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Journal of General Education and Humanities
Vol. 5, No. 5, August 2026, pp. 6619 – 6631, https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i5.2107
ISSN 2963-7147

Language Relations in Kaili Cultural Speech: An Ethnolinguistic Study

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Article Info

Article history:

Received 2026-09-09
Revised 2026-10-14
Accepted 2026-10-14

Keywords:

Cultural Functions
Cultural Meaning
Cultural Preservation
Cultural Utterances
Ethnolinguistics
Kaili Ledo Dialect
Language Relations

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the form, meaning, and function of language relations in Kaili cultural utterances of the Ledo dialect across four traditional ceremonies: nosakaya (thanksgiving), nompakava (traditional wedding), notanda (death/mourning), and nolita (customary deliberation), as spoken by the Kaili community in Sambo Village, South Dolo Subdistrict, Sigi Regency. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method within an ethnolinguistic framework. The data consist of oral utterances in the Kaili Ledo dialect sourced from tobalu ada (customary elders) and native speakers as informants. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Meaning was interpreted through a hermeneutic approach, while function was analyzed through a pragmatic approach. The findings reveal four forms of language relation: lexical relation, evident in the distinctive lexicon of the nolita forum (sintuvu, rapaka, kana); structural relation, shown in the triadic repetition of the opening utterance in nosakaya; functional relation, seen in the prohibitive customary utterances of notanda; and symbolic relation, represented by the betel-nut (bosi) presentation utterance in nompakava. These forms represent three types of meaning (lexical, cultural, symbolic) and carry five functions for the socio-cultural life of the Kaili people: ritual, normative/social, identity, integrative, and social-hierarchy functions. The study concludes that language and culture in the Kaili community are mutually interrelated and complementary, underscoring the importance of documenting these cultural utterances as an effort to preserve the community's cultural values, which are currently under threat of extinction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Kaili ethnic group is one of the major ethnic groups in Central Sulawesi Province, with its distribution encompassing Palu City, Sigi Regency, Donggala Regency,

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and Parigi Moutong Regency. According to data from the Central Sulawesi Provincial Statistics Agency, the Kaili population comprises approximately 566,256 people of the total population of Central Sulawesi [1]. The Kaili people speak the Kaili language, which consists of numerous dialects commonly distinguished by the word used to express the meaning "no," including Ledo, Rai, Tara, Da'a, Unde, and Doi. Among these dialects, Ledo has the largest number of speakers and the widest geographical distribution, particularly in the Palu Valley and Sigi Regency, and therefore frequently functions as a lingua franca among Kaili communities.

Language and culture are two entities that cannot be separated from one another. Language is not merely a means of communication but also a reflection of the value system, worldview, and collective experiences of its speech community. This reciprocal relationship between language and culture provides the foundation for ethnolinguistic studies, a branch of linguistics that examines the relationship between language and the culture of an ethnic group, particularly communities that inherit oral traditions from generation to generation [2]. Ethnolinguistics assumes that every linguistic unit, whether a lexicon, expression, or ritual utterance, contains cultural meanings that can only be fully understood when examined within the cultural context in which it emerges [3]. This perspective is consistent with the ethnography of speaking approach, which emphasizes the importance of identifying the form of an utterance, its function or communicative purpose, and the norms governing its interpretation as interconnected components of communication practices within an ethnic group. Indonesia, as a country characterized by extensive ethnic and regional linguistic diversity, possesses a rich heritage of cultural utterances that have not yet been fully documented and comprehensively studied.

One such community is the Kaili people of Central Sulawesi, who continue to preserve various forms of customary utterances in the performance of traditional ceremonies. As an ethnic group with a living cultural tradition, the Kaili possess a variety of customary ceremonies in which language and culture are closely intertwined and characterized by spiritually and symbolically charged utterances, ranging from ceremonies associated with the human life cycle to those related to reverence for ancestors and nature. In customary practices, language functions not merely as a means of communication but also as a medium for conveying and transmitting the community's cultural values. Utterances spoken by traditional elders during rituals, for example, contain prayers, advice, and markers of identity that cannot be separated from the beliefs and worldview of the speech community. The performance of several such ceremonies also involves a figure known as the *bayasa*, a spiritual leader who serves as an intermediary between humans and the supernatural realm and recites customary prayers during sacred ceremonies. Historically, *bayasa* figures also played a role as spiritual figures within the Sigi kingdom. This fact demonstrates that utterances in Kaili customary rituals are not merely sequences of words but constitute a medium connecting the social, spiritual, and cosmological dimensions of the community. These relationships are particularly evident in the four customary ceremonies that constitute the focus of this study: *nosakaya* (thanksgiving), *nompakava* (traditional wedding), *notanda* (death and mourning), and *nolita* (customary deliberation). These four ceremonies were selected because they are considered highly

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representative of the core cultural values of the Kaili community while also exhibiting rich and complex linguistic structures.

These four forms of cultural utterance are particularly important to study because each contains distinctive patterns of linguistic relations in terms of linguistic form, the symbolic meanings represented, and their socio-cultural functions for the lives of the speech community. These utterances constitute part of the rich oral heritage transmitted across generations and function as a means of reinforcing cultural values, norms, and identity within the Kaili community.

Nevertheless, the continuity of these cultural utterances currently faces serious challenges due to shifts in values and lifestyles associated with modern society. Several previous studies have even revealed signs of declining use of the Kaili language among its own speakers, a phenomenon that not only has local consequences but also broader implications for the sustainability of regional languages as part of Indonesia's cultural and national heritage. Recent findings further reinforce this concern. [4], in their study of mothers' perceptions of the use of the Kaili Tara dialect among young children in Central Parigi District, they revealed a tendency among parents to prioritize Indonesian in daily child-rearing because of academic concerns, thereby limiting the transmission of the Kaili Tara dialect to children. This finding indicates that the weakening of Kaili language transmission is occurring not only in the public sphere but has also entered the family domain, which represents the last stronghold of language maintenance. This condition further underscores the urgency of systematically documenting and scientifically examining Kaili cultural utterances before they become extinct or lose their original meanings among younger generations who are increasingly disconnected from their traditional cultural roots.

Several previous studies have examined aspects of Kaili language and culture from various perspectives, both in earlier periods and within the past five years. [5] examined the cultural identity and oral characteristics of the Kaili community through the *Tamabunto* mantra, highlighting the cultural values embedded in the utterances of the mantra. Another study examined the vocabulary used in the traditional wedding ceremonies of the Kaili ethnic group in Palu City, employing a descriptive method with oral utterances from the traditional wedding process as the data source. [6] investigated the symbolic meanings of the *Rego* dance and poetry in the oral tradition of the Kaili people, demonstrating that Kaili oral elements contain distinctive layers of symbolic meaning that are relevant to ethnolinguistic analysis. [7] examined language education policies and local language maintenance as forms of cultural sustainability in Central Sulawesi. Their findings indicate that efforts to revitalize the Kaili language require broader policy support and should not focus solely on preserving particular dialects.

The most recent study was conducted by [8], who examined narrative forms (legends and myths) and non-narrative forms (customary expressions, poetry, and *raego* folk songs) of Kaili oral literature in the Ledo dialect in Dolo District, Sigi Regency, using a literary ecology or ecocritical approach. The study explicitly demonstrates that previous research on Kaili oral traditions remains fragmented, with separate emphases on cultural identity [9], cultural values [10], character education values [11], and symbolic meanings

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in ritual performances [6]. Consequently, no previous study has comprehensively integrated the form, meaning, and function of Kaili cultural utterances within a single analytical framework. [12], for their part, focused primarily on ecological values in oral literature rather than on the relationship between language and the form–meaning–function structure of utterances from a specifically ethnolinguistic perspective. Therefore, this research gap remains open for further investigation.

Based on this review, it is evident that previous studies, both earlier works and those published within the past five years, have predominantly focused on vocabulary, language contact, revitalization, ecological values, or symbolic meanings in particular types of utterances or oral traditions, such as mantras, poetry, wedding ceremonies, or narrative and non-narrative oral literature. No study has specifically and comprehensively examined linguistic relations in Kaili cultural utterances across the four ceremonies of *nosakaya*, *nompakava*, *notanda*, and *nolita* from three dimensions simultaneously: the form, meaning, and function of the utterances through an ethnolinguistic approach. This gap constitutes the research gap and provides the basis for the urgency of the present study.

These Kaili cultural utterances do not emerge incidentally but are formed through the relationship between language and the cultural practices of the Kaili community. Through these utterances, values such as *sintuvu*, *ada*, *rapaka*, and *kana* are expressed and maintained. However, to date, studies specifically examining the forms of linguistic relations within Kaili cultural utterances remain very limited. Understanding how language and culture influence one another requires the forms of relationships embedded within these utterances to be identified first. Without understanding their meanings, cultural utterances would be reduced to sequences of words devoid of cultural value. Therefore, Kaili cultural utterances also play an important role in the social life of their speech community. They function to regulate social norms, strengthen solidarity, and transmit cultural identity. If the relationship between language and culture within these utterances is not understood, their strategic function in maintaining the continuity of Kaili culture may be overlooked.

Theoretically, the study of the form, meaning, and function of utterances is consistent with [13] ethnolinguistic perspective, which views language as a social practice embedded within a cultural context, as well as [14] perspective on linguistic anthropology, which emphasizes the close relationship between linguistic structure and the cultural meanings attached to it. Building upon this theoretical framework, the present study seeks to reveal how linguistic relations are constructed within Kaili cultural utterances, what meanings are represented through these forms of utterance, and what functions they perform in the socio-cultural life of the Kaili speech community.

This study focuses on the cultural utterances of the Kaili community in the Ledo dialect in Sambo Village, South Dolo District, Sigi Regency, because this dialect remains actively used in various customary activities. Based on the foregoing discussion, this study is important as an effort to scientifically document and preserve Kaili cultural utterances that embody significant cultural values but are increasingly threatened by extinction. Accordingly, this study is entitled “Language Relations in Kaili Cultural Speech: An Ethnolinguistic Study”

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2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative descriptive method was selected because the data examined in this study consisted of oral utterances that required in-depth description and interpretation rather than numerical or statistical analysis [15]. The approach employed was ethnolinguistics, which examines the relationship between language and the culture of an ethnic group [16], complemented by a hermeneutic approach to interpret the meanings of utterances and a pragmatic approach to analyze the functions of utterances based on their contexts. Through these approaches, this study aimed to describe the forms, meanings, and functions of linguistic relations in the cultural utterances of the Kaili community during four traditional ceremonies, namely *nosakaya*, *nompakava*, *notanda*, and *nolita*, as formulated in the research questions and objectives.

The study was conducted in Sambo Village, South Dolo District, Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This location was selected because the people of Sambo Village continue to actively use the Kaili language, particularly the Ledo dialect, in their daily lives as well as in the performance of traditional ceremonies, especially *nosakaya*, *nompakava*, *notanda*, and *nolita*. Therefore, the cultural utterances required for this study could still be obtained directly from members of the speech community.

The data in this study consisted of linguistic units, namely words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, contained in oral utterances in the Kaili Ledo dialect used during the *nosakaya*, *nompakava*, *notanda*, and *nolita* ceremonies. The data covered the linguistic forms of the utterances, the cultural meanings they represented, and the socio-cultural functions they served within the speech community.

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary sources. The primary data comprised oral utterances in the Kaili Ledo dialect directly produced by informants during or in connection with the performance of traditional ceremonies. The informants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives [17], including: (1) being native speakers of the Kaili Ledo dialect; (2) having knowledge of and direct experience participating in the *nosakaya*, *nompakava*, *notanda*, or *nolita* ceremonies; (3) serving as a *bayasa*, traditional elder, or respected community leader; and (4) being willing to participate as research informants. The secondary data consisted of supporting documents, such as customary records, previous research findings, and relevant literature on the Kaili language and culture, which were used to complement and strengthen the primary data.

Data collection was conducted using several complementary techniques. First, participant observation was employed, in which the researcher directly observed the performance of the *nosakaya*, *nompakava*, *notanda*, and *nolita* ceremonies to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the contexts in which the utterances under investigation occurred [18]. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted through direct and detailed interactions with informants to obtain information concerning the forms, meanings, and functions of Kaili cultural utterances that could not be fully identified through observation alone. Third, the *simak libat cakap* technique was employed, whereby the researcher directly participated in speech events while simultaneously listening to the utterances

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produced by the informants [19]. Fourth, the recording technique involved audio and/or video recording of utterances produced during the ceremonies and interviews to ensure data accuracy. Fifth, the note-taking technique was used to transcribe the recorded data into written form and to document supporting information through field notes. Sixth, documentation was conducted by collecting relevant written and visual materials related to the performance of traditional ceremonies and Kaili cultural utterances.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher as a human instrument, since in qualitative research the researcher serves as the planner, data collector, analyst, interpreter, and reporter of the research findings [20]. To support the data collection and documentation processes, several supporting instruments were employed. First, an interview guide consisting of questions designed to elicit information regarding the forms, meanings, and functions of Kaili cultural utterances from the informants. Second, audio and video recording devices were used to document utterances produced during observations and interviews. Third, a camera was used to visually document the performance of traditional ceremonies. Fourth, a field notebook was used to record important information that could not be captured by recording devices, including the situational contexts of the utterances. Fifth, data cards were used to classify the utterances according to their forms, meanings, and functions, thereby facilitating the data analysis process.

Operationally, the data analysis was conducted through the following stages: (1) transcribing all recorded utterances into written forms in the Kaili Ledo dialect and providing their Indonesian translations; (2) identifying and classifying the linguistic forms of the utterances in each traditional ceremony; (3) interpreting the cultural meanings of the utterances through a hermeneutic approach by considering the traditional and cultural contexts in which they emerged; (4) analyzing the functions of the utterances through a pragmatic approach by considering the participants, time, place, and purposes of the speech events; and (5) drawing conclusions regarding linguistic relations in Kaili cultural utterances based on the analysis of their forms, meanings, and functions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation conducted with *tobalu ada* and native speakers of the Kaili language in the Ledo dialect in Sambo Village, South Dolo District, Sigi Regency, it was found that linguistic relations in Kaili cultural utterances are manifested in three interrelated aspects of analysis, namely the form, meaning, and function of the utterances. These three aspects are consistent with the ethnolinguistic perspective proposed by [21], which states that every linguistic unit, whether in the form of a lexicon, expression, or ritual utterance, contains cultural meanings that can only be fully understood when examined within the cultural context in which it originates.

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Forms of Linguistic Relations in Kaili Cultural Utterances of the Ledo Dialect

The analysis of the utterance data revealed four forms of linguistic relations occurring in the cultural utterances of the Kaili community using the Ledo dialect, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Forms of Linguistic Relations in Kaili Cultural Utterances of the Ledo Dialect

No.	Form of Relation	Operational Definition	Example of Utterance	Context of Use	Cultural Meaning
1	Lexical Relation	The occurrence of specific vocabulary originating from Kaili culture	*Sintuvu kita, rapaka, kana*	*Nolita* / traditional deliberation, when community members discuss village issues	*Sintuvu* = solidarity; *rapaka* = safety; *kana* = order/norms
2	Structural Relation	Distinctive linguistic structures involving repetition, parallelism, and figurative language	*Iya nipakabara Pue Mpalagi...; iya nipakamaka... iya nipangansani...*	*Nosakaya* / thanksgiving ceremony, particularly during harvest celebrations or housewarming ceremonies	Threefold repetition indicates sacredness and respect
3	Functional Relation	The use of language according to the social function and status of the speaker	*Uma ri nosani, uma ri notula. Ane ewa, ri ala ada*	*Notanda* / mourning ceremony, when the *tobalu ada* conveys rules and prohibitions during the mourning period	Prohibition against going to "unclean" or "improper" places; violations are subject to customary sanctions
4	Symbolic Relation	Words or objects in utterances that function as symbols of cultural values	*Ri bosi ei, aku mampanoto ana-ku ka ana-mu*	*Nompakava* / traditional wedding ceremony, when betel nut and betel leaves are presented as symbols of a marriage proposal	Betel leaves and areca nuts symbolize the union of the children of the two families

Source: Utterance data from the tobalu ada in Sambo Village, Ledo dialect, South Dolo District, Sigi Regency, 2026.

Lexical Relations

Lexical relations are characterized by the occurrence of specific vocabulary originating from and acquiring its full meaning within Kaili culture, as reflected in the utterance *sintuvu kita, rapaka, kana*, which is used in *nolita* (traditional deliberation) when community members discuss collective issues in the village. The three core lexemes—*sintuvu, rapaka,* and *kana*—do not have single, fully equivalent counterparts in Indonesian because each embodies a particular set of collective values within Kaili society: *sintuvu* refers to solidarity, *rapaka* to safety, and *kana* to order or norms. The selection of these lexemes in deliberative forums emphasizes that *nolita* is not merely a forum for resolving technical problems but also a space for reaffirming the collective values of the Kaili community. The presence of these culturally specific lexemes reinforces [22] view that

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cultural vocabulary constitutes one of the fundamental areas of ethnolinguistic inquiry, as such lexicons record the worldview and value system of the speech community.

Structural Relations

Structural relations are manifested in distinctive linguistic patterns involving repetition, parallelism, and figurative language, as found in the opening utterances of the *nosakaya* (thanksgiving) ceremony during harvest celebrations or housewarming ceremonies: *iya nipakabara Pue Mpalagi... iya nipakamaka... iya nipangansani....* The threefold (triadic) repetition in these utterances is not merely a stylistic variation but serves as a marker of sacredness and repeated reverence for *Pue Mpalagi*. This pattern is consistent with [23] view that language should be understood as a social practice embedded in cultural contexts. Accordingly, such formulaic linguistic structures function to emphasize the solemnity and sacredness of the ritual moment in relation to the supernatural realm. This finding is also consistent with the study by [24] on the structure and semantic meaning of the Kaili Ledo dialect, which emphasizes that Kaili grammatical patterns, including repetition and hierarchical phrase construction, are consistently connected to semantic meaning and the context in which they are used.

Functional Relations

Functional relations can be observed in the use of language according to the social function and status of the speaker, as illustrated by the utterance *uma ri nosani, uma ri notula. Ane ewa, ri ala ada*, is delivered by the *tobalu ada* when conveying rules and prohibitions to bereaved families during the *notanda* (mourning) ceremony. Functionally, this utterance affirms the authority of the *tobalu ada* as a customary leader who has the right to establish boundaries concerning appropriate and inappropriate behavior during the mourning period, while also warning of customary sanctions if such prohibitions are violated. This finding reinforces [25] perspective on the close relationship between linguistic structure and the cultural meanings embedded within it, as the choice of linguistic forms for prohibitions and warnings cannot be separated from the power relations and social responsibilities between the *tobalu ada* and the community members under their guidance. The tendency of utterances to be closely connected to social functions and interpersonal relations among speakers is also consistent with the findings of [26] concerning speech acts in interactions among Kaili-speaking communities.

Symbolic Relations

Symbolic relations are characterized by words or objects in utterances that function as symbols of cultural values, as illustrated by the utterance *ri bosi ei, aku mampanoto ana-ku ka ana-mu*, which is delivered during the presentation of betel leaves and areca nuts (*bosi*) in the *nompakava* traditional wedding ceremony. In this context, *bosi* is not merely a physical object being presented but rather a symbolic representation of the union of the children of two different families into a new kinship bond through the marriage proposal process. Such symbolic relations demonstrate that Kaili cultural utterances operate on two levels of meaning simultaneously: literal meaning (the presentation of an object) and

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symbolic meaning (the establishment of a new relationship), which can only be fully revealed through an understanding of the cultural context underlying the utterance [27].

Meanings Represented by the Forms of Linguistic Relations

The four forms of linguistic relations described in the previous subsection represent three types of meaning, namely lexical, cultural, and symbolic meanings, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Meanings Represented by the Forms of Linguistic Relations

No.	Form of Relation	Example of Utterance/Lexicon	Type of Meaning	Represented Meaning
1	Lexical Relation	*Sintuvu*	Cultural Meaning	(*Nolita*) Solidarity, shared fate and mutual support, and collective responsibility within the community
2	Lexical Relation	*Rapaka*	Cultural Meaning	(*Nolita*) Safety and the hope that the traditional activities proceed smoothly and receive blessings
3	Structural Relation	*Iya nipakabara Pue Mpalagi... iya nipakamaka...*	Symbolic Meaning	(*Nosakaya*) Reverence for God and ancestors; repetition functions as a marker of the sacredness of the utterance
4	Functional Relation	*Uma ri nosani, uma ri notula...*	Cultural Meaning	(*Notanda*) Prohibitions and rules intended to maintain the sanctity of the mourning period; violations may result in customary sanctions
5	Symbolic Relation	*Guma, Bosi, Air Putih*	Symbolic Meaning	(*Nompakava*) *Guma* = customary authority; *bosi* = purity; white water = pure intentions and the absence of deceit
6	Functional Relation	*Tabea kami nompakava*	Lexical + Cultural Meaning	(*Nompakava*) *Tabea* = permission/excuse me; culturally, it represents respect and adherence to ethical norms of speaking

Source: Utterance data from the tobalu ada in Sambo Village, Ledo dialect, South Dolo District, Sigi Regency, 2026.

The interpretation of meaning in this study was conducted through a hermeneutic approach [28], whereby utterances were understood not merely in their literal sense but also by considering the cultural context in which they originated. The lexemes *sintuvu* and *rapaka*, for example, have relatively simple lexical meanings referring to "togetherness" and "safety," respectively. However, within the context of the *nolita* traditional deliberation, they represent deeper cultural meanings, namely collective solidarity and the shared hope for safety in resolving community issues [29].

In the structural relation, the repetition of the utterance *iya nipakabara Pue Mpalagi... iya nipakamaka... iya nipangansani...* during the *nosakaya* ceremony does not merely convey a lexical meaning as a sequence of statements but also carries a symbolic meaning of layered reverence toward God and the ancestors. In the functional relation, the prohibition expressed through *uma ri nosani, uma ri notula* during the *notanda* ceremony

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conveys a cultural meaning by emphasizing the boundaries of appropriate behavior during the mourning period, while simultaneously reminding community members of the customary consequences of violating such restrictions [30].

Similarly, in the symbolic relation, the elements *guma*, *bosi*, and white water in the *nompakava* ceremony each carry specific symbolic meanings, namely customary authority, purity, and sincere intentions without deceit. Meanwhile, the utterance *tabea kami nompakava*, which is also used during the *nompakava* ceremony, demonstrates the integration of lexical meaning ("permission" or "excuse me") and cultural meaning (respect and ethical speaking practices). This finding indicates that a single traditional ceremony may contain multiple layers of meaning simultaneously across different utterances [31].

Functions of Linguistic Relations for the Life of the Kaili Community

Linguistic relations in Kaili cultural utterances serve several important functions in the social and cultural life of the speech community, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Functions of Linguistic Relations for the Life of the Kaili Community

No.	Form of Relation	Example of Utterance	Type of Function	Description of Function for the Community
1	Structural Relation	*Nosakaya*: repetition of utterances referring to *Pue Mpalagi*	Ritual Function	Serves as a medium connecting human beings with the Creator and constitutes a requirement for the validity of the traditional ceremony
2	Functional Relation	*Notanda*: *Uma ri nosani, uma ri notula...*	Normative/Social Function	Regulates relationships among community members, facilitates conflict resolution, and enforces customary law (*ada*)
3	Lexical Relation	*Nolita*: *Sintuvu, Kana, Ada*	Identity Function	Serves as a distinctive marker of the Kaili Ledo community and transmits cultural values to younger generations through language
4	Symbolic Relation	*Nompakava*: *Ri bosi ei, aku mampanoto ana-ku ka ana-mu*	Integrative Function	Unites two families into a new kinship relationship through the symbolic presentation of betel leaves and areca nuts
5	Functional Relation	Use of polite language when addressing the *tob alu ada* across ceremonies	Social Hierarchy Function	Maintains social order and demonstrates respect for the status and authority of customary leaders

Source: Utterance data from the tobalu ada in Sambo Village, Ledo dialect, South Dolo District, Sigi Regency, 2026.

The analysis of functions in this study was conducted through a pragmatic approach [32], taking into account the participants, time, place, and purpose of the utterances. First, the ritual function is evident in the repeated invocation of *Pue Mpalagi* in the opening

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utterances of the *nosakaya* ceremony. This practice positions the utterance as a medium connecting human beings with the Creator and as an essential requirement for the proper conduct of the traditional ceremony [33].

Second, the normative/social function is manifested in the prohibitions and rules expressed during the *notanda* ceremony, which regulate the behavior of bereaved community members, maintain social order, and uphold customary law (*ada*). Third, the identity function is reflected in the lexemes *sintuvu*, *kana*, and *ada*, which are used in the *nolita* forum [34]. These lexical forms serve as distinctive markers of the oral expression of the Kaili Ledo community while simultaneously functioning as a means of transmitting cultural values to younger generations [35].

Fourth, the integrative function is manifested in the symbolic utterance accompanying the presentation of betel leaves and areca nuts during the *nompakava* ceremony. The utterance symbolizes the incorporation of two families into a new kinship relationship. Fifth, the social hierarchy function is evident in the use of polite linguistic forms when speakers interact with the *tobalu ada* during various traditional ceremonies. Such language choices contribute to maintaining social order and expressing respect for the position and authority of customary leaders.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion concerning linguistic relations in the cultural utterances of the Kaili community using the Ledo dialect in Sambo Village, South Dolo District, Sigi Regency, it can be concluded that there is a close and reciprocal relationship between language and culture in the four traditional ceremonies examined, namely *nosakaya*, *nompakava*, *notanda*, and *nolita*.

First, four forms of linguistic relations were consistently identified across the four ceremonies: (a) lexical relations, characterized by culturally specific vocabulary such as *sintuvu*, *rapaka*, and *kana* in the *nolita* forum; (b) structural relations, manifested in patterns of repetition and parallelism in the opening utterances of *nosakaya*; (c) functional relations, reflected in prohibitive and regulatory language corresponding to the social functions and status of speakers in *notanda*; and (d) symbolic relations, exemplified by the word and object *bosi*, which symbolizes the establishment of a new kinship relationship in *nompakava*.

Second, these four forms of linguistic relations represent three types of meaning: lexical meaning, referring to the basic meanings of words as defined in dictionaries; cultural meaning, such as *sintuvu* and *rapaka* in *nolita*, which represent the values of solidarity and collective safety, as well as the prohibitions in *notanda*, which represent the preservation of the sanctity of the mourning period; and symbolic meaning, such as *bosi* in *nompakava* as a symbol of kinship integration and the repetition of utterances in *nosakaya* as a symbol of reverence toward God and the ancestors.

Third, these linguistic relations serve five major functions in the lives of the speech community: a ritual function, connecting human beings with *Pue Mpalagi* in *nosakaya*; a normative/social function, regulating relationships among community members and upholding customary law in *notanda*; an identity function, maintaining and transmitting

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Kaili cultural identity through *nolita*; an integrative function, bringing two families together in a new kinship relationship through *nompakava*; and a social hierarchy function, maintaining social order and demonstrating respect for the position of customary authorities.

Thus, language serves as a reflection of culture, while culture provides language with its contextual and cultural meanings. The two are consistently interconnected through four forms of linguistic relations, three types of meaning, and five functions that mutually reinforce one another in maintaining the continuity of customary utterances as a cultural identity of the Kaili Ledo speech community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the academic supervisor for providing guidance in developing the analytical framework, as well as to colleagues who assisted in checking the consistency of the data coding.

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