



Proverbs in Action: Exploring Their Meaning and Internalization in Manggarai's Teing Hang Rituals

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Abstract: Manggarai's Teing Hang rites provide as a live medium for the internalization and expression of ancestral proverbs that govern social values and collective behaviours. The purpose of this study is to uncover the significance of the proverbs used in the Teing Hang ritual and to comprehend how the Manggarai community internalizes these expressions. Data were gathered utilizing a qualitative method incorporating elders, cultural experts, and the younger generation through in-depth interviews and interactive observations. Thematic data analysis was used to identify and comprehend the meaning by utilizing semiotic and pragmatic theories. The data triangulation procedure was also utilized to strengthen the validity and reliability of the research findings. The findings demonstrate that Teing Hang proverbs serve as a tool for ritual communication as well as having deep symbolic connotations that enhance the community's social, spiritual, and cultural relations. Learning to live with these local expressions offers a window into the difficulties the younger generation has upholding traditional norms in the face of globalization. By incorporating local culture into teaching and learning instruction, these findings are expected to contribute to the development of understanding about the importance of preserving culture and language in the modern era.

Keywords: internalization; meaning; proverb; teing hang

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INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential tool in transmitting a society's cultural values, identity and knowledge. Language is used in Manggarai, an area of Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara, to preserve traditions and customs in addition to being a medium of communication (Darong & Niman, 2023; Niman, 2022). Teing Hang, a ritual performed as an expression of gratitude to ancestors, is one example of a traditional ceremony with a significant linguistic dimension. Various traditional expressions are utilized in this event to express respect, requests, and express hopes that community life will continue. Through the study of these expressions, we can see how spiritual and social values are represented in language. In this regard, the analysis of the Teing Hang ceremony's expressions (proverbs) sheds light on the rich cultural heritage of the Manggarai language. Every expression reflects human relationships with nature, ancestors, and fellow community members and has a profound symbolic meaning (Darong et al., 2023; Gonar et al., 2021; Raru, 2018). Unfortunately, the use of local languages, including Manggarai, is eroding as a result of modernity and globalization (Darong & Niman, 2023). This phenomenon can lead to language extinction, which not only means the loss of a medium of communication, but also the loss of cultural heritage that is closely linked to the language.

The study of proverbs, traditional expressions, in Teing Hang becomes increasingly relevant in light of language extinction. For example, studies undertaken by Bustan et al. (2021), Narung et al. (2019) and Sanjaya (2021) focusing on the examination of Manggarai traditional expressions linguistically, but does not go deeper into how these expressions may be utilized as materials in Manggarai language learning in schools. Furthermore, Menggo et al. (2021), a study emphasizes the need of reviving the Manggarai language, but it omits specific recommendations for how to incorporate traditional values into formal schooling. Therefore, one of the research gaps that can be identified is the lack of research linking efforts to preserve the Manggarai language through the teaching of the expressions in question in the field of education. Previous studies have also demonstrated the significance of traditional ceremonies in preserving ethnic identity (Lon, 2016; Paulus et al., 2023). However, the studies are still confined to the anthropological realm and do not address concerns about language extinction or education. Therefore, this study intends to fill this vacuum by concentrating on the incorporation of traditional expressions into the language instruction especially in the context of the threat of local language extinction.

In order to preserve languages, it can be crucial to internalize the meaning of indigenous terms in daily communication. Children and young people can learn how to pronounce these idioms as well as the context and values that underpin them through both formal and informal schooling. Manggarai people have found success with internalizing cultural values through traditional expressions (Darong et al., 2022; Haryanto et al., 2021). Unfortunately, the significance of Teing Hang expressions in the Manggarai people's everyday life has not been particularly addressed by the study. Therefore, the merits of this research lay in two parts. First, culturally, this research can help in the preservation of the Manggarai language by offering a deeper understanding of the

relevance of traditional expressions (proverbs). Secondly, from an educational perspective, this research can provide ways to incorporate the local languages and cultures into the learning instruction. As a result, this article advances research on the Manggarai language and culture while also aiding in the preservation of other regional languages that face extinction. The investigation of the meaning, internalization, and manifestation of language expressions in Teing Hang is expected to be one model of how local language preservation can be merged with successful learning. Additionally, this research can be used as a basis for developing curricula with more cultural content to promote the contextualized and comprehensive learning. In linguistics, proverb is a group of words or phrases with a particular meaning that is frequently idiomatic, metaphorical, or symbolic and cannot be understood literally. It is a language unit utilized by humans in daily conversation, both to transmit messages, feelings, and thoughts. Since proverb reflects the rules and values of the language's speakers, it is directly linked to culture (Millar, 2020). Therefore, researching proverb not only comprises language characteristics, but also encompasses societal and anthropological dimensions.

The anthropological linguistic theory put forth by Duranti (1997) emphasizes that language is a social practice and reflects the culture of the people who use it. Through proverbs, we may discover how a group constructs reality and understands the world around them. Proverbs typically serve a strong pragmatic purpose since they are utilized in the framework of conventional communication, so their meaning can only be understood by those who have knowledge of the underlying cultural context (Mubshirah & Mulyadi, 2023). Furthermore, a group of people's language usage affects how they see and think about the world. As a result, the traditional utterances employed in certain rites not only capture the essence of the local way of life but also influence the way the people regard their relationship to the environment, their ancestors, and their community (Bustan et al., 2021). There have been many studies on proverbs in the field. For example, a study conducted by Wijana (2024) focusing on the concurrence of plants or its parts and its representations in Indonesian proverbs. Besides, studies conducted by Ose-Agbo (2021), Seal (2021), Shariati and Tayebi (2012) and Shih (2013) discovered that traditional proverbs serve to uphold social harmony, foster morality, and fortify social unity. These research studies in question suggest that proverbs serve as a vehicle for internalizing social and cultural norms in addition to serving as a way of communication. They represent values of collectivity, human-nature interactions, and social hierarchy. Meanwhile, other studies were concerned with employment of proverbs in textbooks and educational contexts (Avoseh, 2013; Hatipoğlu & Daşkın, 2020). The studies highlight that proverbs have the potential to have multiple interpretations.

In the context of Manggarai, studies on Manggarai rites were concerned with sociological, anthropological and religious aspects (Lon, 2019b, 2019a, 2020; Lon & Widyawati, 2018; Ndiung & Bayu, 2019; Resmini & Saina, 2021). Despite the fact that there have been studies focusing on linguistic aspects (Bustan et al., 2021; Darong et al., 2022, 2023; Darong & Niman, 2023; Haryanto et al., 2021; Narung et al., 2019; Paulus et al., 2023; Raru, 2018; Sanjaya, 2021), there is still a dearth of research on traditional Manggarai language proverbs. In fact, a number of traditional Manggarai rituals are used and are frequently metaphorical and incorporate natural aspects, which reflects the community's affinity to its natural surroundings. In addition, broader social and cultural dimensions have not been examined in this study, particularly with regard to the employment of these terms in the context of customary rites like Teing Hang. Along line with the above studies, studies by Dimitrov et al. (2022), Gao (2013), Niman, (2022), Simangunsong et al. (2021) and Suyitno et al, (2023) have highlighted that traditional proverbs have a significant influence in the preservation of local languages. Local languages can be preserved and transmitted to the next generation by using terms in traditional rituals. Differently, Darong (2022) and Darong and Menggo (2021) underlined the value of teaching local languages in schools in order to raise students' curiosity and comprehension of the languages and cultures. In this study, the Teing Hang ceremony's traditional expressions have the same potential to be utilized as teaching tools for language preservation in the Manggarai context, which makes this research significant.

Furthermore, traditional rituals have a high potential to preserve local languages. As noted by Darong et al. (2021), one of the greatest barriers in revitalizing local languages is the absence of integration between language and culture in the education curriculum. This study highlights the significance of establishing a connection between local culture, including traditional proverbs, and educational values in order to support language preservation inside the formal education system as well as in cultural contexts. As such, curriculum is essential to create values in learning (Heineke et al., 2019; Tolosa et al., 2023). Similar findings are shown in the study of Avoseh (2013), which demonstrates that including traditional proverbs into education might increases students' enthusiasm in learning. In order to educate learners, local languages such as proverbs and local cultural values should be provided in such a way that they help learners to achieve the learning goals. Previous research studies have mostly concentrated on linguistic and sociocultural elements without closely relating to the instruction of local languages within the framework of formal education. This study analyzes the proverbs in Teing Hang, examining their potential for language instruction and their role in language preservation. Building on previous research, it aims to explore how integrating traditional expressions into language teaching can serve as a strategy to combat the threat of local language extinction.

METHODS

Using a qualitative approach, the purpose of this study is to investigate in detail the significance of traditional proverbs used in Manggarai rite focusing on Teing Hang ritual in new year eve. As one year comes to a close and a new one begins on New Year's Eve, it is a period of transition. Such transitions are revered in many indigenous religions, including Manggarai. Teing hang, a ceremony of offering and thankfulness, harmonizes with this energy of transition, fostering a potent rebirth and appreciation for the past while wishing for blessings for the future. By establishing a sacred space based on oral tradition and ancestral wisdom, Teing Hang, a ceremony of giving and gratitude, harmonizes with the energy of transition. Through symbolic acts and spoken proverbs, the community honors the past, fortifies social ties, and expresses hopes for future blessings.

To gather data, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis were used. Through direct participation in the Teing Hang ceremony, the researcher recorded the expressions of proverb, participant interactions, and the socio-cultural background around the expressions. To learn about the significance and function of the proverbs, in-depth interviews were held with key informants, such as elders, rituals spokespersons, and Manggarai cultural experts. Furthermore, as supplementary references, written sources pertaining to the language and culture of the Manggarai people were examined through document studies.

Semantic and pragmatic theories were used in the data analysis process. The literal and symbolic meanings of Manggarai proverbs, as well as how these meanings are influenced by the cultural background of the Manggarai people, were deciphered using semantic theory (Denisenko et al., 2023). Pragmatic analysis (Simons, 2016), on the other hand, concentrated on the linkages and social implications of the proverbs utilized in Teing Hang event. Instead of imposing predetermined frameworks, the researchers used an inductive approach to data analysis, letting patterns, themes, and meanings naturally arise from the gathered data. They ensured that the analysis stayed closely aligned with the lived experiences and cultural context of the Manggarai community by carefully observing and interpreting the participants' narratives and ritual practices to draw conclusions.

In order to guarantee the reliability and validity of the results, this study used data triangulation from several sources and methods. To get a more complete picture, triangulation was done by integrating observations, interviews, and document studies. In order to verify the accuracy of the material, multiple informants from various backgrounds were interviewed as part of the source triangulation process. In addition to taking into consideration possible differences in interpretation and practice across various social strata and generational perspectives, this methodological approach enabled cross-verification of information, capturing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Teing Hang rituals and the embedded proverbs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained through a rigorous thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within the data. The results are structured around key themes that emerged during the analysis, each supported by specific codes that categorize the data meaningfully. To enhance clarity and provide a deeper understanding, relevant extracts from the dataset are included as illustrative examples. These extracts serve to demonstrate how the themes were identified and how they relate to the overall research objectives, ensuring a comprehensive and transparent presentation of the findings.

Table 1. Theme and code of the proverbs used in the Teing Hang ritual

Theme	Code	Excerpt
Function	Human	These terms are used in the Teing Hang ceremony to promote social cohesion. When someone shows respect for a parent or other seniors, for instance, it serves as a reminder for all of us to treat one another with dignity and preserve positive interpersonal ties. Additionally, there is a sense of connection and unity when we all say the same thing at the same time. We have a sense of belonging as members of a greater whole as well as individuals....
	Nature	... extremely near. Teing Hang has a lot of expressions. For instance, we frequently use phrases to thank nature for the abundance of the planet. This serves as a reminder to protect the environment and not take more than we require. Since nature is considered the source of life in our culture, we owe it to it to preserve and protect it. We reaffirm our dedication to leading environmentally conscious lives by using these proverbs

Meaning	Ancestors	Our means of communication with our ancestors is through the sentences including proverbs in Teing Hang. Sayings like "pujut mu saka cangkem " give us the impression that the spirits of our ancestors are guiding us and that we are not alone. This keeps our traditions alive and serves as a reminder of our duty to the next generation. We have a close and continuous relations with our past.
	Supreme God	We believe that there is someone beyond our life. He is the most powerful. He controls human, nature and our ancestors. Special words are dedicated to him.,...
	Literal	Of course. As an illustration, consider the expression " awangn eta, tanan wa" which translates to "to the sky and the land." This expression in this case relates specifically to the sky and the land. This literal interpretation is crucial because it captures the spirit of the ceremony—thanksgiving.
	Symbolic	The underlying meaning behind " awangn eta, tanan wa " is symbolic. This phrase expresses a deep cultural and spiritual bond between the people and their supreme in addition to being a sign of respect. In our culture, land is viewed as more than just a tangible thing; it is also considered as a force with inherent power and significance to daily existence. The community learns that they are a part of something greater—the customs and heritage that have been passed down from generation to generation—by showing respect for the land and their predecessors.
Internalization	Pragmatic	Of course. Phrases like "ta'a tana" (respect the land) are used in the Teing Hang ceremony to remind community members of the value of upholding a relationship with nature and showing respect for one another. This illustrates societal duty in addition to respect. By saying these words together, we reaffirm our shared commitment to preserving the environment and one another. As a result, the community's ties are strengthened and constructive social norms are shaped.
	Old	... as the elders, the proverbs in Teing Hang are more than merely words spoken during ceremonies. They are a component of who we are and how we live. We have been taught to appreciate these expressions since we were young. These sentiments serve as a constant reminder of our duty to honor our ancestors, God, and the natural world whenever we conduct a ceremony. We need to teach the next generation about this and preserve it as a part of our cultural legacy.
	Young	One instance would be having to decide between going to a current music festival that is more popular and a cultural event. Music festivals are more "trendy" and enjoyable, which is why many of my friends like them. They frequently think it dull and uninteresting to attend conventional ceremonies. I feel stuck because I want to maintain relationships with my friends who value modern things, but I still want to enjoy my culture.

The study's findings show that the proverbs used in the Teing Hang traditional ritual have a complex and multifaceted significance that reflects the Manggarai people's relationship with supreme God, nature, their ancestors, and themselves. These traditional expressions serve as powerful tools for preserving intergenerational knowledge and strengthening community identity by connecting people to their ancestors, nature, and a higher spiritual power. By exploring their literal, symbolic, and pragmatic meanings, learners can gain a deeper understanding of both the language and the cultural values embedded within it. Ultimately, this approach seeks to make traditional wisdom relevant to younger generations and help counter the growing threat of local language extinction. Through in-depth observations and interviews, it was discovered that every proverb spoken throughout the event serves as a tool for social and environmental balance as well as a way of verbal communication, respect, and worship for ancestors. In this context, proverbs are frequently employed to signify the existence of God, ancestors, nature, and others who are always with Manggarai people. Interviews with traditional spokespersons and seniors demonstrated how deeply these sentiments are still ingrained in daily life,

particularly among the elderly. They regularly communicate with family members and connect with the natural world using traditional terms in their everyday social interactions. Concerns have been raised, meanwhile, that the younger generation is becoming less and less likely to use traditional idioms, partly as a result of modernization's influence and the absence of their incorporation into official schooling. Interviewees highlighted that the decrease in active language use in traditional contexts can be attributed to Manggarai language instruction that no longer prioritizes cultural elements and customary language expressions.

Semantic and pragmatic analysis results showed that traditional expressions in Teing Hang have rich symbolic and pragmatic implications in addition to their literal meanings. Pragmatically, they are employed in ways like showing respect for senior citizens or people of high social standing in order to fortify social bonds and establish hierarchical roles within the community. Many expressions have a strong semantic connection to natural components (land, water, and trees), God, ancestors and humans which stand for the sustainability and well-being of communities. The findings demonstrate that customary expressions help to maintain the values of local wisdom, but there are currently significant obstacles to their continued use, particularly with regard to the younger generation. Meaning in a language context can be broken down into multiple categories, including literal (denotative) and contextual (connotative) meaning. Connotative meaning refers to subtleties and deeper associations that emerge from social, cultural, and historical settings, whereas denotative meaning refers to a word or phrase's direct and explicit meaning (Hendro, 2020; Nurhidayah et al., 2021; Setiawan et al., 2021). The Manggarai community's long-standing customs and beliefs are reflected in the deep and nuanced meanings of the terms employed in the Teing Hang ritual. For instance, the phrase "pujut mu'u saka cangkem" denotes more than just the literal meaning, it represents the community's respect, honor to the ancestors, which is context-dependent in use.

Regarding the meaning, they serve as media for communicating values that the Manggarai community finds significant. Beyond their literal meaning, these proverbs have deeper meanings regarding the relations between humans and nature, ancestors as well as with their God. These utterances serve to open channels of contact between the material and spiritual realms within the Teing Hang ritual. By uttering certain proverbs, ritual participants seek for blessings and protection from their ancestors and God and reaffirm their commitment to environmental preservation and tradition-keeping. This demonstrates that proverbs are more than just words; they are also ways to create and preserve peaceful relations with the environment and the neighbourhood. More generally, the meaning of the proverbs in the Teing Hang ritual also represents indigenous knowledge that the Manggarai people have assimilated into their way of life. It is intended that the younger generation will inherit the values embodied in the proverbs, understanding and appreciating the significance of social and spiritual interactions within their cultural context. Consequently, in addition to serving as ceremonial components, the proverbs serve as instructional tools that impart to the next generation the meaning of living in harmony with customs, the natural world, and society. In addition to meaning and as a part of verbal communication, the findings indicate that the proverbs are important means of expressing the close relationship between humans, nature, and ancestors. In this respect, the Manggarai people regard nature, their ancestors, human, and God as sacred entities, and this is reflected in the usage of phrases like "ata riang gu lami" and "awangn eta, tanan wa " in the ritual. However, this is still context-dependent in usage. This result is consistent with previous studies by Darong et al. (2023), Niman (2022), Raru (2018), and Sanjaya (2021), who discovered that the terms or language expressions such as proverbs in the Manggarai language have a rich symbolic meaning, particularly when used in relation to religious and local ceremonies. In addition to reflecting cultural values, the language expressions so-called proverbs convey the philosophy of life of those who are deeply rooted in their surroundings.

The expressions of proverb used in Teing Hang have a strong pragmatic function particularly in upholding social systems and preserving harmony within the community. Regarding this matter, Darong et al. (2023) research on Manggarai's funeral ceremony, the expressions also serve to instill moral ideals in community members and to fortify social cohesion. Similar ideas about the value of preserving harmonious relationships between people, ancestors, and nature are conveyed through the expressions in Teing Hang in Manggarai. This shows that customary expressions have a very important role in transmitting ethical and social values to the next generation. The study does highlight one important result, though, which is that younger generations are using less indigenous expressions (proverbs). The Manggarai language is used less frequently now due to modernization, urbanization, and outside cultural influences, particularly when it comes to customs and rituals. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Ose-Agbo (2021), which emphasized the issue of local language extinction as a result of a decrease in regional language use in daily settings. The decrease in the use of local language suggests a significant obstacle in the conservation of local languages and cultures, particularly in the absence of tangible initiatives to include them into formal education.

The pedagogical implications of these findings are noteworthy in the context of education. Language instruction, particularly in local languages, should emphasize sociocultural elements like the usage of local terms in addition to formal linguistic elements like syntax and vocabulary. The significance of incorporating local

proverbs into the educational curriculum to enhance students' cultural awareness and commitment to local heritage was underscored by Heng and Yeh (2022), Leather (2014) and Tolosa et al. (2023) in their studies on local knowledge. Students should be equipped with local values in order that they can manage their life globally. In this context, the preservation of Manggarai local language and culture can be achieved through the use of Teing Hang local expressions such as proverbs in language instruction.

Additionally, using local language in the classroom can aid in the development of students' knowledge of ethics, social standards, and values of unity. Proverbs in Teing Hang that convey moral and ethical lessons can be used as teaching tools that cover both language and character development facets. Incorporating local cultural values into formal education has a big impact on helping students develop a passion and awareness for their learning (Hamdi et al., 2018; Niman et al., 2020; Osazuwa-Peters, 2021). This is consistent with the findings of Darong et al. (2021), which show that local language hold a wealth of cultural values that should be imparted to the next generation. This research also suggests that innovative approaches to teaching, using local language such as proverbs, might serve as an authentic and contextual learning tool. The approach in question can be made into more concrete techniques. For example, through role-playing traditional ceremonies or using expressions in casual discussions, teachers can encourage students to learn and apply traditional expressions in real-world contexts. As such, learning local languages comprises both academic and practical facets have the potential to help students better comprehend and assimilate local cultural values. Students will be able to learn in an authentic setting and discover firsthand how important local culture are to preserving their cultural identity (Tecedor & Cabo, 2020).

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach that moves beyond previous studies, which primarily emphasized the symbolic or ceremonial meanings of Manggarai proverbs, by explicitly exploring their pedagogical potential as tools for language instruction and cultural preservation. While previous studies focused on the proverbs' cultural and religious significance within rituals, this study uniquely positions them as context-rich, pragmatic resources for formal education that can instill ethical values, environmental awareness, and social cohesion. It highlights how these traditional expressions can bridge generational gaps and revitalize endangered local language practices by embedding them into modern learning environments. This research not only underscores the depth of meaning in Teing Hang proverbs but also offers innovative, context-based strategies—like role-playing and everyday usage—to make language learning both authentic and culturally grounded. To date, the local proverbs used in the Teing Hang traditional ceremonial, which demonstrate close relation to nature, humans, ancestors, and God, are crucial to the preservation of local language and culture. Subsequently, the pedagogical implications recommend that, in order to preserve cultural values and local wisdom for future generations, they should be incorporated into the teaching and learning instruction. The use of local language in instruction can enhance students' language proficiency while fortifying their cultural identification.

CONCLUSION

Research findings indicate that participation in research groups or supervision teams significantly enhances students' academic development by fostering identity construction and engagement within a scholarly community. Students involved in such communities experience more significant support in learning, research, and education, whereas those lacking this engagement face increased challenges, lower self-efficacy, and a higher risk of discontinuing their studies. Evidence suggests that these communities facilitate the development of transferable skills and professional competencies, making them essential for doctoral education. Creating an empowering learning environment that encourages initiative, collaboration, and reflection is crucial for meaningful learning. Constructive friction within such environments accelerates the development of advanced academic skills and knowledge. The ProBell research group exemplifies this approach, demonstrating that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a threshold concept that expands critical thinking and lifelong learning. Establishing and sustaining PBL-focused research groups, like ProBell, is an effective strategy for strengthening research capacity and ensuring the long-term sustainability of PBL research and practice. These findings highlight the importance of integrating community-driven learning models into doctoral education to enhance academic success and professional growth.

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