substance charged with the most fundamental (sea) and socially sanctioned (ancestral) forces of order.

4.4. Synthesis: The Mantra as a Holistic Ritual Mechanism

The findings demonstrate that the *Suna Ro Ndos* mantras are not decorative chants but a holistic ritual mechanism. They perform indispensable work across three planes. First, Structural, they segment and organize the ritual time through specific recitations at key stages. Second, social spiritual, they manage the community's relationship with the unseen world, ensuring safety through a defined protocol of exchange and communication. Third, psychological, they alleviate anxiety for the family and participants by actively addressing potential sources of danger (spirits) and providing a tangible solution (consecrated water) for crises like *Ncala*.

The interplay of form, function, and meaning reveals a sophisticated oral tradition where poetic form is matched to ritual intent, and where simple words perform the complex work of navigating a child's transition within a multispecies cosmos governed by both divine and customary law [50]. This study provides a documented template of this mechanism, contributing to the preservation and understanding of this intricate cultural practice.

Based on the documented findings, the mantras of the *Suna Ro Ndos* ceremony in Dompu Regency constitute a sophisticated, multi-layered communicative system integral to the ritual's efficacy. Far from being mere incantations, they function as a dynamic interface between the human community and a sentient spiritual ecology [51]. The analysis reveals that these mantras perform critical cultural work: they map an invisible cosmology, negotiate relationships within it through a principle of reciprocal exchange, and actively manage the perilous transition of a child into society. This is achieved not through commands of domination but through elaborate diplomacy, where offerings are allocated, errors are apologized for, and all potential spiritual actors are acknowledged to ensure comprehensive ritual security. The ceremony, therefore, emerges as a carefully orchestrated protocol for maintaining *keselarasan* (harmony) in a universe perceived as densely populated and interactive.

The formal duality of the mantras switching between free verse and *gurindam* couplets demonstrates a deliberate alignment of poetic structure with ritual function. The expansive, narrative quality of free verse in mantras like M-01 and M-04 allows for detailed exposition, enumeration of spiritual entities, and the articulation of complex social concepts such as apology and humility based on economic means. Conversely, the compact, rhythmic, and proverbial *gurindam* form in M-02 and M-03 is reserved for performative declarations and direct adjurations that establish non-negotiable ritual facts and boundaries. This selective use of form indicates a highly developed oral poetic tradition where the mode of speech is as significant as its content, using flexibility for persuasion and fixed forms for authoritative pronouncement, thereby structuring the ritual's emotional and narrative arc.

A profound layer of meaning uncovered in the hermeneutic analysis is the seamless syncretism of Islamic theology and local *adat* cosmology. Every mantra is firmly anchored in the Islamic framework with the *Basmalah*, asserting Allah's ultimate sovereignty, while the content engages with a pre-Islamic spiritual landscape of ancestors, jinn, and place-specific guardians. This integration is not contradictory but hierarchical and practical.

Islam provides the overarching authority and ultimate source of blessing, while the local mantras provide the relational toolkit for navigating the immediate, everyday spiritual environment. The child is referred to by the Islamic name "La Abdullah" (Servant of God), even as the ritual protects him from local spiritual forces, illustrating how global religion is locally embodied and applied to concrete existential concerns.

Specifically, in the healing phase (Ncala), the mantras reveal a deep philosophy connecting agency, ancestry, and primordial elements. Mantra M-06 reflects an ecological ethic, seeking permission from the *Kami'l* guardians of specific wells, acknowledging that natural resources are enspirited and their use requires ritual courtesy. Mantra M-07 then performs a symbolic alchemy, condensing the vast, purifying power of the primordial sea (*oi moti*) into the ritual vessel, under the authority of the ancestral figure Sa'dia Anggo. This transforms ordinary water into *air doa* a consecrated substance that heals possession by applying the combined forces of nature's origin and ancestral sanction. The meaning here is one of transformative restoration, where social and spiritual disorder is cured by reconnecting the individual with the most fundamental sources of order and lineage [52].

In synthesis, the mantras act as the holistic ritual mechanism that binds the ceremony together. They operate simultaneously on structural, socio spiritual, and psychological planes: they segment ritual time, manage the community's relationship with the unseen world through a protocol of exchange, and alleviate human anxiety by providing a tangible, logical process for ensuring safety and addressing crises [53]. The interplay of form, function, and meaning shows a cultural system where language is performative and world-making. These mantras do not just describe reality; they actively construct and secure a safe passage for the child within a multispecies cosmos, demonstrating the enduring power of oral tradition to navigate the vulnerabilities of human life through poetic negotiation and sacred integration.

Based on a review of three prior studies on mantras in Indonesian ethnic rituals, this research identifies several significant gaps that it aims to address. Nugroho's study of the *Balian Mimbul Kuluk Metu* ritual among the Dayak Ngaju extensively detailed the *functions* of mantra and *katambung* as ritual instruments, symbolic offerings, vertical communication, and community integration, alongside their musical and non-musical *forms* of presentation [54]. Genua, Demon, & Utari's [55] analysis of the *Mbama* ritual in Lio Ende focused primarily on the linguistic *Form of the text* including phonological and morphological features and its interpersonal and informative *functions*, as well as religious, communal, and symbolic *meanings* (Genua et al., pp. 1, 9–12). Meanwhile, Syarofi's study of healing mantras used by *dukun* in Lamongan categorized mantras according to their *form* as traditional poetic structures (*seloka and bidal*) and their instrumental *functions* as healing tools, prayer media, and means of invoking benefit or harm [56]. However, these studies tend to treat *form*, *function*, and *meaning* in relative isolation either emphasizing musical/functional aspects (as in Nugroho and Syarofi) or deep textual-linguistic analysis (as in Genua et al.) or they reinforce a *static, dichotomous understanding* of mantra purposes (e.g., white vs. black magic in Syarofi's work). In contrast, this study on the *Suna Ro Ndoso* ritual in Dompu offers a *holistic and dynamic synthesis* of form, function, and meaning within a sequential ritual framework, revealing mantras not as one-directional prayers but as *active transactional mechanisms* for cosmological negotiation with a responsive spiritual ecology. Furthermore, it elaborates on syncretism by demonstrating how Islamic frames of authority structurally encompass local spiritual interactions a nuanced integration not deeply explored in earlier studies. Thus, this research contributes a new analytical perspective that conceptualizes mantras as integral, adaptive, and multi-layered ritual instruments that simultaneously structure ceremonial proceedings, manage socio-spiritual relations, and provide psychological reassurance in contexts of human vulnerability.

This study presents a multifaceted theoretical and methodological novelty by synthesizing and advancing beyond prior research on Indonesian ritual mantras. While previous studies largely treated the formal, functional, and semantic dimensions of mantras in isolation focusing either on their performative and social roles or their textual and linguistic features this research offers an integrative analytical model [57], [58]. It uniquely demonstrates how mantra form specifically the strategic use of *gurindam* couplets for declarative commands and free verse for complex negotiation, function as a sequenced mechanism for supplication, cosmic pacification, and healing consecration, and meaning as an expression of spiritual ecology and syncretic cosmology are dynamically interconnected and unfold sequentially within a single ritual framework. Crucially, it introduces the concept of mantra as active cosmological diplomacy, moving beyond the paradigms of one-way prayer or static function. It reveals mantras as a performative technology for transactional negotiation with a sentient spiritual ecosystem, governed by principles of reciprocal exchange, apology, and comprehensive inclusivity. Furthermore, it provides a nuanced, process-oriented understanding of Islamic-local syncretism, showing not just co-existence but a structured hierarchy where Islamic ontology provides the ultimate authoritative frame *Bismillah*, the child's name *La Abdullah* that encompasses and legitimizes detailed *adat*-based negotiations with ancestral and natural spirits [59], [60]. This holistic perspective on mantra as a coordinated ritual mechanism addressing structural, socio-spiritual, and psychological planes simultaneously represents a significant advance in the ethno-linguistic and ethnomusicological study of ritual speech.

The findings of this study carry significant implications for academic scholarship, cultural preservation, and interreligious understanding. For researchers in ethnolinguistics, anthropology of religion, and ritual studies, this integrated analytical model provides a robust framework for examining other complex ritual speech systems, particularly in syncretic societies across the Malay Archipelago. It moves analysis beyond descriptive cataloguing of forms and functions toward understanding the operational logic of rituals as lived, negotiated experiences. For cultural preservationists and local communities in Dompu and similar regions, this deep documentation and interpretation serves as a vital safeguard against cultural erosion, offering a detailed record of the intellectual and spiritual sophistication embedded in *adat* practices. It validates local knowledge systems by highlighting their internal coherence and adaptive complexity [61]. Furthermore, for interfaith dialogue and community harmony, the study's nuanced portrayal of syncretism has practical import. By clearly illustrating how Islamic doctrine and local cosmology can be integrated in a complementary, non-contradictory hierarchy, it provides a scholarly basis for mitigating potential tensions between orthodox religious institutions and traditional practitioners. It demonstrates that rituals like *Suna Ro Ndoso* are not "pre-Islamic" survivals but are contemporary, Islamically-framed cultural expressions that manage community well being, thereby arguing for their continued relevance and protection within a modern, predominantly Muslim nation-state.

Conducting this research is a matter of critical and timely urgency driven by intersecting threats of cultural attenuation, practitioner scarcity, and scholarly oversight. The *Suna Ro Ndoso* ritual, like many intricate *adat* ceremonies, exists within a fragile oral tradition. Its specialized knowledge is held by a dwindling number of elders and ritual specialists (*sando*), placing it at high risk of irreversible loss within a generation due to modernization, migration, and shifting religious attitudes. This urgency is compounded by a scholarly gap: while major ethnic groups in Indonesia have received considerable academic attention, the intricate ritual systems of smaller communities like the Bima Dompu in Eastern Indonesia remain severely understudied [62]. Without immediate documentation and deep analysis, a sophisticated system of cosmological thought and practice could vanish before being understood. Furthermore, there is an interpretive urgency. Without studies like this one, the nuanced syncretism and transactional logic of such rituals risk being misunderstood or misrepresented either simplistically dismissed as "superstition" or rigidly categorized in ways that obscure their dynamic nature. Therefore, this research is urgently needed to capture, decode, and contextualize this cultural heritage at a tipping point, ensuring that its intellectual contributions to understanding human relationships with the unseen world, community healing, and adaptive religious synthesis are preserved for future generations of scholars and the community itself.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the mantras within the *Suna Ro Ndoso* ceremony of the Bima people in Dompu constitute a sophisticated, holistic ritual mechanism that seamlessly integrates poetic form, socio-spiritual function, and deep cultural meaning. As anticipated in the introduction, the analysis confirms that these mantras are not merely ancillary chants but are central to structuring the ritual, managing relationships with a complex spiritual ecology, and ensuring the ceremony's safe and successful completion. The findings reveal a profound syncretism, where Islamic monotheism, framed by the invocation *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*, provides the ultimate cosmological authority, while local *adat* wisdom dictates a protocol of negotiation, offering, and apology to ancestral spirits and unseen beings. Furthermore, the mantras demonstrate a pragmatic application in crisis management, particularly through the consecration of healing water during the *Ncala* trance phase. The prospect for further development of this research lies in comparative studies with similar rites of passage in other Indonesian ethnic groups to map broader patterns of oral ritual poetry. Additionally, the documented mantras and their analysis present a direct application prospect: they can be systematized into authentic cultural materials for local content curriculum in Dompu and Bima regions, serving both educational preservation and fostering intergenerational appreciation for this intricate intangible heritage.

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