



Contextualization of the Sayur Matua Tradition in Regional Language Learning: A Semiotic Analysis of Simalungun Cultural Values

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the Sayur Matua funeral ceremony in the Batak Simalungun community as a medium for learning cultural values through Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach. The Sayur Matua ceremony is the highest form of respect given to individuals who die in a perfect state, namely after marrying off all their children and having grandchildren. This tradition is full of cultural symbols that function as a reflection of social, spiritual, and moral values. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, incorporating observation, interview, and documentation techniques within the community of Gajapokki Village, Simalungun Regency. The analysis was carried out using Peirce's semiotic theory, which distinguishes signs into icons, indices, and symbols. The results of the study identified 14 ritual stages involving 22 cultural symbols, 18 symbolic functions, and 18 symbolic meanings that reflect the value structure in Simalungun society. This article suggests the integration of Sayur Matua in a local wisdom-based learning curriculum to strengthen students' character education, especially in the aspects of responsibility, solidarity, and respect for ancestors. Thus, Sayur Matua not only functions as a sacred tradition but also as a contextual learning resource in shaping the identity and cultural awareness of the younger generation.

Keywords: contextualization, Sayur Matua tradition, regional language learning, semiotic analysis, cultural values

Kontekstualisasi Tradisi Sayur Matua dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Daerah: Analisis Semiotika terhadap Nilai Budaya Simalungun

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji upacara adat kematian Sayur Matua dalam masyarakat Batak Simalungun sebagai media pembelajaran nilai budaya melalui pendekatan semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce. Upacara Sayur Matua merupakan bentuk penghormatan tertinggi yang diberikan kepada individu yang meninggal dalam keadaan paripurna, yaitu setelah menikahkan seluruh anak dan memiliki cucu. Tradisi ini sarat akan simbol-simbol budaya yang berfungsi sebagai cerminan nilai sosial, spiritual, dan moral. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi pada masyarakat di Desa Gajapokki, Kabupaten Simalungun. Analisis dilakukan dengan teori semiotika Peirce yang membedakan tanda menjadi ikon, indeks, dan simbol. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi 14 tahapan ritual yang melibatkan 22 simbol budaya, 18 fungsi simbolik, dan 18 makna simbolik yang mencerminkan struktur nilai dalam masyarakat Simalungun. Artikel ini menyarankan integrasi Sayur Matua dalam kurikulum pembelajaran berbasis kearifan lokal untuk memperkuat pendidikan karakter siswa, terutama dalam aspek tanggung jawab, solidaritas, dan penghormatan kepada leluhur. Dengan demikian, Sayur Matua tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai tradisi sakral, tetapi juga sebagai sumber belajar yang kontekstual dalam membentuk identitas dan kesadaran budaya generasi muda.

Kata Kunci: kontekstualitas, tradisi Sayur Matua, pembelajaran bahasa daerah, semiotika, nilai budaya

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INTRODUCTION

Regional languages are a key instrument in the cultural heritage and collective identity of an ethnic group. In the context of the Simalungun community, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a sign system that embodies local cultural values embodied in various traditional practices, one of which is the Sayur Matua funeral ceremony. This ceremony not only represents respect for parents who have died in "perfect" condition according to custom but also serves as a pedagogical space rich with linguistic expressions, social norms, and the Simalungun community's philosophy of life.

In practice, Sayur Matua includes traditional utterances such as umpasa (common speech) andung (everyday speech), as well as ritual speeches that convey values such as respect for ancestors, communal solidarity, and resilience. The language used in this site is a complex cultural symbol, and its understanding requires an analytical approach capable of unraveling symbolic meaning. In this regard, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach—which examines the relationship between representamen (signs), objects (reality), and interpretants (meaning)—is relevant for uncovering the representation of cultural values embodied in these regional languages. However, the cultural values inherent in regional languages, such as Simalungun, are increasingly threatened as the intensity of local language use decreases in daily life and formal education. Therefore, contextualizing the Sayur Matua tradition into regional language learning is a crucial strategy for preserving local languages and cultural values. Learning that stems from concrete cultural practices is considered more effective in improving language competence while instilling local wisdom in students.

This study aims to analyze the representation of cultural values in regional languages used in the Sayur Matua ceremony using a Peircean semiotic approach and explore its potential application in culture-based regional language learning. The results of this study can strengthen contextual edu-

cation models that simultaneously integrate language, culture, and local character.

Relevant articles are widely available in various online journals.. First, Hutabarat, S., Ripai, M., Napitupulu, P. V. A., Harahap, S., Amelia, R., Arif, S., & Siallagan, L. (2024). Strategi Pelestarian Budaya Simalungun melalui Pesta Rondang Bintang. *Journal of Education, Religions Humanities, and Multidisciplinary*, 2(2), 1140-1144. Second, Sinaga, D. M., & Purba, A. S. (2023). Revitalisasi Pesta Rondang Bintang sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Budaya Simalungun di Era Modern. *Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia*. 45(2),123-145. Third, Puspitasari, A. (2019). Revitalisasi Kesenian Tradisional Simalungun dalam Upaya Melestarikan Warisan Budaya Bangsa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Seni*, 12(1), 1-10. Fourth, Saragih, S. (2021). Peranan Seni Tradisional Simalungun dalam Menumbuhkan Rasa Cinta Tanah Air. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 5(2), 152-160.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at understanding the symbolic meaning of the regional language used in the Sayur Matua ceremony and exploring its potential use in local culture-based regional language learning. This approach aligns with the contextual, social, and symbolic characteristics of the data, as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) within an interpretive research framework.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted during the Sayur Matua ceremony in Raya and Purba Districts, Simalungun Regency. Interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, hasuhuton families, regional language teachers, and local cultural practitioners. Documentation included transcripts of conventional speeches, photographs, videos of the ceremony, and documents on regional language learning.

Data analysis employed Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotic approach, which exam-



ines each utterance within the structure of representamen (sign), object (cultural value), and interpreted meaning (Hoopes, 1991; Peirce, 1955). This approach is relevant for uncovering the relationship between linguistic symbols and cultural values such as respect for ancestors, communal solidarity, and life wisdom.

After identifying symbolic meanings, the data is further analyzed to determine their alignment with the core competencies and objectives of regional language learning within the local content curriculum. The goal is to formulate contextual learning models that integrate cultural traditions into language education.

Data validity is ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1994), as well as member checking with key informants and education practitioners. This ensures that the meanings interpreted by the researchers remain aligned with the cultural understanding of the local community.

RESULTS

1. Representation of Cultural Values in the Language of the Sayur Matua Ceremony

The research results show that the regional language used in the Sayur Matua ceremony is not merely a ceremonial communication tool but also contains a sign system rich with meaning and local cultural values. Using Peirce's semiotic approach, the traditional utterances studied can be analyzed into a triadic structure: representamen (linguistic signs), objects (cultural values), and interpretants (social meanings). "One example is found in the umpasa utterance delivered by a traditional leader: "Sai torop ma hita marsombuh sihol, songon ni ulok na maratur." ("May we unite in feeling, like snakes that unite their bodies.")

Semiotically, this utterance represents the value of communal solidarity, which is an important part of the Simalungun social system. The object is the value of togetherness and kinship ties. The interpretant is the hope that all parties present will maintain harmonious relationships, even in times of grief. This demonstrates that the

regional language in Sayur Matua reflects the norms of social life that cannot be separated from the traditional system. "Similarly, the Simalungun ethnic group's Sayur Matua Ceremony consists of 14 stages: Padashon Tugah-Tugah, Tonggo Raja/Riah Tongah Jabu, Pamasuk Hurumah-Rumah, Pattampe Porsa, Pahata Gonrang, Manortor, Mandingguri, Acara Hasuhuton, Pangiligion, Tortor Pahoppu, Hiou Parpudidan Marsakkil Gonrang, Paragendaon, Mangari-ari/Pangapohon/Paturun Porsa, and Marziarah Hu Tanoman. Symbols are then found, divided into (1) symbols of equipment, (2) symbols of food, (3) symbols of social status, and (4) symbols of time. Stages of the Simalungun Ethnic Sayur Matua Ceremony. In Simalungun Regency, if a family member dies, the closest relatives and neighbors are required to come and gather for a family meeting. The Simalungun ethnic group's Sayur Matua Ceremony consists of 14 stages. The symbols are described as follows:

1. Padashon Tugah-Tuga. In Simalungun customs, condolences regarding the deceased must be conveyed to the closest relatives through the *tolu sahundulan* and *lima saodoran* components. At the time of death, the sayur matua ceremony is conducted differently based on the deceased's gender. If the deceased is a father or male, the news is conveyed to the *Tondong Pamupus*, the paternal uncle (mother's brother). Conversely, if the deceased is a mother (female), the condolences are conveyed by bringing a *bulang* (traditional women's head covering) and a *bajud* (betel nut container)
2. Tonggo Raja/Riah Tongoh Jabu. This meeting is a crucial moment for both families. Both parties will sit face to face, led by *Raja Parhata* (Customary Leader), to discuss the traditional ceremonies to be performed for the deceased parent.
3. During the *Martonggo Raja* Stage. Both families will jointly agree on the customary concepts to be implemented, including the burial location, the coffin to be used, and the burial time.

4. Pamasuk Hurumah-Rumah. Before the body is brought into the house, a church service is held by an elder (*sintua*) or priest. After the church service, the family members ask permission from the London campus to bring the body into the house on a plate filled with betel and money. After the body is brought into the house, the *Hasuhutan* (forest) officials give betel leaves containing money on plates to the following: *Tondong Pamupus*, *Tondong Jabu*, *Tondong Bona*, *Tondong Ni Tondong*, *Tondong Mataniari*, *Tondong Mangihut Sanina*, *Tondong Mangihut Anak*, *Tondong Mangihut Nono*, to seek advice. All *Tondong* officials wear *porsa* (a traditional ritual offering), and the *Hasuhutan* officials invite the *Tondong* to participate in the *manortor* (a ritual offering).
5. *Pattampe* *Porsa*. *Pattapei Porsa*, or wearing a white headband, is a stage in the *Sayur Matua* ceremony. In the *Simalungun* traditional *Sayur Matua* ceremony, the *Tondong* officials wear a white cloth tamper purse tied around the heads of the bereaved family. The *Tulang* (bone) officials (*Tondong Pamupus* or *Tondong Jabu*) will give and wear a white cloth tied around the heads (*tampe* *porsa*) to the bereaved family and all *Suhut Bolon* (the ancestors).
6. *Pahata Gonrang*: Before the *gonrang* is played, a custom is performed for the *pannggual* and *parsarunei*, which involves offering betel on a plate, offering one *tumba* (a bundle of rice), and one sheet of *porsa* (a sachet of rice). The purpose of this *pahata gonrang* is to show respect for the *pannggual* and to encourage its spirit.
7. *Manortor*: This is a *suhut tortor* with *boru* performed three times for mutual forgiveness: *tortor riap* (together), *boru manambah suhut* (asking for blessings), *suhut mamasu-masu boru* (blessing). *Suhut manortor* is performed together with *tondong pamupus* three times: *tortor riap* (together), *suhut manambah tondong pamupus* (asking for blessings), *tondong pamupus mamasu-masu suhut* (blessing).
8. *Mandingguri*. The term comes from the word "dinggur," meaning "to stand guard," reflecting the vigil held by family and relatives to commemorate the passing of elderly parents. This event involves all family members, including the deceased's married children, as well as relatives who have their respective roles in the *tolu sahundulan* kinship system (*tondong*, *boru*, and *sanina*). The *pannggual* begins the event with the call "mamungkah gonrang" (a traditional Javanese dance) and plays two gongs (a traditional Chinese instrument) to signal the beginning of the event.
9. *Acara Hasuhuton*. The *manortor* ceremony is held jointly by the *suhut* (family of the child) and *suhut* (family of the mother). This ceremony honors the life lived by the parents, who are considered to have fulfilled their responsibilities in this world.
10. *Pangiligion*. The purpose of *mangiliki* is to build a familial relationship with the *tondong*, thus fostering harmony through *manortor*. *Pangiligion* is a customary offering made by the *tondong*. Initially, the *mangiliki* is given by the *tondong pamupus* (if the deceased was male) or *tondong jabu* (if the deceased was female). After the *pangiligion* from the *tondong pamupus* or *tondong jabu*, it is followed by *pangiligion* from the *odoran ni tondong bona*, *tondong mataniari*, *tondong jabu*, *tondong manrihutkon*, *tondong ni tondong*, and all the *tondong* members. The *tondong* are only given *demban namarbatu* (a traditional offering), unlike those offered to the *tondong pamupus* or *tondong jabu*. In the *Simalungun sayur matua* funeral tradition, the *tondong* (family) will not offer *hiou* (a gift). After the *pangiligion* from all the *tondong* (family) is completed, it is followed by *pangiligion* from the *sanina samarga* (relatives of the same clan), then the *sanina sapanganonkon* (relatives of the same clan) or *sanina pariban* (relatives of the same husband or wife).



11. Tortor Pahoppu. In the sayur matua traditional ceremony, one of the most interesting tortor is the tortor pahoppu. It serves as a form of respect for the deceased grandmother and demonstrates the grandmother's affection for the deceased. The offering of the deceased's final earnings is symbolically expressed in the form of rice, money, and candy thrown (scattered) during the manortor ceremony.
 12. Hiou Parpudidan Marsakkil Gonrang. The maralaman (event in the courtyard of the funeral home) consists of two components: a communal meal and a conversation between the speakers. During the communal meal for all mourners, traditional foods such as carp (dekke sayur) and slaughtered chicken (dayok binatur) are served to those who deserve it. First, the tondong pamupus (if the deceased is male) or tondong jabu (if the deceased is female) are served. Then, the children of the deceased break it up by catching the hiou so that it doesn't fall or land on the body. Then, the tondong will wrap the hiou around the children of the deceased. After all these events, the manangkil gondrang (closing the drum) is carried out. This event is intended to close the sayur matua drum. The pannggual is served the slaughtered chicken (dayok binatur) along with rice for the drummer to take home.
 13. Paragendaon. In the funeral procession according to Christian tradition, the coffin is covered with several layers: hiou ragi panei (sinttakan ni anak boru jabu), white hiou (as a symbol of sayur matua), and finally, a casket covering from the church. The essence of this funeral procession emphasizes God's work in creating and taking humanity back. The God who created humanity also has the right to take it back. Humans were created from the dust of the earth by God, and will ultimately return to the earth. While the human spirit returns to its Creator, it awaits the coming day of judgment. During burial, the body is first placed on a wooden or bamboo pole and lowered using twisted ropes. The head of the body faces the rising sun (hapoltakan), while the feet face the setting sun (hasundutan). During this procession, a short prayer service is held before the coffin is lowered into the grave. All those present at the burial will throw soil into the grave as a sign of final respect or farewell.
 14. Mangari-ari/Pangapohon/Paturun porsa. After the burial ceremony, all the hasuhutan and tondong (the deceased) return home for the mangipuh ceremony. The tondong pamupus is responsible for opening the porsa (clothes covering the head of the deceased) and washing the face of the hasuhutan, while the tondong jabu is responsible for opening the old ulos sappe (clothes covering the head of the deceased) and washing the face of the hasuhutan. At the same time, the tondong pamupus inaugurates the eldest son to take over the responsibility for any customary duties on the part of the tondong and hands over the peci (cap)/takkuluk (traditional headdress). This is followed by a communal dinner.
 15. Marziarah hu Tanoman (Tanoman Visit). The tondong pamupus invites the suhut (supreme) to visit the grave in the morning. The pilgrimage requires water, flowers, kaffir lime, and betel. The pilgrimage begins with the eldest son, followed by the eldest son, and finally the grandchildren. The pilgrimage is performed to honor the deceased's parents. Furthermore, prayers are requested, led by traditional elders, so that the bereaved family may find happiness in their children and grandchildren.
- ## 2. Potential for Contextualization in Regional Language Learning
- The analysis shows that the linguistic structure and meaning contained in Sayur Matua have high potential to be used as a learning resource in regional language learning. There are three main forms of speech that can be utilized as teaching materials, namely:

1. Umpasa (traditional expressions) – teaches metaphors, distinctive sentence structures, and life philosophies.
2. Traditional speeches, which contain kinship vocabulary, formal discourse structures, and pragmatic functions.
3. Andung, which teaches emotional expression, linguistic imagination, and cultural values in musical form.

The relationship between linguistic symbols and cultural values can serve as a basis for strengthening contextual learning based on local culture, as suggested by Sibarani (2012). By incorporating cultural content into language instruction, students not only learn linguistic aspects but also understand the socio-cultural context behind them.

For example, in observations at a public junior high school in Raya District, a local language teacher reported that students did not fully understand the explanation of the function of symbols in the Sayur Matua traditional ceremony of the Simalungun ethnic group. Therefore, the results of this study support the development of teaching materials that incorporate traditional texts such as Sayur Matua as part of the learning resources. The functions of symbols are presented below.

2.1 Symbolic Functions of Equipment

2.1.1 Takuluk/Peci

The takuluk or peci in the Sayur Matua traditional ceremony serves as a head covering for men who have died. This takuluk signifies that the deceased has passed away.

2.1.2 Bulang

The Bulang in the Sayur Matua traditional ceremony serves as a head covering for women. The delivery of condolences is carried out by carrying a bulang (a traditional female head covering). The bulang given at the delivery of the condolences is then worn on the head of the eldest son's wife as a sign of replacing the mother in the

bereaved household. Therefore, wearing the bulang signifies the "inauguration" of the eldest son's wife as the replacement for the deceased mother.

2.1.3 Porsa

The porsa is a white cloth tied around a man's head. This process is known as padalan porsa. For the Simalungun ethnic group, the porsa holds profound meaning and symbolism as a sign of purity. The porsa is always worn at every funeral ceremony, as it is considered highly important and valuable. It should be noted that this porsa is only used by men, not including women.

2.1.4 Hiou/Ulos Parpuddi

Hiou serves to strengthen social relations among the Simalungun ethnic group. This cloth can be used at the time of death when the sayur matua is given to the bereaved family. Hiou serves as a source of warmth for the bereaved, and it is evident that when offered, it is accompanied by prayers and hopes.

2.1.5 *Pinggan pasu (piring)*

The pottery bowl serves as a container for various gifts to be presented to the tondong (the honored person) at this event. Generally, a pottery bowl is a large white ceramic plate with various patterns, such as leaves, flowers, stripes, and stars. This pottery bowl is larger than a regular plate.

2.1.6 Hepeng (Money)

Hepeng means money in Indonesian. During funeral ceremonies, hepeng is essential, but the amount is not specified. Hepeng is given in conjunction with the offering of demban (a kind of offering) and boras (a kind of offering). Furthermore, hepeng is used in the sayur matua tradition as an offering or sacrificial offering, accompanied by the offering of napuran (a kind of offering) and boras (a kind of offering).



2.1.7 Bahul-bahul/Tandok

The bahul-bahul or tandok is a tool used during the sayur matua ceremony of the Simalungun ethnic group, as a tool for storing rice. In Simalungun ethnic tradition, women carry a tandok during the ceremony and place it on their heads while dancing the tortor dance. A tandok is a container made of woven bamboo or woven pandanus leaves.

2.1.8 Tombuan/Tinombuan

Tombuan serves as a symbol of the Simalungun ethnic group's cultural identity. Its use reflects a connection to culture and tradition, as well as a form of respect for ancestors. Tombuan is often used in various traditional ceremonies as an offering to ancestral spirits and forefathers. This is a way to honor the ancestors and preserve traditions.

2.2. Function of Food Symbols

2.2.1 Demban/Sirih

Demban serves as a symbol of sacredness in the sayur matua traditional ceremony. It is believed to bring blessings and symbolizes a request for blessings from ancestors or supernatural powers, making its presence essential in sacred rituals. As a symbol of intimacy and closeness, offering betel to someone can also be a sign of intimacy and togetherness.

2.2.2. Boras/Rice

Boras serves as a symbol that strengthens the spirit, as rice is shared by all levels of society, reflecting the value of social equality. In the sayur matua traditional funeral ceremony, boras is used as a symbol of strengthening the spirit and soul. The community believes that every object has a tondi, especially rice, which is valued from planting to harvest. This long process makes rice highly revered.

2.2.3 Tobu/Sugarcane

In the Simalungun ethnic group, tobu serves as a symbol of happiness and blessings in life. This

is associated with the deceased's life, which is considered complete because they have reached old age and left behind a complete line of descendants. Furthermore, it serves as a sign of final respect for the deceased. The presence of sugar cane reflects respect for the deceased's life journey, which has progressed through various stages of life until old age.

2.2.4 Pig

The function of the pig in the Simalungun ethnic group's sayur matua funeral ceremony is as a symbol of perfection. Pigs symbolize prosperity and a perfect life. Therefore, pork is chosen as an offering to represent the deceased's life, which is considered complete, having died with a full complement of descendants and reached maturity.

2.2.5 Dayok Nabinatur

Dayok Nabinatur literally means "arranged chickens" or "arranged chickens." The chickens used in this ritual are selected, slaughtered, and prepared in a special way to be given to the bereaved family. The following are some of the functions of the Dayok Nabinatur ritual in the Simalungun community's sayur matua funeral ceremony: Symbol of Honor and Final Respect: Dayok Nabinatur is a form of respect for the deceased who died in a "sayur matua" state. The neatly arranged chickens symbolize the completeness and harmony of life achieved by the deceased. This symbolizes the end of a full and honorable life. Furthermore, it serves as an expression of gratitude and prayer.

2.3 Functions of Symbols Marking Social Status

2.3.1 Hasuhuton

The Hasuhuton is the organizer of traditional ceremonies in the Simalungun community. The Hasuhuton's role in the ceremony is as follows: The head of the family, the Hasuhuton, is the family representative responsible for organizing all the events of the Sayur Matua funeral ceremony. He ensures that all traditions are carried out correctly according to Simalungun customs.

2.3.2 Boru

The Boru's function in this ceremony is to be responsible for logistics and food provision. The Boru is responsible for preparing and serving food to the guests attending the funeral ceremony. Furthermore, the Boru also plays a role in welcoming guests who come to pay their respects. They help arrange seating, organize the guest lineup, and ensure the smooth running of the ceremony, ensuring an orderly and solemn atmosphere.

2.3.3 Sanina

The function of the Sanina is to strengthen social relations. Sanina, which refers to relatives or extended family members related to the deceased, serves as a form of recognition of social ties in Simalungun customs. Their presence indicates that the deceased's family had a strong social network and good relationships with the surrounding community.

2.3.4 Tondong

The Tondong's function in the Simalungun ethnic group's sayur matua funeral ceremony is to provide the highest level of blessing and respect. The tondong, who in Simalungun culture represent the wife's family (or the wife's in-laws), hold a revered position within the traditional structure. In the sayur matua ceremony, the tondong gives their final blessing to the deceased as a sign of the highest level of respect. This blessing is considered important because it signifies that the deceased's life journey has been blessed by the wife's family.

2.3.5 Hasoman Sahuta

The function of the hasoman sahuta in the sayur matua funeral ceremony is a form of social solidarity. Hasoman sahuta demonstrates solidarity and a sense of togetherness among the community within a community. Furthermore, hasoman sahuta can function in carrying out mutual cooperation (gotong royong). In Simalungun tradition, hasoman sahuta often assists in event preparations, such as

providing ceremonial equipment, cooking, and ensuring the event runs smoothly.

DISCUSSION

This research makes a significant contribution to the understanding of local cultural values through a contextual semiotic approach. The local content curriculum for regional languages in North Sumatra has provided space for strengthening local identity and values. However, the approach still tends to be textual and non-contextual. The use of the Sayur Matua tradition in learning allows for, among other things, experiential learning based on local culture, recognition of the social function of language in real life, and the instilling of character values through linguistic symbols.

In this context, Peirce's semiotics provides a strong theoretical framework to explain how regional languages function symbolically in conveying values. By analyzing the representamen-object-interpretant structure, teachers can encourage students to understand not only the meaning of words but also the cultural significance they contain.

These results align with Musgrave's (2014) findings that strengthening regional languages must be accompanied by the cultural context in which they develop. Language education that focuses solely on grammar or vocabulary tends to fail to foster cultural understanding. The regional languages used in traditional rituals like Sayur Matua are a rich "laboratory of meaning" for learning character, cultural literacy, and a love of local heritage.

Student involvement in learning traditional texts like umpasa, andung, or harungguan can simultaneously develop three learning domains: cognitive (language), affective (values), and psychomotor (practice). Therefore, regional language teachers can create a project-based local culture learning model by assigning students to observe, copy, interpret, and dramatize traditional speech within the classroom context.



CONCLUSION

This research shows that the regional language used in the Sayur Matua ceremony of the Simalungun people serves not only as a means of ritual communication but also as a sign system representing local cultural values. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic approach, every traditional utterance, such as umpasa, andung, and ritual speech, can be analyzed triadically—representing the relationship between the sign (representamen), the cultural value (object), and the resulting meaning (interpretant). The identified values include respect for ancestors, social solidarity, resilience, and kinship ethics.

Furthermore, the research findings demonstrate that the language structure and meaning in the Sayur Matua tradition has strong potential to be used as a learning resource in regional language instruction. By integrating local cultural content into the learning process, students not only develop linguistic competence but also strengthen their cultural identity and local character. Therefore, contextualizing traditional traditions into regional language education is an essential strategy for language preservation and strengthening values-based education. This research recommends the development of a learning model based on local traditions as part of a sustainable local content curriculum innovation.

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