



## ANDALIMAN: HARMONIZATION OF SPICES WITH BATAK CULTURE

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**Abstract:** This research aims to describe the relationship among ecolinguistics, andaliman, and Batak Culture. It explains how andaliman as Batak's spices can hold ecolinguistics and Batak Culture. This study employs a qualitative research approach where the data is taken from observation, interviews, and documentation. The finding indicates that in Batak culture, andaliman is not just a culinary ingredient but also an important part of traditional rituals and festivities. The spice is deeply ingrained in the cultural identity of the Batak people such as: Social Interaction, Batak's Connection to Nature, Respect for Natural Resources, Spiritual Beliefs, Modern Batak Culture, Preserving Tradition in a Modern World, Andaliman in Tourism, and Cultural Connector. It means that andaliman and Batak culture is not only ecological but also linguistic and symbolic. Andaliman holds cultural significance to be tied to local stories, practices, and beliefs about the plant's power. The symbolic value of andaliman in these contexts goes beyond its flavor and is woven into the cultural fabric of Batak life. Language functions as a vehicle for passing down traditional ecological knowledge, ensuring the continued use and conservation of plants like andaliman. plays a significant role in shaping attitudes toward the sustainable harvesting of plants like andaliman. The way elders talk about andaliman could serve as a cultural guide to ensuring that its use is sustainable and harmonious with nature.

**Keyword:** *Andaliman; Batak's culture; ecolinguistics*

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has extraordinary wealth in terms of plants used as spices. Indonesia's abundant biodiversity, which includes thousands of species of spice plants, provides countless resources for traditional cuisine. These plants not only have nutritional value, but are also rich in aroma and taste that are characteristic of Indonesian cuisine. Andaliman or in scientific language is *Zanthoxylum acanthopodium* DC, a group of the Rutaceae family, is a typical plant found in highland areas around 800–2,000 meters above sea level, especially in the mountainous areas of North Sumatra, Indonesia, the Batak region. Garjito (2013); Wardatunnisa (2018). Andaliman trees grow wild and full of bushes in the areas of Toba Regency, Samosir Regency, North Tapanuli Regency and Dairi Regency. Meanwhile, in Simalungun Regency there are 3 andaliman producing sub- districts, namely Raya, Dolog Masagal and Purba sub-districts. Munte (2023);

Gultom & Gultom (2022).

Andaliman is small tree that can grow to around 2–4 meters. The leaves of this plant are small and oval in shape with small spines along the stem and twigs. The flowers of this plant are white and have a fragrant aroma. The fruit is small, round, and usually red or black when ripe. Simanullang (2022); Sinaga (2015); Harahap & Silaban (2019). The fruit is used as a spice in traditional Batak dishes, especially fish and meat. Saragih

& Raihandhany (2023); Pardede (2021); Wahyuni, et.al (2022). This means that the andaliman fruit is used as a spice in Batak cuisine in fish and meat dishes, which creates a taste and aroma that is quite unique and appetizing.

The various traditional Batak dishes use andaliman as the main spice and additional spices, such as *arsik* (a kind of dried carp curry), and *sangsang* (a kind of *dirica- rica* meat), *ayam pinadar* (a kind of grilled chicken), *ikan tombur* (a

kind of grilled fish), and niura fish (a kind of fish sushi). Silalahi & Lumbantobing (2021); Cristy & Chunliu (2024). The taste of andaliman is spicy with a distinctive aroma, so it is often nicknamed "Batak pepper". Traditional dishes flavored with andaliman fruit have a unique taste. Tambunan (2021); Sihombing & Pandiangan (2018); Siboro, et.al (2022). Empirically, andaliman is used in food to make it last longer. When used as a cooking spice, old andaliman fruit is crushed or pounded to produce a distinctive aroma.

Beside andaliman was known as a cooking spice, some researchers various research reports other functions of andaliman as a traditional medicine. Silalahi & Lumbantobing (2021); Helmalia, et.al (2019). Andaliman is used as a medicine for fever, cough, warming the throat and medicine for stomach aches. Ulung, G., & Studi, P. (2014); Sk (2023). The research results found that andaliman fruit contains many chemical compounds such as alkaloids, flavonoids, glycosides, saponins, tannins, and steroids/triterpenoids. Anggraeni, R. (2020); Rienoviar, et.al (2019).

Andaliman is known not only as a spice or spice for typical Batak cuisine, but is also an ingredient in traditional medicine for the Batak people. These two functions of andaliman have an important role in the lives of the Batak people, therefore, this research aims to explain the harmony of andaliman not only as a Batak spice but also as a symbol of local culture and identity that differentiates the Batak people from other ethnic groups in Indonesia. Alfiyami (2023); Sertiawan & Dora (2024); Manurung, et.al (2024).

Ecolinguistics, andaliman, and Batak Culture are interconnected through the ways language, ecology, and culture shape and influence each other. To understand the relationship between these three, it is needed to explore how language (as part of ecolinguistics) interacts with the local ecosystem (where andaliman is found) and cultural practices (particularly in the Batak community).

Ecolinguistics is a field of study that focuses on the relationship between language and the environment. It examines how language reflects, shapes, and influences the way humans understand and interact with the natural world. In this context, ecolinguistics is concerned with how language encodes and conveys ecological knowledge, cultural beliefs, and attitudes towards nature, especially in terms of sustainability, biodiversity, and resource use. Kravchenko (2016); Stibbe (2015); Ondimu & Simotwo

(2023).

Language as a reflection of ecological awareness: In, the language used to describe the environment, plants like andaliman, and agricultural Batak Culture practices often reflects an intimate knowledge of the local ecosystem. Ecolinguistics examines how Batak language might encode information about the plant, its growing conditions, its role in traditional medicine, and how it's integrated into local knowledge systems. For instance, the names of plants, including andaliman, often carry meanings that reflect the plant's usefulness, spiritual significance, or ecological role. Nurlaeni, et.al (2024); Rakhman, et.al (2024); Pardosi, et. al (2024).

Language as a tool for ecological sustainability: Ecolinguistics also explores how language influences behaviors and attitudes towards environmental conservation. In Batak communities, the language surrounding the use of andaliman can serve to promote sustainable harvesting practices. Language can shape how people talk about their relationship with nature, fostering an ethic of respect for the plants and ecosystems they depend on. Rambe, et.al (2022); Pangaribuan (2018).

Andaliman is a unique spice that grows in the mountainous regions of North Sumatra, Indonesia, and plays an important role in the local ecosystem and Batak cultural practices. It is closely tied to the natural environment of the Batak people, and its use reflects the traditional ecological knowledge of the community. Indra, et.al (2024); Harahap, et.al (2024).

The ecology of the Batak region, with its tropical climate, fertile volcanic soil, and mountainous terrain, supports the growth of andaliman. Nurlaeni, et.al (2021) state that the Batak people have long understood the ecological conditions required for growing this spice and have cultivated it with a deep knowledge of the local flora and fauna. Andaliman, like many traditional crops, is part of a complex agro-ecosystem where its cultivation is integrated with sustainable practices passed down through generations. Rakhman,et.al (2024); Pardosi, et.al (2024).

As an integral part of Batak culinary traditions, andaliman plays a role not only in flavoring food but also in rituals and spiritual practices. Bahri, et.al. (2024) state that the use of this plant in Batak cuisine, such as in dishes like saksang and naniura, is deeply linked to Batak identity. It reflects a cultural relationship with nature—how

the community has adapted to and interacted with the local environment. The language surrounding andaliman, its harvesting, and its consumption serves to reinforce the Batak people's connection to their land.

Based on explanation in previously, it can be described the relationship between ecolinguistics, andaliman, and Batak Culture is a dynamic example of how language, ecology, and cultural identity intersect. Ecolinguistics reveals how the Batak people use language to communicate their deep connection to the natural world, especially in the context of sustainable practices like the cultivation of andaliman. Andaliman is not just a spice in Batak cuisine but a reflection of the Batak worldview, where the language used to describe it communicates more than just its culinary value—it conveys a cultural narrative of respect for nature, spiritual significance, and community bonds.

By examining the relationship between language, the environment, and culture, it can better understand how ecolinguistics can contribute to preserving traditional knowledge and promoting sustainability in the face of modern challenges.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the role of andaliman in Batak Culture through their rituals, social customs, and cultural identity. According to Creswell et al. (2015), qualitative research is particularly effective for examining human behaviors, cultural practices, and contextual factors in depth. In this study, a qualitative approach enables the capture of ecolinguistics, andaliman, and Batak Culture.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation allowed the researchers to witness each stage of andaliman; the tree, the using for food and medicine, and tasting it as good culinary. Interviews were conducted with local people, farmers, restaurant chefs, and connoisseurs of traditional Batak food. In line with the ecolinguistic approach, interview questions were created to explore the language used by participants to describe harmony with Batak Culture. This in-depth conversation provides insight into how local narratives and terminology influence the perception of andaliman's important role in the lives of the Batak people

Documentation included reviewing relevant records, reports, and local people publications on sustainable the delicious of Batak's culinarians because of using andaliman.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Batak culinary traditions*

Andaliman has a soft orange aroma, but 'bites', causing a sensation of numbness in the tongue, even though it is not as spicy as chili or pepper. This feeling of spasm on the tongue is caused by the presence of hydroxy-alpha-sanshool in the spice. Andaliman can be used as ritual and social functions of food. In Batak Culture, food is much more than sustenance; it plays a role in rituals, ceremonies, and social bonding. The preparation and sharing of meals, particularly those that use andaliman, are central to communal events such as weddings, funerals, and other important life-cycle events.



Figure 1. Cooking goldfish *Arsik* used *Andaliman*

Andaliman in ceremonial meals, for example, The *Arsik*, which often features Goldfish cooked with andaliman, is a dish traditionally shared among family and guests, symbolizing the unity of two families. It's not just a meal, but a



reflection of social cohesion and respect for tradition.



Figure 2. *The ritual of giving gold fish Arsik in Batak's wedding ceremony*

Andaliman uses as ritualistic and symbolic use. It means that in some Batak ceremonies, food prepared with andaliman is also believed to hold spiritual significance. It's considered to bring good fortune, health, and protection, particularly when served during important life transitions or ceremonies. The use of andaliman thus ties culinary practices to broader spiritual beliefs and rituals, such as:

#### *Social interaction*

The cultural environment in which andaliman is used goes beyond its culinary role—it is embedded in social practices and interpersonal relationships within the Batak community. In Batak Culture, hospitality is highly valued, and food plays a central role in building and

maintaining social ties. Offering a dish with andaliman to guests is seen as a sign of generosity, respect, and a warm welcome. The act of sharing food, especially one as special as andaliman-flavored dishes, creates a sense of belonging and solidarity within the community.

The role of food in social rituals, andaliman is used for food which is also central to ritual gatherings like "gotong royong" (communal work) or "mandi adat" (ritual cleansing), where traditional dishes are prepared for the collective good of the community. The use of andaliman in these settings reinforces the idea of community-based culture, where collective participation in rituals and the sharing of food strengthen social cohesion and cultural continuity.



Figure 3. *The ritual of Upah Upah through giving Arsik goldfish to strengthens social relations between families or communities*

#### *Batak's connection to nature*

The cultural environment in which andaliman is embedded is also deeply tied to the Batak's view of nature and the spiritual significance of the environment. In Batak Culture, the natural world

is seen as a living entity with its own spirit and force. Many Batak beliefs are centered around harmony and balance with nature, and the cultivation and use of local plants like andaliman reflect this deep connection.



Figure 4. Andaliman fruits

#### *Respect for natural resources*

The Batak people often harvest andaliman from the wild, and its seasonal availability dictates its use in the kitchen. The way the Batak people use andaliman in cooking reflects an understanding of the rhythms of nature and a respect for the resources they have. They use it sparingly and with respect, acknowledging the limited and precious nature of their local environment



Figure 5. Farmer pick Andaliman fruits

#### *Spiritual beliefs*

In some Batak traditions, certain plants, including andaliman, are believed to have spiritual significance. These plants are seen as gifts from the earth and are treated with reverence in both everyday and ceremonial contexts. The use of andaliman in rituals or special dishes can be seen as an offering to the spirit world or a way of connecting with ancestral spirits who are believed to reside in the natural world.



Figure 6. Batak' culinery with Andaliman spices are provided in traditional Batak ritual

#### *Modern Batak culture*

In the contemporary world, even as the Batak people adapt to modern influences, andaliman remains a critical part of their cultural identity. Although the globalization of food and culture has introduced new flavors and ingredients to the region, andaliman continues to represent Batak heritage.

Figure 7. Pizza with Andaliman taste



Figure 8. Tradisional medicines by Andaliman



*Preserving tradition in a modern world*

As Batak people move to urban areas or abroad, they continue to use andaliman to maintain a connection to their roots. For example, Batak communities living in larger cities such as Medan

or Jakarta often use andaliman to recreate traditional dishes that remind them of home. Cultural preservation through food is an important part of how Batak people retain their cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.



Figure 9. Batak's women cooked Mie Gomak with Andaliman for her family in Jerman

*Andaliman in tourism*

With the rise of tourism in North Sumatra, andaliman has also become a cultural product. Many tourists are introduced to Batak cuisine through dishes that feature this spice, and the

spice itself is often marketed as a local specialty. In this way, andaliman has become a symbol not only of local culture but also of regional pride in the face of modernity and globalization.



Figure10. Andalima productions; Andaliman chili sauce, Andaliman bandrek, Andaliman chips, Andaliman drinks, Andaliman sasagon

*Cultural connector*

In the context of the Batak people, andaliman is much more than a culinary ingredient. It is a cultural symbol that connects the Batak people to their land, their ancestors, and their identity. Whether used in rituals, communal meals, or everyday dishes, andaliman plays an important role in maintaining social cohesion, spiritual beliefs, and a sense of cultural continuity in the Batak community.

The use of andaliman reflects a profound respect for both nature and tradition, and it underscores the idea that the surrounding environment, both natural and social, is deeply intertwined with the cultural practices of the Batak people. Through food, andaliman continues

to serve as a bridge between the past and present, and it remains a vital part of Batak cultural heritage.



Figure 11. Giving Upah-Upah for

*respecting and binding both family*

### *Ecology and environmental stewardship*

In Batak Culture, the use of andaliman is often linked to environmental stewardship. The language surrounding its cultivation, harvesting, and consumption can reinforce the values of sustainable agriculture and natural resource conservation. This ties into broader themes of ecolinguistics, which explores how language shapes human interaction with the environment.

The Batak people, like many indigenous communities, have developed a deep understanding of their local environment, including how to cultivate and use plants like andaliman in a way that preserves the ecosystem. The language of agriculture in Batak communities reflects this knowledge, with specific terms for soil health, planting techniques, and harvest timing. This language of ecological wisdom contributes to practices that maintain the health of the environment.



Figure 11. *Replanting Andaliman*

As global challenges like climate change, deforestation, and the loss of biodiversity threaten local ecosystems, the language of Batak Culture could play an important role in conservation efforts. The Batak language holds knowledge that can guide efforts to protect not only andaliman but also the broader ecological balance of the region. Ecolinguistic approaches could help revitalize this indigenous knowledge and promote environmental awareness in the face of modern development pressures.

### **CONCLUSION**

Andaliman is one of Indonesia's spices, particularly associated with the Batak people of North Sumatra. In Batak Culture, andaliman is not just a culinary ingredient but also an important part of traditional rituals and festivities. The spice is deeply ingrained in the cultural identity of the Batak people such as: Social Interaction, Batak's Connection to Nature, Respect for Natural Resources, Spiritual Beliefs, Modern Batak Culture, Preserving Tradition in a Modern World, andaliman in Tourism, and Cultural Connector. It means that andaliman and Batak Culture is not only ecological but also linguistic and symbolic.

The term "andaliman" itself holds cultural significance and might be tied to local stories, practices, and beliefs about the plant's power. In Batak rituals or traditional events, the language

surrounding food preparation and consumption is rich with symbolism. For example, when elders speak of the preparation of food, the language may evoke ideas of respect for ancestors, blessings, and unity in the community. The symbolic value of andaliman in these contexts goes beyond its flavor and is woven into the cultural fabric of Batak life

Language functions as a vehicle for passing down traditional ecological knowledge, ensuring the continued use and conservation of plants like andaliman. It means that language plays a significant role in shaping attitudes toward the sustainable harvesting of plants like andaliman. In Batak Culture, there may be traditional knowledge passed through language that teaches the proper harvest cycles, respect for the land, and spiritual responsibility that accompanies the use of natural resources. The way elders talk about andaliman could serve as a cultural guide to ensuring that its use is sustainable and harmonious with nature.

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