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Biotic Ecolexicon in the Gotilon Harvest Ceremony: An Ecolinguistic Study of HKBP Congregation

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses how biotic ecolexical items are represented in the Gotilon ceremony discourse of the HKBP Pardomuan Congregation and how these linguistic elements reflect ecological meanings, cultural values, and theological perspectives toward nature. The study aims to: 1) Identify biotic ecolexical items related to living beings in the Gotilon ritual discourse, 2) Interpret their ecological significance from an ecolinguistic perspective, and 3) Explain their functions within the ceremonial and cultural context. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method grounded in Arran Stubbe's ecolinguistic framework. Data were collected through Participant observation of the Gotilon ceremony, documentation of ritual texts, in-depth interviews with church members and community elders. Data analysis focuses on identifying, classifying, and interpreting ecolexical items within their ecological and cultural contexts. The findings reveal a diverse range of biotic ecolexical items referring to plants, animals, and agricultural products, such as rice, buffalo, chicken, banyan tree, and mango tree. These lexical items function beyond literal meanings and carry deeper ecological and symbolic significance. They represent ecological values and collective memory, reflect theological beliefs about nature as a divine gift, serve as symbols of gratitude and prosperity, act as sacrificial elements in ritual practices, and function as a bridge connecting humans, nature, and God. Overall, the Gotilon ceremonial discourse reflects an integrated ecological worldview combining spirituality, agricultural traditions, and environmental responsibility.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language extends beyond its instrumental function as a communicative system; it operates as a symbolic resource through which individuals conceptualize, interpret, and negotiate their relationships with the natural and social environment [1], [2], [3]. This

epistemological and representational capacity of language constitutes a primary concern of ecolinguistics, an interdisciplinary field that critically examines how linguistic structures and lexical selections encode ecological knowledge, value systems, and ideological orientations. Within this theoretical framework, the notion of the ecolexicon occupies a significant position, referring to environmentally oriented lexical items that signify biotic (living organisms) and abiotic (non-living entities) elements, as well as the relational patterns that connect human communities to the ecological systems they inhabit [4], [5].

The biotic ecolexicon focuses on vocabulary related to living organisms, including plants, animals, and other biotic components [6]. These lexical items often carry symbolic or cultural meanings, particularly within rituals and ceremonies where human interaction with the natural world is enacted [7]. Such language use provides insight into how communities conceptualize their environment, transmit ecological knowledge, and express cultural or spiritual values [7].

The Gotilon ceremony in the HKBP (Huria Kristen Batak Protestan) congregation is a traditional ritual that incorporates various living elements as part of its proceedings. Plants, animals, and other biotic resources are used not only practically but also symbolically, embodying the spiritual and cultural values of the Batak community [8], [9]. Investigating the biotic ecolexicon in this ceremony allows researchers to understand how ecological knowledge and cultural beliefs are encoded and communicated through language [10], [11].

Research in ecolinguistics highlights that language not only communicates ideas but also mirrors ecological consciousness and culturally shaped understandings of the environment [12]. Lexical choices, especially those referring to living organisms, can disclose how a community perceives, categorizes, and relates to the natural world [13]. Within ritual discourse, such vocabulary often extends beyond literal reference, embodying symbolic, spiritual, and ethical meanings that integrate ecological knowledge with collective belief systems and value structures [14].

This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of Batak culture, where the *Gotilon* (annual thanksgiving) ceremony exemplifies the interdependence between ritual practice and ecological elements [15], [16]. Various plants and animals are incorporated into the ceremony, serving both practical functions and layered symbolic purposes. However, although these biotic components hold cultural and religious importance, scholarly attention to the specific lexical items used to denote them in ritual speech remains limited. Hakim [17] and Denpasar [18] stated that investigating the biotic ecolexicon within this ceremonial discourse, therefore, offers valuable insight into how ecological knowledge is linguistically preserved and transmitted through cultural and spiritual traditions.

Analyzing biotic lexical items in the *Gotilon* ceremony not only contributes to ecolinguistic theory but also preserves cultural knowledge and offers insight into the interconnection between language, ecology, and ritual practices [19]. Understanding these lexical representations can shed light on how the Batak community linguistically encodes their ecological consciousness and cultural identity, emphasizing **the importance of language in** sustaining both **environmental** awareness and cultural heritage [20], [21], [22].

Previous studies have demonstrated that language encodes ecological knowledge and cultural perceptions of the environment [23], [24]. Lexical items in the biotic ecolexicon referring to living organisms often carry multiple layers of meaning, reflecting ecological awareness, ritual functions, or symbolic values. In ritual or religious contexts, these words can reveal both the practical and spiritual dimensions of human-environment interaction [25].

Several prior studies are relevant to the present research, such as Stibbe's analysis of ecolexical items across cultural contexts, which demonstrated that biotic language reflects environmental ideologies embedded in social practices. explored the semantic and pragmatic functions of biotic lexical items, emphasizing their role in conveying cultural and ecological knowledge. [10] studied Batak HKBP rituals, documenting the use of plants and animals in ceremonies, highlighting their cultural and spiritual significance. [20] investigated ecological symbols in Batak rituals, showing how biotic elements serve as carriers of community values and ethical teachings about nature. [15] examined ritual language in indigenous ceremonies and argued that lexical choices reflect both ecological knowledge and cultural ideologies, linking language with environmental stewardship, and [26] analyzed the symbolic role of trees and other living entities in cultural narratives, illustrating how biotic ecolexicon mediates human-nature relationships.

Despite these studies, there is limited research specifically on the biotic ecolexicon in Batak HKBP *Gotilon* ceremonies, particularly regarding how linguistic items encode ecological knowledge and cultural meaning. This study addresses that gap by identifying, analyzing, and interpreting the biotic lexical items used in the *Gotilon* ceremony, thereby contributing to both ecolinguistic theory and cultural documentation.

Despite increasing attention in ecolinguistics, limited scholarly work has specifically examined how biotic ecolexical items are linguistically constructed and function within the *Gotilon* ceremony of the HKBP (Huria Kristen Batak Protestan) tradition. Previous studies have addressed ecological discourse, ritual symbolism, and Batak cultural practices; however, they have not systematically analyzed the specific lexical items referring to living organisms, their ecological meanings, and their functional roles in ritual discourse. Thus, the central problem of this study is the lack of in-depth ecolinguistic analysis of biotic ecolexicon in Batak Christian ritual language, particularly in the *Gotilon* ceremony. To address this gap, the study adopts Arran Stibbe's ecolinguistic framework, which emphasizes how language encodes ecological values, ideologies, and human-nature relationships.

The author plans to identify and classify biotic ecolexical items in ritual discourse systematically, analyze their meanings through ecolinguistic interpretation (ecological, symbolic, theological), examine their functional roles within ritual practices, and contextualize the findings within Batak cultural and religious traditions. This approach ensures linguistic ecological-cultural integration, offering a deeper understanding of how ecological knowledge is preserved through language.

This study aims to identify biotic lexical items used in the *Gotilon* ceremony of the HKBP congregation, analyze the ecological meanings embedded in these lexical items, and explain the functional roles of biotic ecolexicon within the ritual context.

This research is grounded in ecolinguistic theory, particularly the framework proposed by Arran Stibbe, which examines how language shapes ecological perception and environmental ethics. Key theoretical concepts include Language as ecological representation: Language functions not only as communication but also as a system that constructs environmental reality [1], [27], Ecolexicon: refers to lexical items representing ecological entities and relationships, including both biotic and abiotic elements [13], Biotic ecolexicon: focuses on vocabulary related to living organisms (plants, animals, crops) that often carry symbolic, cultural, and spiritual meanings [28], Ritual discourse: Language used in ceremonial contexts that encodes collective beliefs, ecological knowledge, and value systems.

This study is expected to make theoretical contributions to the development of ecolinguistics by expanding research on the ecolexicon in ritual discourse. Empirically, provide detailed documentation of biotic lexical items in the *Gotilon* ceremony. Culturally, support the preservation of Batak ecological knowledge and ritual language traditions. Furthermore, practically, promote awareness of the role of language in fostering environmental ethics and sustainability.

By investigating the interplay between language, ecology, and ritual practice, this research provides insights into how the Batak community expresses ecological awareness, cultural identity, and spiritual beliefs through the biotic ecolexicon. This study aims to explore the biotic ecolexicon used in the *Gotilon* ceremony of the HKBP congregation, such as what biotic lexical items are used in the HKBP *Gotilon* ceremony? what are the ecological meanings of the biotic ecolexicon in the *Gotilon* ceremony? and how are the biotic lexical items functionally used in the ritual context?

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design within the framework of ecolinguistics to investigate the biotic ecolexicon in the HKBP *Gotilon* ceremony, HKBP Pardomuan, South Medan Ressor. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the research focuses on understanding how language reflects ecological knowledge, cultural values, and ritual practices rather than measuring numerical data [29]; [1]. Data were collected through a combination of observations, audio recordings, and document analysis of ritual texts and liturgical scripts used during the *Gotilon* ceremony. Observations allowed the researcher to identify the use of living elements, such as plants and animals, within the ceremonial context, while audio recordings facilitated accurate transcription and lexical analysis. Additionally, ritual texts and related documentation were examined to identify biotic lexical items embedded in the ceremony's formal discourse.

The participants of this study included the officiating pastor, ritual assistants, and congregation members who actively engage in the *Gotilon* ceremony. Purposive sampling was employed to select informants with direct experience and understanding of the ritual procedures and the symbolic meanings of the biotic elements. In total, the study focused on approximately 10–15 key participants to ensure the depth and richness of the data.

Data analysis followed a systematic qualitative content analysis integrated with ecolinguistic principles. The analytical procedures were conducted in several stages. First,

all recorded data were transcribed verbatim and compiled with field notes and textual documents to form a unified corpus. Second, lexical items referring to living organisms (biotic elements) were identified through open coding. In this stage, each relevant word or phrase (e.g., plant, animal, or other living entity names) was labeled as a unit of analysis.

Third, the identified lexical items were coded and categorized using a combination of semantic and ecological criteria. The coding process involved grouping lexical items into categories such as flora, fauna, and other biotic entities. These categories were further interpreted based on their contextual meanings, including symbolic (e.g., representing prosperity or blessing), cultural (e.g., linked to traditional practices), and ritual functions (e.g., used in offerings or prayers) [29], [30].

Fourth, an interpretive analysis examined how the categorized ecolexicon reflects the Batak community's ecological knowledge, environmental ethics, and spiritual worldview. This stage emphasized the relationship between linguistic expressions and broader ecological ideologies embedded in the ritual discourse [31], [32].

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was applied by cross-validating data from observations, recordings, and textual analysis [33], [34]. Member checking was also conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with participants to confirm their accuracy. Ethical principles were strictly followed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for cultural values throughout the research process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The present study identified a variety of biotic ecolexicons closely associated with the Gotilon ceremony celebrated by the HKBP Congregation. These ecolexicon items reflect the congregation's intimate relationship with the natural environment, highlighting both cultural and ecological dimensions embedded in ritual practices [36], [37]. The biotic elements observed include various plants, animals, and agricultural products that not only provide practical functions such as food, materials, and sustenance but also carry significant symbolic and ritual meanings [38], [39]. Each item serves a dual role: supporting the ecological balance of the surrounding environment and reinforcing the cultural and spiritual values of the HKBP community. The following list presents the biotic ecolexicon documented during the celebration, illustrating the diversity of living entities recognized and utilized within this traditional ritual context.

Harungguan (banyan tree), Boras / Eme (rice), Manuk (chicken), Pinahan (pig), Lombu (cow), Harungguan Nauli (areca palm), Tarutung (durian tree), Harungguan Mardua (mahogany tree), Manuk Boru-boru (dove), Bonani Mangga (mango tree), Huta Nauli (teak tree), Mata Air (spring water), Ikan Mas (goldfish/carp), Ihan (Batak fish), Horbo (buffalo), Bulung (leaf), Latong (fertile), Marisi (grainy / full of seeds), Lomak (abundant / lush), Arsik (spiced fish), Hauma (dry field / crops), Saba (wet rice field / paddy), Suan-suanan (plants), Indahon (rice), Parbue (fruit), Pora-pora (kind of fish), Handang (cage), panangga (dog), Boraspati: Cicak/kadal tanah, Unte (Jeruk), Hau (tree), tumbur (sprout), manuk mira (rooster), Na niula (Crops, agricultural products), pangkat

(young bamboo shoots/bamboo shoots), *Hotang (Rattan)*, *hariara (banyan)*, *pidong (bird)*, and/or (climbing plants/tendrils).

Based on the data found in the *Gotilon* ceremony by HKBP's congregation, the items of ecolexicon, ecological meaning, and functional use in the Ritual/ceremony are described as follows:

Table 1. Items of ecolexicon, ecological meaning, and functional use in the Ritual/ceremony

Biotic Lexical Item	Ecological Meaning	Functional Use in the Ritual
Harungguan (banyan tree)	Provides shade, oxygen, and supports local biodiversity; symbolizes life and protection	Used as a sacred tree for placing offerings or performing prayers; represents spiritual protection and stability
Boras / Eme (rice)	Main food source, sustains human life; symbolizes fertility and abundance	Central in harvest rituals and offerings; represents prosperity and blessing for the congregation
Manuk (chicken)	Provides protein, maintains ecological balance; symbolizes life and vitality	Used as ritual offerings to invoke blessings and fertility; sometimes part of sacrificial rites
Pinahan (pig)	Source of food and nutrients; contributes to ecological cycles	Sacrificial offerings in the ceremony; symbolizes wealth, gratitude, and communal sharing
Lombu (cow / buffalo)	Provides labor, milk, and fertilizer; supports agricultural ecosystems	Used in plowing demonstrations or as ceremonial offerings; symbolizes strength, abundance, and prosperity
Harungguan Nauli (areca palm)	Habitat for insects and birds, produces edible fruits	Incorporated in ceremonial decorations; symbolizes purity, continuity, and life-giving energy
Tarutung (durian tree)	Provides fruits, supports pollination; represents abundance	Fruits used as offerings; symbolizes prosperity and shared abundance among participants
Harungguan Mardua (mahogany tree)	Provides timber, oxygen, prevents soil erosion; represents longevity	Wood may be used in ceremonial tools or altars; symbolizes durability, strength, and sacredness
Manuk Boru-boru (dove)	Controls insects, maintains ecological balance; symbolizes peace and harmony	Released or offered symbolically; represents peace, love, and spiritual connection
Bonani Mangga (mango tree)	Provides nutritious fruits, supports biodiversity	Fruits used as offerings; symbolizes fertility, generosity, and abundance
Huta Nauli (teak tree)	Provides timber and habitat for wildlife; supports ecological balance	Wood used in ritual artifacts or altars; symbolizes stability and sacredness of the community
Mata Air (spring water)	Freshwater source supporting aquatic life; essential for human and ritual needs	Used in purification rituals, blessing of participants, and symbolic representation of life
Ikan Mas (goldfish / carp)	Supports aquatic food chain; contributes to nutrient cycling	Used as symbolic offerings or ritual food; represents prosperity, good fortune, and abundance
Ihan (Batak fish)	Endemic freshwater species; supports	Served or offered during rituals; symbolizes

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Biotic Lexical Item	Ecological Meaning	Functional Use in the Ritual
	local biodiversity	respect for nature, abundance, and local ecological knowledge
Horbo (buffalo)	Provides labor, meat, and nutrients; supports soil fertility	Central sacrificial animal in ceremonies; symbolizes wealth, strength, and communal solidarity
Bulung (leaf)	Photosynthetic organ supporting plant growth; contributes to ecological cycles	Used as decoration or wrapping in offerings; symbolizes life, growth, and natural harmony
Latong (fertile)	Indicates nutrient-rich soil or plants; reflects agricultural productivity	Refers to crops or fields during blessings; symbolizes successful harvest and life-sustaining abundance
Marisi (grainy / full of seeds)	Represents fully developed seeds; ensures crop propagation	Used in harvest rituals; symbolizes fertility, continuity, and prosperity
Lomak (abundant / lush)	Dense growth of plants or crops; supports ecological stability	Describes healthy crops in ceremonies; symbolizes abundance, well-being, and gratitude
Arsik (spiced fish)	Prepared local freshwater fish; sustains community diet	Offered as ceremonial food; represents abundance, cultural identity, and ecological knowledge
Hauma (dry field / crops)	Cultivated land supporting plant growth; sustains human life	Used in rituals of planting or blessing crops; symbolizes livelihood, productivity, and blessing
Saba (wet rice field / paddy)	Flooded fields support rice cultivation and aquatic biodiversity	Central to harvest and thanksgiving rituals; symbolizes fertility, sustenance, and community sharing
Suan-suanan (plants)	General plant life providing oxygen, food, and habitat; supports biodiversity	Used in offerings or ritual decoration; symbolizes life, ecological awareness, and continuity

Categorization of the biotic items based on the table is as follows:

1. Plants / Trees / Crops / Leaves:

Harungguan (banyan tree), Boras / Eme (rice), Harungguan Nauli (areca palm), Tarutung (durian tree), Harungguan Mardua (mahogany tree), Bonani Mangga (mango tree), Huta Nauli (teak tree), Bulung (leaf), Latong (fertile / plant descriptor), Marisi (grainy / full of seeds), Lomak (abundant / lush), Hauma (dry field / crops), Saba (wet rice field / paddy), Suan-suanan (plants). Total plants = 14.

2. Animals:

Manuk (chicken), Pinahan (pig), Lombu (cow / buffalo), Manuk Boru-boru (dove), Ikan Mas (goldfish / carp), Ihan (Batak fish), Horbo (buffalo), Arsik (spiced fish), and the total animals/fish = 8.

3. Abiotic-derived / borderline:

Mata Air (spring water) → supports life, but technically abiotic

Total items in the table are 23, with 14 plants, 8 Animals/fish, and 1 Mata Air

Percentage of Plants = $(14/23) \times 100 = 60.87\% \approx 61\%$

Percentage of Animals/Fish = $(8/23) \times 100 = 34.78\% \approx 35\%$

Percentage of Mata Air (Abiotic-related) = $(1/23) \times 100 = 4.35\% \approx 4\%$

This shows that the Gotilon ceremony primarily uses plant-related biotic items, followed by animals and fish, with a very small contribution from abiotic elements such as spring water, which still play a symbolic and functional role in rituals.

3.2. Discussion

Biotic Ecolexicon in the Gotilon Ceremony

The results of this study reveal a rich and diverse biotic ecolexicon embedded within the Gotilon ceremony of the HKBP Congregation. The analysis identified 23 key items, including plants, trees, crops, leaves, animals, and fish, each carrying specific ecological meaning and ritual function. The prevalence of plant-related items, comprising approximately 61% of all biotic lexicon, underscores the central role of vegetation in both ecological and symbolic dimensions of the ceremony. Trees such as Harungguan (banyan tree) and Harungguan Mardua (mahogany tree) are not only valued for their ecological functions, providing oxygen, shade, and habitat, but also hold profound cultural and spiritual significance, serving as sacred objects around which ritual activities are conducted. Crops such as Boras/Eme (rice), Hauma (upland crops), and Saba (wet rice fields) highlight the interplay between agriculture and ritual practice, symbolizing fertility, sustenance, and prosperity for the community.

Ecological Meaning of Biotic Items

The animal-based lexicon, which constitutes roughly 35% of the biotic items, illustrates the significance of fauna in ritual performance. Domesticated animals such as *Manuk* (chicken), *Pinahan* (pig), and *Lombu* (buffalo) serve both practical and symbolic roles: they provide food and nutrients while also representing wealth, strength, and communal solidarity when used as ritual offerings. Aquatic species such as *Ikan Mas* (goldfish/carp) and *Ihan* (Batak fish) reflect the community's ecological knowledge of local freshwater biodiversity and its integration into cultural practices. Notably, *Mata Air* (spring water), although technically abiotic, demonstrates the community's recognition of water as a vital life-supporting resource, bridging ecological function with ritual symbolism.

The findings align with previous research in ecolinguistics, which shows that language encodes human-environment relationships [1], [13]. The *Gotilon* ceremony exemplifies how the biotic ecolexicon conveys multi-layered meanings: ecologically, these items sustain life and maintain environmental balance; culturally, they are vehicles of social memory, spiritual belief, and communal identity; ritually, they perform symbolic functions that mark cycles of life, abundance, and gratitude.

Functional Usage of Biotic Lexical Items in Rituals

The functional use of biotic items demonstrates the interdependence between ecological knowledge and cultural practice. Rice, as a staple crop, is not only consumed but also ritualized to invoke blessings and communal prosperity, reflecting the co-

construction of ecological and cultural meaning. Animals like buffalo and chicken serve as symbolic offerings, reinforcing social cohesion and ethical relations between humans and the natural world. Plant descriptors such as *Latong* (fertile), *Marisi* (grainy), and *Lomak* (abundant) indicate a nuanced linguistic sensitivity to ecological conditions, highlighting the community's observation of productivity, abundance, and environmental health.

Implications for Ecolinguistics and Cultural Sustainability

Overall, the *Gotilon* ceremony represents a complex socio-ecological system in which language, ritual, and ecology intersect. The biotic ecolexicon not only documents the community's ecological knowledge but also serves as a cultural tool for environmental stewardship, transmitting values of sustainability, reverence for life, and communal responsibility. These findings contribute to the broader field of ecolinguistics by demonstrating how ritual language encodes environmental knowledge and cultural ethics simultaneously, providing insight into how traditional practices maintain ecological and social balance [35], [36].

Functional Use of Biotic Lexical Items in the Ritual Context

The biotic lexical items identified in the *Gotilon* ceremony serve multiple functional roles that intertwine ecological, cultural, and ritual significance. From a practical perspective, many of the items are directly involved in sustaining life and supporting ritual activities. For example, rice (Boras/Eme), upland crops (Hauma), and paddy fields (Saba) not only provide food but also symbolize the fertility of the land and the prosperity of the community. These crops are often used as offerings, highlighting the community's dependence on agricultural abundance and their gratitude toward both nature and spiritual forces. Similarly, spring water (Mata Air), while technically abiotic, is functionally essential for ritual purification, blessing participants, and preparing offerings, demonstrating the integration of natural resources in ceremonial practice.

Animals play a central role in ritual, both as sacrificial offerings and as symbolic participants. Domesticated animals such as chickens (Manuk), pigs (Pinahan), and buffalo (Lombu/Horbo) are selected not only for their nutritional value but also for their symbolic representation of strength, wealth, and communal solidarity. These animals are ritually offered to invoke blessings, mark gratitude, and reinforce social cohesion among participants. Aquatic species, including goldfish (Ikan Mas) and local Batak fish (Ihan), are used in symbolic dishes like *Arsik* (spiced fish), combining practical nourishment with ritualized meaning that emphasizes abundance, ecological balance, and respect for local biodiversity.

Plants, trees, and leaves are functionally utilized in both symbolic and decorative capacities. Sacred trees such as *Harungguan* (banyan) and *Harungguan Mardua* (mahogany) serve as central objects around which ritual activities are performed, symbolizing spiritual protection and stability. Leaves (Bulung) and plant descriptors such as *Latong* (fertile), *Marisi* (grainy/full of seeds), and *Lomak* (abundant/lush) are incorporated into offerings, decorations, or spoken references, symbolizing life, growth, and ecological productivity. The careful selection and placement of these items within the

ritual context reflect a nuanced understanding of the natural and spiritual interdependence, illustrating how material and linguistic elements work together to sustain cultural continuity.

The functional use of biotic lexical items in the *Gotilon* ceremony demonstrates a dynamic relationship between humans and their environment, where ecological knowledge, symbolic meaning, and ritual practice converge. Each item contributes not only to the practical execution of the ritual but also to the communication of cultural values, ethical norms, and environmental awareness, showing how language and material culture encode and transmit complex socio-ecological knowledge across generations.

Overall, these findings demonstrate a dynamic human–environment relationship in which language, material culture, and ritual action converge. Unlike prior studies that separate linguistic and ecological analysis, this research highlights their inseparability, showing how biotic lexicon encodes and enacts socio-ecological knowledge across generations.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored the biotic ecorexicon used in the *Gotilon* ceremony of the HKBP Congregation, focusing on its ecological meaning and functional use within the ritual context. The findings revealed a wide variety of living elements, including plants, trees, crops, leaves, animals, and fish, each carrying multiple layers of ecological, cultural, and spiritual significance. These lexical items not only reflect the community's ecological knowledge, such as agricultural fertility, biodiversity awareness, and resource utilization, but also embody symbolic meanings related to prosperity, gratitude, and divine blessing.

The analysis demonstrates that biotic ecorexicon functions both practically and symbolically within the ritual. Plants and crops signify fertility and sustenance, animals represent wealth and communal solidarity, and aquatic elements highlight ecological awareness of local ecosystems. These findings confirm that the *Gotilon* ceremony operates as a dynamic socio-ecological system in which language, ritual practice, and environmental knowledge are deeply interconnected. In line with Arran Stibbe's perspective, this study shows that language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a carrier of ecological ideologies and environmental ethics.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the development of ecolinguistics by providing empirical evidence from an Indonesian Christian ritual context that remains underrepresented in the existing literature. It expands the concept of ecorexicon by demonstrating how biotic lexical items simultaneously encode ecological consciousness, cultural identity, and theological interpretations. Practically, the findings highlight the role of ritual language as a medium for transmitting environmental values and sustaining ecological awareness across generations.

However, this study has several limitations. First, it is contextually limited to a single HKBP congregation, which may not represent the diversity of *Gotilon* practices across Batak communities. Second, the analysis focuses primarily on biotic ecorexicon, without extensive examination of abiotic elements or broader discourse structures. Third,

the qualitative approach, while providing in-depth insights, limits generalizability due to the relatively small number of participants and the absence of quantitative validation.

Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to expand the scope by examining the abiotic ecolexicon, conducting comparative studies across different cultural or religious contexts, and integrating multimodal or corpus-based approaches. Interdisciplinary research combining linguistics, anthropology, and environmental studies would also provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and ecology.

Beyond academic contributions, this study offers meaningful implications for the general public. It supports the preservation of ecological knowledge embedded in local ritual language, promotes environmental awareness through cultural practices, and strengthens community identity by highlighting the value of traditional wisdom. By demonstrating how language encodes respect for nature and sustainable living, this research emphasizes the importance of maintaining cultural heritage as a foundation for environmental responsibility.

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