

An original meaning of Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou in post-independence war Indonesia: A first-hand experience of Sam Ratulangi's oldest daughter

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Abstract

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Sitou timou tumou tou (ST4) has been a well-recognized philosophy adopted by the Minahasan people. During its development, it has become even more popular within the scope of education. ST4 was said to be first mentioned by the Minahasan national hero, Sam Ratulangi. The interpretations of ST4 have been abundant, mostly reciting the educational aspect: "a man lives to make other men humans." However, a direct historical record on when and in what situation ST4 was first mentioned by Sam Ratulangi is not well known by the academia and general public. In fact, there has not been any written authoritative source about this manner. In this auto-narrative historical research, the authors took advantage of the direct experiential account of the oldest daughter of Sam Ratulangi (the second author) when ST4 was first said by Sam Ratulangi himself. This has revealed a novel, but rather the original intention of Sam Ratulangi when he first mentioned ST4 in the context of post-war Indonesia: "a man lives to live as a real man."

Keywords: sitou timou tumou tou, Sam Ratulangi, philosophy, Minahasa

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INTRODUCTION

Despite being extremely popular in Minahasa and has been tightly associated with education, there is no authoritative written source about when the term "Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou" (ST4) was first mentioned by Dr. Phil. Gerungan Saul Samuel Jacob (Sam) Ratulangi, an Indonesian national hero from Minahasa. The derivations and interpretations of ST4, however, have been abundant, mostly being done by the younger generations who do not have a physical encounter with Sam Ratulangi himself (Masinambow et al., 1991; Sondakh, 2002).

In this article, a narrative review on how the ST4 was first mentioned by Sam Ratulangi is presented. This article was mainly based on the synthesis of the first-hand experience of Dr. Emilia Pangalila-Ratulangi (the second author) when directly having a conversation with Sam Ratulangi himself about ST4. Her view of ST4 translation was then presented and then contrasted with the current popular semantic interpretation of ST4. The implication of this novel, but the original meaning of ST4 was then discussed, by bringing into attention the aspects of education and Minahasan philosophy.



METHODS

This study uses a combination of auto-narrative (Boufoy-Bastick, 2004; Gajek, 2014) and deconstruction approaches to the firsthand experience of the second author (EAPR) during her conversation with Sam Ratulangi. The auto-narrative approach were employed mainly for constructing the historical timeline of the phenomenon (the history of ST4). To provide an external structured triangulation, the first author (ASAS) asked open-ended questions, to whom the second author replied with the narration. The narration was recorded and transcribed and considered as the primary data. Following this, the deconstruction of the primary data was performed by comparing the decoded information with secondary sources (Feldman, 1995). Historical dating of the events mentioned in the narration was then matched with the recorded documentation from the literature. The findings were then presented as a narrative review.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Historical context background

In 1948 post-independence war Indonesia, numerous national organizations emerged, such as Komite Van Aksi, Barisan Banteng, Pemuda Indonesia Maluku, Hizbullah, Sabillillah, and Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia (Budi & Hidayat, 2019; Joshua et al., 2014; Nusferadi, 2009). Among these, the Kebaktian Rakjat Indonesia Sulawesi (KRIS) was also founded. KRIS started after the dismissal of the Dutch-Indie army, the Koninklijke Nederlandsch-Indische Leger (KNIL) after Indonesia gained its independence (Heydemans & Langi, 2020). Initially, KRIS was founded to organize the people of Sulawesi, most of them were former members of the KNIL army, who at that time were domiciled on the Java island. There was circulating news at that time about KNIL soldiers who were sent to war in Sulawesi, where they had to fight against their own brothers. When they meet with their relatives during the war, the KNIL soldiers and the natives instead saluted each other, apologized, and ask permission to accomplish their mission. On some occasions, these KNIL soldiers offered ammunitions to their native brothers who were actually fighting against their corps, so the battle would not be unfair (Pangalila-Ratulangie, 2002).

The man behind the formation of KRIS was Mr. Alex Maramis, among others (Heydemans & Langi, 2020). It turned out that KRIS was then separated into two groups: The Civil KRIS (led by Bart Ratulangie) and the Military KRIS (led by Evert Langkay). The Civil KRIS mainly protects the people of Sulawesi, while its military counterpart fights against the remaining Dutch army in Krawang and Modjokerto (Hafizah, 2019).

The internal conflict between the Civil and Military KRIS: Ratulangi came to the spot

During their development, clashes occurred between the Civil and Military KRIS. In 1948, when the Civil KRIS was holding its summit meeting in Madioen, the military KRIS was already preparing to launch an attack into the meeting venue. It happened that Sam Ratulangi was also invited to the summit meeting, where he also met Bart Ratulangi, the head of the Military KRIS. Evert Mailangkay then engaged in a deep conversation with Sam Ratulangi, which then replied with the sentence: “*Si toutimoutou.*”

Although it is not possible to know what the interpretation of Langkay of this saying of Ratulangi was, the history recorded that the aggression of Civil KRIS to Guerilla KRIS had never happened. Multiple interpretations can be made. Is it possible that the

charisma of Sam Ratulangi and his saying “ST4” has successfully prevented a war between brothers? Has this ST4 neutralized the ‘inhumane’ aggressive behavior to destroy other humans merely because of opinion differences? These questions, along with further historical and semantics reflection about ST4 will be discussed in the following sections (Pangalila-Ratulangie, 2002).

Semantics of ST4

Semantically, word-by-word the transliteration of ‘Si toutimoutumoutou’ (ST4) is: sitou – one man; timou – has become; tumou – to become; tou – man. The interpretation of ST4, however, varied depending on the context. The most frequent context of ST4 interpretation is within the education sector, where ST4 is interpreted as “a man lives to make others man” (Rampengan, 2015; Sondakh, 2002). When the educational context is detached from ST4, a pure semantics transliteration of ST4 would be, “a man // [has] become // to become // man”, which can be simplified as “a man lives to live as a [real] man” or “*Manusiahidupuntukmenjadimanusiasesungguhnya.*” A personal interpretation of Emilia Ratulangi about this ST4 is: “behave yourself” (Pangalila-Ratulangie, 2002). It is therefore understandable that ST4 possesses a deep philosophical meaning with multiple interpretations available upon the context and interest of the thinker. While paying respect to the depth of its philosophical meaning in the educational setting, it is still reasonable to understand the historical context of ST4 in order to know its original intention when first mentioned by Sam Ratulangi. To avoid confusion with the consensus ST4 in the context of education (a man lives to humanize other men), we would use the term “proto-ST4” to describe the ST4 within its original context when first mentioned by Sam Ratulangi.

Proto-ST4 modified the morals of Minahasan soldiers

Interestingly, Sam Ratulangi himself was not the sole inventor of ST4. During the Aceh war (1873-1904), the Minahasan men who were recruited into the KNIL have been advised the very same sentence: “Si toutimoutumoutou”. This piece of advice had steered Minahasan soldiers to respect their enemy as a human, even when the enemies were under their captivity. It came to pass that when Sam Ratulangi was elected as the parliament member (*Dewan Rakjat* [Indonesian], *Volksraad* [Dutch]), he met the representative from Aceh named Tengku Mahmud. Mahmud belonged to the royal family. When Mahmud was at the age of 10, his family was killed by their enemies, but an unknown Minahasan soldier asked Mahmud to climb a tree and hide there until everyone left, letting him as the sole survivor of the unfortunate incident. Mahmud later lived and met Sam Ratulangi to share his story.

From the story above, it can be contended that with the philosophy of proto-ST4, the morale of Minahasan soldiers had been modified, i.e. considering all humans, including the enemies during the war, as human. Only a human can appreciate their counterparts as human. This implies that, if a person fails to appreciate the humanity of other humans, it is his humanity that needs to be questioned (Wood, 1995).

Proto-ST4 in the context of current-day education

It is not the authors’ intention to replace the current meaning of ST4 with the proto-ST4 in our educational institution—in spite of the more accurate historical context of proto-ST4. Instead, we would argue that proto-ST4 possesses a distinct meaning when applied to the education field. While ST4 is directly and explicitly related to pedagogic

activities (“a man lives to humanize other humans”, most likely by teaching and learning activity), proto-ST4 may serve as a triangulating point-of-view for education, especially from the view of the pupils. As mentioned, proto-ST4 semantically means “a man lives to become a real man”, which resonates more with the spirit of the pupils—instead of the teachers. Conventional ST4 states that it is a man’s duty to humanize others—by educating others. However, this also implies that the subject (*sitou*) must consider himself *more human* than the to-be-humanized object (*tou*). Thus, there can be some degree of internal superiority (Brenninkmeijer et al., 2001) to the subject in order to perform conventional ST4. On the other hand, proto-ST4 does not require similar superiority, since “becoming a real man” is an internal intention to deal with the self in reaching a full value of humanity. While ST4 demands to deal with other people, proto-ST4 demands to deal with the person him/herself. Interestingly, only after a person reaches his/her full value of humanity, then s/he will be able to humanize others. Thus, it can be concluded that a person needs to go through proto-ST4 before being able to perform ST4. The authors would contend that this is the spirit of education that had been diminishing in today’s education culture—especially in Minahasa: the spirit to be a ‘real man’, or more specifically, to be a ‘real Minahasan man’. The idealism of being the proud and educated Minahasan man has been exclaimed by Sam Ratulangi himself during his study period in Europe, where he highlighted the potency of Minahasan people as an educated and civilized society (Ratulangie, 1914). Thus, the embodiment of proto-ST4 renders a desire to become a real man in the subject, while giving the power to humanize other men.

A man lives to be a real man: according to what?

ST4 philosophy is much older than Sam Ratulangi himself. Thus, an immediate question arises: what is the standard of becoming a ‘real man’ (*tou*) among the pre-historic Minahasans? The historical record of Minahasa has just started around the 17th century when the Europeans introduced the alphabet (Wigboldus, 1987). Alternatively, ancient Minahasans might have had their own written language but dissipated through history (Miller, 2011). While the written sources are scarce, oral traditions of being a real man still could be found circulating across Minahasan folk stories. The history of ST4 before Sam Ratulangi is in general elusive. The earliest mention about ST4 was definitely verbal, passed from generation to generation through oral traditions. Supit (1986) mentioned the early saying of ST4, quoting the Dutch researcher Mr. F. D. Holleman, the teacher K. B. Masinambow, and Pastor Domsdorff; ST4 could be found in the sayings of the TonaasWangko after the first assembly in WatuPinawetengan: “... *Tumani e kumeter, mapar e waraneij, akad se tu’us, tumow on tumow tow!...*” (Supit, 1986, p. 29). Supit then provided the free translation of this sentence as follows: “Conquer the territory, o mighty warrior, so our descendants may live and give life!...” It is interesting to note that the phrase “*tumow on tumow tow*” (or “*tumou on tumoutou*”, to make the spelling phonetically consistent) was related to the warrior (*waraneij* or *waraney*) and conquering activities, thus emphasizing the context of being in a war or opening a new territory, which is in agreement with the arguments in this current article.

CONCLUSION

Due to its depth of meaning, *Si toutimoutumoutou* can be interpreted in multiple ways. These interpretations do not necessarily negate each other; instead, they are complementary. The quest to reflect on the original meaning of ST4 when first mentioned by Sam Ratulangi will arguably continue, as long as the Minahasans walk through the history of fame. Each and every *tou*Minahasa is subject to this quest, to find their meaning as a real human—and eventually, take turn to humanize others. The authors have presented the putative original meaning of ST4 as “a man lives to live as a real man”, which can complement our current understanding of ST4. Most likely, these two meanings are overlapping: a man should always try to be a real man while humanizing others—without first dehumanizing them.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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