

Traditional Expressions of Social Harmony in Manggarai Society: A Cultural Linguistic Analysis

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores traditional expressions (go'et) in the Manggarai speech community as linguistic manifestations of social harmony. Using the framework of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2011; 2017), this research investigates how these oral expressions encode collective cultural conceptualizations such as cultural schemas, metaphors, and categories. The data were collected from Pinggang Village, Cibai District, through interviews, observation, and documentation, involving ten traditional expressions commonly used in social interactions. The findings show that these go'et reflect deeply rooted values of unity, mutual respect within kinship, peaceful conflict resolution, and collective identity. Each expression exhibits rich linguistic forms including parallelism, metaphor, and symbolic imagery, while also functioning as tools for moral instruction, cultural preservation, and social regulation. The analysis reveals that language in Manggarai society is not only a medium of communication but also a repository of communal ethics and social harmony. This research contributes to the understanding of how traditional linguistic expressions function as carriers of cultural knowledge and moral guidance in indigenous communities.

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INTRODUCTION

The Manggarai people of East Nusa Tenggara maintain a cultural and social system deeply rooted in the values of togetherness (*guyub*), deliberation (*lonto leok*), and social harmony. These values are not only reflected in customary practices and rituals but are also embedded in traditional oral expressions (*go'et*) that have been transmitted across generations. Far from being mere linguistic ornaments, these expressions function as moral guidelines, cultural anchors, and effective instruments for social regulation. They are integral to preserving communal balance and guiding members of the society in upholding harmonious relationships. As Bustan and Mahur (2019) argue, *go'et* play a crucial role in fostering social solidarity and safeguarding the customary order that defines the Manggarai speech community.

In the context of daily life, traditional expressions operate at two different but interconnected levels of interaction. At the macro-interactional level, they reinforce collective cultural norms and values that serve as the foundation for communal life. These expressions create a framework of expected behaviors and shared obligations that ensure stability in the larger community. At the micro-interactional level, they are strategically employed in specific communicative events, such as conflict mediation, community meetings, ritual ceremonies, and interpersonal dialogues. Through these uses, *go'et* demonstrate their integrative function in promoting cooperation, resolving disputes, and sustaining peaceful coexistence. Bustan et al. (2021) emphasize that these expressions are often enriched with metaphors that reflect the community's worldview, highlighting the careful balance Manggarai people maintain in navigating social relationships.

Another significant characteristic of Manggarai traditional expressions is their linguistic subtlety. Expressions frequently employ inclusive pronouns and indirect forms of speech to avoid confrontation and to foster empathy. Menggo and Ndiung (2024) illustrate this through the preference for pronouns such as *ité*

("we/us") and *dité* ("our") instead of more direct pronouns like *hau* ("you") or *gaku* ("my"), which may sound overly personal or confrontational. For example, the expression "*Ngo nia ité?*" (literally "Where are we going?") is often used instead of "*Ngo nia hau?*" ("Where are you going?"), thereby promoting a sense of collective responsibility. Similarly, "*Ho'o ro'éng dité*" ("This is our child") replaces "my child" to emphasize humility and shared obligation. These linguistic choices reveal a cultural ethic that prioritizes politeness, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence.

Despite their cultural richness, these expressions are increasingly under threat. Globalization, the dominance of the Indonesian national language in educational and formal domains, and the rapid transformation brought about by digital technology have caused a noticeable decline in the use of traditional expressions, especially among younger generations. Sakura (2019) observes that many young people in Manggarai are no longer familiar with *go'et* due to their limited use in everyday life. This situation not only signals the erosion of linguistic forms but also the weakening of cultural values and identities that have historically sustained the community. In response, Jemali et al. (2021) stress the urgency of revitalization efforts, advocating for strategies such as educational integration, digital archiving, and community-based cultural activities to safeguard these intangible cultural assets.

A number of previous studies have examined aspects of Manggarai language and culture. Bustan et al. (2021) investigated metaphors of social cohesion in the Manggarai language, showing how metaphoric language reflects values of unity and egalitarianism. Imun et al. (2023) studied the shifting meanings of cultural symbols in traditional marriage rituals, revealing the impact of modernization on customary communication practices. Meanwhile, Semana and Menggo (2022) explored the use of pronouns, demonstrating how forms of address embody politeness, hierarchy, and communal values in Manggarai interactions. While these studies provide valuable insights into different aspects of Manggarai language and culture, relatively few have applied the framework of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2011; 2017) to systematically analyze how traditional expressions (*go'et*) encode cultural conceptualizations and contribute to sustaining social harmony.

Based on this gap, the present study focuses on analyzing the linguistic forms and cultural meanings of traditional expressions in Manggarai society, with a specific focus on Pinggang Village, Cibai District, Manggarai Regency. The study also investigates their integrative functions in both everyday communication and customary contexts. By doing so, this research seeks to contribute to the theoretical development of Cultural Linguistics, provide empirical evidence of how language reflects and shapes cultural values, and support the preservation of local cultural identity amid the challenges of globalization and digital transformation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach within the framework of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2011; 2017). The focus was on uncovering the cultural conceptualizations encoded in traditional expressions (*go'et*) and understanding their role in sustaining social harmony within the Manggarai community. A qualitative method was considered appropriate because the study aimed to capture meanings, functions, and cultural values, rather than numerical data or statistical generalizations.

The research was conducted in Pinggang Village, Cibai District, Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. This site was selected because of its strong adherence to customary practices and the active use of *go'et* in both daily communication and ritual contexts. Data were collected over one month through three techniques: (1) non-participant observation of community meetings, informal conversations, and rituals to document spontaneous use of expressions; (2) semi-structured interviews with traditional leaders (*tua adat*), elders, and community members to elicit interpretations and social significance of the expressions; and (3) documentation of written records, cultural archives, and previous studies relevant to Manggarai language and culture.

The data consisted of ten traditional expressions that were frequently cited and considered culturally significant by informants. The selection was based on their frequency of use, relevance to themes of social harmony, and diversity of cultural functions (e.g., advising, warning, unifying, and conflict resolution). The analysis followed several stages: organizing and coding the data, conducting descriptive linguistic analysis of forms and structures, interpreting cultural conceptualizations (schemas, metaphors, and categories), and applying ethnolinguistic contextualization to link language use with cultural practices. Triangulation of methods—observation, interviews, and documentation—was used to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study based on ten traditional expressions (*go'et*) collected from the Manggarai speech community in Pinggang Village, Cibal District, Manggarai Regency. The analysis was carried out within the framework of Cultural Linguistics, focusing on four main aspects: linguistic forms, cultural meanings, cultural conceptualizations, and social functions.

Traditional Expressions Related to Social Harmony

No	Manggarai Language	Indonesian Translation	English Translation
01	<i>Muku ca pu'u, neka woleng curup; teu ca ambo, neka woleng lako</i>	Pisang satu rumpun jangan beda bicara; tebu satu rumpun jangan beda jalan	A cluster of bananas should not differ in speech; a cluster of sugarcane should not differ in direction.
02	<i>Neka bike lide, neka behas cewak</i>	Jangan pecah wadah, jangan lepas wadah	Do not break the container, do not let go of the vessel.
03	<i>Neka oke ngger-lau wa'u, neka oke ngger-sale ase-ka'e</i>	Jangan buang ke selatan sesama warga klan, jangan buang ke barat adik-kakak	Do not throw away to the south fellow clan members, do not throw away to the west your siblings.
04	<i>Anggom pele awo, ambet pele sale</i>	Rangkul bagian timur, tarik bagian barat	Gather the eastern part, pull the western part.
05	<i>Nai ca anggit, tuka ca lele; bantang cama reje leles</i>	Hati satu ikatan, perut satu ikatan; setuju bersama, setuju berkolaborasi	One heart ties, one stomach binds; agree together, agree to collaborate.
06	<i>Neka behas neho kena, neka koas neho kota</i>	Jangan terpisah seperti pagar dari kayu; jangan runtuh seperti susunan batu	Do not scatter like wooden fences; do not collapse like a wall of stones.
07	<i>Ipung ca tiwu, neka woleng wintuk; nakeng ca wae, neka woleng tae</i>	Ikan satu kolam jangan beda tindakan; daging satu air jangan beda bicara	Small fish in the same pond must not act differently; meat in the same water must not speak differently.
08	<i>Ema agu anak neka woleng bantang; ase agu kae neka woleng tae</i>	Ayah dan anak tidak boleh berbeda pendapat; adik dan kakak tidak boleh berbeda kata	Father and child should not differ in opinion; younger and older siblings should not differ in speech.
09	<i>Neka mas agu hae ata; neka nggaut agu hae mbaru</i>	Jangan bermusuhan dengan orang luar; jangan bertengkar dengan orang serumah	Do not make enemies with outsiders; do not argue with members of your own household.
10	<i>Neka pocu wa'u, neka jogot hae golo</i>	Jangan mencemarkan nama anggota klan; jangan jengkel terhadap sesama warga kampung	Do not taint the name of clan members; do not be hostile toward fellow villagers.

1. Linguistic Forms

From the perspective of linguistic forms, the analysis shows that most *go'et* are structured as compound sentences consisting of two or more independent clauses. A dominant feature is the use of negative

imperatives, marked by the particle *neka* ("do not"), which conveys prohibitions against socially disruptive behavior. Repetition, parallelism, and metaphor are frequently employed, making the expressions both memorable and rhetorically powerful. These stylistic elements are essential in oral traditions because they enhance the authority of the speaker and ensure that moral values are effectively transmitted across generations (Finnegan, 2012).

Data 01 (*Muku ca pu'u, neka woleng curup; teu ca ambo, neka woleng lako*) exemplifies this feature clearly. The expression consists of two negative imperative clauses arranged in strict parallel form. The noun phrases *muku ca pu'u* ("one banana clump") and *teu ca ambo* ("one sugarcane cluster") function as subjects, both of which metaphorically represent unity and solidarity. These are followed by prohibitive verbal phrases *neka woleng curup* ("do not split in words") and *neka woleng lako* ("do not split in deeds"), emphasizing that unity must be preserved not only in speech but also in action. The absence of any coordinating conjunction creates an asyndetic construction, giving each clause independent rhetorical weight.

In a similar vein, Data 02 (*Neka bike lide, neka behas cewak*) displays a simpler but equally forceful parallel structure. Both clauses repeat the syntactic pattern [*neka* + *verb* + *object*], producing a rhythm that reinforces the prohibition. The verbs *bike* ("to break") and *behas* ("to smash") depict violent actions, while the objects *lide* ("vessel") and *cewak* ("pot") symbolize collective integrity. Through repetition and parallelism, the expression conveys a strong warning against disintegration, whether in physical or social terms.

Data 03 (*Neka oke ngger-lau wa'u; neka oke ngger-sale ase-ka'e*) continues the negative imperative form, this time targeting divisions within kinship structures. The prohibitions are directed at the *wa'u* (clan) and *ase-ka'e* (siblings), highlighting the cultural expectation that both clan-based solidarity and sibling harmony must be preserved. The balanced use of *ngger-lau* ("divide in the clan") and *ngger-sale* ("divide among siblings") demonstrates how linguistic symmetry mirrors cultural symmetry, making the prohibition universally applicable to different social relations.

Data 04 (*Anggom pele awo, ambet pele sale*) introduces a variation through positive imperatives. The verbs *anggom* ("gather") and *ambet* ("pull") are employed in a symmetrical pair, each followed by noun phrases indicating direction: *pele awo* ("east") and *pele sale* ("west"). This structure emphasizes collaboration between groups or communities from different sides, symbolizing the bridging of diversity. The choice of action verbs here underlines the performative aspect of unity: togetherness is not merely abstract but requires active participation.

Metaphorical imagery is strongly pronounced in Data 05 (*Nai ca anggik tuka ca leleng, bantang cama reje leles*). The key nouns *nai* ("heart") and *tuka* ("stomach") symbolize the unity of thought and intention, while the parallel construction equates harmony of mind and desire with a balanced community life. The verbs *anggik* and *leles* contribute to the rhythm, producing a poetic resonance that enhances the depth of meaning.

Data 06 (*Neka behas neho kena, neka koas neho kota*) returns to negative imperatives but employs concrete imagery through metaphors of fences. The *kena* ("wooden fence") symbolizes fragile, easily broken relationships, whereas the *kota* ("stone fence") represents stronger but still vulnerable ties. The symmetrical repetition of the prohibitions (*neka behas*, "do not break" and *neka koas*, "do not collapse") reinforces the cultural lesson that both weak and strong relationships require maintenance. The metaphor reflects Manggarai cultural wisdom that even strong social structures can disintegrate if neglected.

Similarly, Data 07 (*Ipung ca tiwu, neka woleng wintuk; nakeng ca wae, neka woleng tae*) employs imagery of shared environments. The terms *tiwu* ("pond") and *wae* ("water") symbolize spaces where resources are collectively shared, while *ipung* ("fish") and *nakeng* ("meat") represent community members. The prohibitions against division (*neka woleng*) remind speakers that harmony must be preserved wherever people share space and resources.

In Data 08 (*Ema agu anak neka woleng bantang; ase agu kae neka woleng tae*), the expression highlights vertical and horizontal kinship ties. The first clause pairs *ema agu anak* ("father and child"), emphasizing intergenerational harmony, while the second clause pairs *ase agu kae* ("siblings"), stressing lateral harmony. The consistent use of *neka woleng* underscores that harmony is mandatory across all kinship bonds, whether between generations or among siblings.

Data 09 (*Neka mas agu hae ata; neka nggaut agu hae mbaru*) employs contrasting categories: *hae ata* ("outsiders") and *hae mbaru* ("household members"). The prohibitions urge restraint and harmony both with those outside the community and within the domestic sphere. The balanced verb choices (*mas* "to insult" and *nggaut* "to attack") illustrate different forms of aggression that must be avoided to maintain peace.

Finally, Data 10 (*Neka pocu wa'u, neka jogot hae golo*) extends the prohibitive structure to the communal level. The *wa'u* (clan) and *golo* (village) are both highlighted as domains requiring protection. The prohibitions *neka pocu* ("do not betray") and *neka jogot* ("do not destroy") function as collective injunctions to maintain loyalty and safeguard the broader community.

Overall, the analysis of the ten *go'et* demonstrates that the linguistic forms are characterized by a high degree of structural symmetry, reliance on imperatives (both negative and positive), and extensive use of metaphor. These linguistic features are not merely aesthetic; they serve pragmatic and cultural functions. By combining repetition, parallelism, and metaphorical imagery, the *go'et* ensure that ethical messages are memorable, persuasive, and culturally resonant. This confirms Finnegan's (2012) view that the stylistic devices of oral traditions are indispensable tools for the transmission of values and the reinforcement of collective identity.

2. Cultural Meanings

In terms of cultural meanings, the analysis of the ten *go'et* reveals that each expression encapsulates values that are central to the Manggarai worldview, particularly unity, kinship respect, collective responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. These meanings are not incidental; they are deeply embedded in cultural conceptualizations that guide social conduct and reinforce the moral fabric of the community.

Data 01 (*Muku ca pu'u, neka woleng curup; teu ca ambo, neka woleng lako*) emphasizes solidarity in both speech and action. The metaphors of a banana cluster (*muku ca pu'u*) and sugarcane cluster (*teu ca ambo*) symbolize groups that remain united despite multiple parts. This reflects the cultural schema that speech and action must align to maintain trust and solidarity within the kinship group. Division in either domain is considered a threat to communal harmony.

Data 02 (*Neka bike lide, neka behas cewak*) warns against the breaking of social unity, using the metaphor of a vessel (*lide* or *cewak*) that must remain whole. Just as a broken pot cannot hold water, a divided community cannot function effectively. This meaning highlights the fragility of unity and the collective responsibility of every member to safeguard it.

Data 03 (*Neka oke ngger-lau wa'u; neka oke ngger-sale ase-ka'e*) draws attention to the importance of harmony within kinship, particularly in relation to the *wa'u* (clan) and *ase-ka'e* (siblings). These kinship categories form the foundation of Manggarai social life. Disunity within these units threatens the entire social structure, underscoring that kinship harmony is both a personal and communal obligation.

Data 04 (*Anggom pele awo, ambet pele sale*) advocates collaboration by uniting east (*awo*) and west (*sale*). The directional metaphors symbolize inclusivity across boundaries, whether geographical, familial, or ideological. The cultural meaning is clear: sustainable social harmony can only be achieved when differences are reconciled and embraced.

Data 05 (*Nai ca anggiti tuka ca leleng, bantang cama reje leles*) symbolizes unity of heart (*nai*) and stomach (*tuka*), which in Manggarai conceptualization means agreement between thought and desire. The message is that true harmony requires both intellectual alignment and the satisfaction of basic needs, reflecting a holistic view of human well-being that integrates reason and emotion.

Data 06 (*Neka behas neho kena, neka koas neho kota*) stresses the preservation of fragile and strong social ties through fence metaphors. The wooden fence (*kena*) symbolizes fragile relationships that can break easily, while the stone fence (*kota*) represents strong but not indestructible ties. The cultural meaning is that both weak and strong relationships require continuous care, reflecting the schema of vigilance in maintaining social bonds.

Data 07 (*Ipung ca tiwu, neka woleng wintuk; nakeng ca wae, neka woleng tae*) represents shared destiny and responsibility. The pond (*tiwu*) and water (*wae*) symbolize common environments, while the fish (*ipung*) and meat (*nakeng*) represent community members. The prohibitions against division express the principle that all who share the same resources and space must live in harmony, reflecting the cultural metaphor of community as a shared ecosystem.

Data 08 (*Ema agu anak neka woleng bantang; ase agu kae neka woleng tae*) reinforces ethical harmony across both vertical and horizontal kinship. The father-child (*ema agu anak*) relationship represents intergenerational respect, while the sibling (*ase agu kae*) relationship reflects equality and cooperation. Together, they encode the cultural expectation that respect and harmony must be practiced consistently across all family ties.

Data 09 (*Neka mas agu hae ata; neka nggaut agu hae mbaru*) promotes conflict prevention in both external and internal relationships. The distinction between outsiders (*hae ata*) and household members

(*hae mbaru*) illustrates that the responsibility for peace extends beyond the immediate community to relations with others. This reflects the cultural schema of relational balance, which emphasizes that harmony must encompass both insiders and outsiders.

Finally, Data 10 (*Neka pocu wa'u, neka jogot hae golo*) stresses the importance of maintaining the honor and solidarity of both the clan (*wa'u*) and the village (*golo*). Betrayal or destruction of these units is equated with undermining the very foundation of social life. This meaning reinforces the collective identity of the Manggarai people, where loyalty to kin and village ensures continuity of tradition and preservation of communal values.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that *go'et* function as cultural instruments encoding schemas of unity, mutual respect, collective responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. They provide moral guidance that is not abstract but grounded in daily social practice. These interpretations align with Bustan and Mahur (2019), who argue that Manggarai oral traditions are essential cultural mechanisms for preserving harmony, and with Sharifian's (2017) framework of Cultural Linguistics, which explains how cultural values are embedded in language through schemas, metaphors, and categories. Thus, the cultural meanings of *go'et* illustrate how language operates as a repository of communal ethics and as a tool for sustaining Manggarai identity in the face of modern challenges.

3. Cultural Conceptualizations

The cultural conceptualizations embedded in the Manggarai traditional expressions (*go'et*) can be understood through three analytical dimensions: cultural schemas, cultural metaphors, and cultural categories. These dimensions reveal how linguistic forms encapsulate deep cultural knowledge and guide social behavior in the community.

Several dominant cultural schemas are identified in the data. The schema of social harmony emerges most clearly in Data 10 (*Neka pocu wa'u, neka jogot hae golo*), which expresses the collective duty to safeguard both the clan (*wa'u*) and the village (*golo*). This schema reflects the shared belief that peace is not only an individual obligation but a communal responsibility. The schema of unity and collectivism is evident in Data 01 (*Muku ca pu'u, neka woleng curup; teu ca ambo, neka woleng lako*) and Data 05 (*Nai ca anggit tuka ca leleng, bantang cama reje leles*), where banana clumps, sugarcane clusters, and the unity of "heart and stomach" symbolize the necessity of acting and thinking as one. The schema of kinship responsibility is strongly embedded in Data 03 and Data 08, where harmony within the family, among siblings (*ase-ka'e*), and across generations (father-child relations) is emphasized as the foundation of communal balance. Additionally, a schema of conflict prevention and peaceful resolution is expressed in Data 09 (*Neka mas agu hae ata; neka nggaut agu hae mbaru*), which uses indirect prohibitions to suggest avoidance of direct confrontation, aligning with the Manggarai cultural preference for mediation and reconciliation rather than open conflict.

The cultural metaphors reinforce these schemas and provide concrete imagery. Bananas and sugarcane (Data 01) symbolize unity and cohesion within the community. Vessels (Data 02) represent the fragility and integrity of social bonds, where a broken vessel signifies disintegration of harmony. Heart and stomach (Data 05) symbolize alignment of thought and intention, showing that harmony requires both mental and emotional agreement. Wooden and stone fences (Data 06) metaphorically represent fragile and strong relationships, teaching that even strong bonds require maintenance. Similarly, pond and water (Data 07) symbolize a shared environment and collective responsibility, where members who live in the same "ecosystem" must maintain solidarity and cooperation.

The cultural categories further highlight the structure of Manggarai social organization. The category of *wa'u* (clan) appears in Data 03 and Data 10 as the most central unit of identity, where loyalty to the clan ensures stability and continuity. The category of *ase-ka'e* (siblings) in Data 03 and Data 08 emphasizes horizontal relations of equality and cooperation, while the categories of *ema* (father) and *anak* (child) in Data 08 stress vertical relations of respect and obedience. Data 09 introduces the relational categories of *hae mbaru* (insiders/household members) and *hae ata* (outsiders/strangers), marking the boundary between in-group and out-group relations. Finally, although not always explicitly mentioned, the category of *tua golo* (village elders) is implicitly acknowledged since most of these expressions are typically invoked in customary deliberations (*lonto leok*), where elders hold the authority to mediate, interpret, and enforce communal norms.

Taken together, these cultural schemas, metaphors, and categories illustrate how *go'et* function as cognitive and cultural tools. They encode moral obligations, guide social interactions, and sustain cultural identity by linking everyday language use with deeply rooted conceptual frameworks.

4. Social Functions

The social functions of Manggarai traditional expressions (*go'et*) can be broadly grouped into educational, social, and customary roles, each of which plays an essential part in transmitting cultural knowledge and sustaining community life.

From an educational perspective, *go'et* act as powerful tools for intergenerational moral instruction. They encode ethical lessons about respect, unity, and harmony that are taught by elders to younger members of the community. For instance, Data 01 (*Muku ca pu'u, neka woleng curup; teu ca ambo, neka woleng lako*) emphasizes the importance of unity in both words and actions, teaching younger generations that social cohesion must be maintained consistently. Data 05 (*Nai ca anggit tuka ca leleng, bantang cama reje leles*) illustrates the unity of thought and intention, reinforcing the idea that harmony requires both intellectual and emotional agreement. Similarly, Data 08 (*Ema agu anak neka woleng bantang; ase agu kae neka woleng tae*) highlights the ethical responsibilities between parents and children as well as siblings, thereby serving as a moral compass for family harmony. Through these expressions, values are not abstractly taught but are made concrete through metaphorical and poetic forms that resonate with the listener.

On the social level, *go'et* function as instruments for regulating behavior and maintaining peaceful relationships within the community. They often operate as indirect strategies for conflict avoidance, reducing the risk of confrontation and fostering empathy among members. Data 02 (*Neka bike lide, neka behas cewak*), for example, warns against disunity, likening social breakdown to a vessel breaking apart, a metaphor that discourages divisive speech or action. Data 03 (*Neka oke ngger-lau wa'u; neka oke ngger-sale ase-ka'e*) underscores the importance of avoiding disputes within the clan and among siblings, reflecting the principle that kinship harmony is the foundation of broader communal peace. Data 07 (*Ipung ca tiwu, neka woleng wintuk; nakeng ca wae, neka woleng tae*) conveys the idea of shared destiny, where community members are reminded that disruption in one part of society affects everyone. Likewise, Data 09 (*Neka mas agu hae ata; neka nggaut agu hae mbaru*) reflects the importance of managing both external (outsiders) and internal (household) relations, stressing that harmony depends on maintaining respectful interactions in all spheres of social life. In this way, *go'et* serve as a social mechanism to maintain empathy, solidarity, and collective responsibility.

In customary contexts, *go'et* play a central role in formal and ritual communication. They are frequently invoked in *lonto leok* (customary deliberations), ritual gatherings, and conflict mediation sessions, where they function as authoritative cultural references. Data 04 (*Anggom pele awo, ambet pele sale*) is often used in meetings to symbolize reconciliation and collaboration, especially in situations where unity between different groups is needed. Data 06 (*Neka behas neho kena, neka koas neho kota*) employs fence metaphors to highlight the need for protecting both fragile and strong bonds, a lesson particularly relevant in customary rituals emphasizing community resilience. Data 10 (*Neka pocu wa'u, neka jogot hae golo*) reinforces the importance of protecting the integrity of both clan and village, making it a frequent reference in ritual speeches and conflict mediation led by elders (*tua golo*). In these contexts, *go'et* are not only symbolic but also serve as authoritative sources of wisdom, legitimizing decisions and reinforcing collective adherence to customary norms.

Taken together, these functions demonstrate that *go'et* are multifaceted cultural instruments. They educate, regulate, and sanctify social life, simultaneously transmitting moral lessons, preventing conflict, and guiding customary practices. More than mere linguistic artifacts, they are deeply practical tools for preserving harmony and sustaining the cultural identity of the Manggarai community.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined ten traditional expressions (*go'et*) of the Manggarai community, focusing on their linguistic forms, cultural meanings, cultural conceptualizations, and social functions. The findings reveal that *go'et* are not merely decorative oral sayings but a sophisticated cultural system that binds together language, culture, and social life.

From a linguistic perspective, most *go'et* are structured as compound or complex sentences, often constructed using negative imperatives marked by the particle *neka* ("do not"). These prohibitions, when combined with parallelism, repetition, and metaphor, become powerful rhetorical tools that reinforce their memorability and authority. The frequent use of parallel structures highlights the collective orientation of Manggarai communication, while symbolic imagery drawn from nature and everyday objects grounds these expressions in familiar cultural contexts.

In terms of cultural meanings, *go'et* encode and transmit values that are central to Manggarai society. These include unity, solidarity, kinship loyalty, peaceful coexistence, and collective responsibility. For instance, metaphors of banana clumps, vessels, fences, ponds, and hearts symbolize togetherness, resilience, and harmony. Such meanings are not abstract ideals but lived realities that regulate behavior and sustain communal ethics in daily life.

The cultural conceptualizations embedded in *go'et* further illustrate how language serves as a repository of collective cognition. Cultural schemas such as social harmony, conflict prevention, and kinship responsibility are repeatedly reinforced. Cultural metaphors—drawn from plants, animals, and household objects—translate abstract values into tangible forms. Cultural categories like *wa'u* (clan), *ase-ka'e* (siblings), *ema-anak* (father-child), and *tua golo* (elders) define the social structure within which these expressions operate, ensuring that moral values are closely tied to kinship and communal identity.

Equally significant are the social functions of *go'et*. They act as educational instruments, teaching morality and cultural wisdom across generations; as social regulators, they prevent conflict, promote empathy, and maintain peaceful relations; and as customary tools, they are invoked in rituals, deliberations (*lonto leok*), and conflict mediation. Their authority rests not only in their poetic language but also in their cultural legitimacy, which enables them to guide both everyday interactions and formal decision-making processes.

Taken together, these findings affirm that *go'et* function simultaneously as linguistic artifacts and cultural instruments. They preserve ancestral wisdom, reinforce social norms, and maintain harmony within the Manggarai community. In the context of modernization and globalization—where local languages and traditions face marginalization—*go'et* remain highly relevant as cultural identity markers, ethical guidelines, and tools of resilience.

This research contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of Cultural Linguistics. Theoretically, it demonstrates how linguistic forms in oral traditions reflect collective conceptualizations and worldview. Practically, it emphasizes the importance of revitalizing and integrating traditional expressions into education, community activities, and cultural preservation initiatives. Future research could expand this study by exploring generational shifts, regional variations, and the transformation of *go'et* in digital communication. Ultimately, the study underscores that preserving traditional expressions is not only about safeguarding linguistic heritage but also about maintaining the cultural foundations of harmony, respect, and solidarity that define the Manggarai way of life.

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