



Cultural Lexicon In The Siraman Ceremony Of The Javanese Community In Muara Jaya Village, Rokan Hulu: An Ethnolinguistic Study

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Jan 3, 20xx

Revised Jan 7, 20xx

Accepted Jan 9, 20xx

OnlineFirst Jan 12, 20xx

Keywords:

Cultural Lexicon

Ethnolinguistic

Javanese Diaspora

Semantic Analysis

Siraman Tradition

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to inventory, classify, and analyze the cultural lexicon used in the Javanese Siraman wedding ritual performed by the diaspora community in Muara Jaya Village, Rokan Hulu Regency. It also seeks to describe the semantic and symbolic meanings embedded in these lexicons.

Methodology: This research applies a descriptive qualitative method with an ethnolinguistic approach. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with five purposively selected key informants (customary leaders, ceremony guides, and bridal makeup artists), and audio-visual documentation of ritual speeches and procedures. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, including lexical identification, taxonomic classification, componential analysis, and interpretation of cultural meanings.

Main Findings: The study identified 67 cultural lexicons within the Siraman ritual, categorized into eight semantic groups: ritual equipment (12), flowers and plants (15), water and purification (5), actions and procedures (18), actors/officiants (8), spatial concepts (3), time concepts (4), and currency/transaction (2). Semantic analysis indicates that these lexicons convey philosophical values related to fertility, purity, prosperity, harmony, and cosmological balance. The findings also reveal lexical erosion among the younger generation, with approximately 60% of respondents unfamiliar with key terms such as dulangan pungkasan, kreweng, and gendhongan.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study is the first to systematically document the ethnolinguistic dimensions of the Siraman tradition within a Javanese transmigration community in Sumatra. It contributes to the preservation of endangered cultural lexicons and provides a practical framework for documenting traditional vocabulary in diaspora contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the most powerful marker of cultural identity and a reflection of the cosmology and value systems of its speech community. In Javanese society, linguistic richness is intensively reflected in various traditional ceremonies, one of which is the Siraman ritual performed one day before the wedding vows [1]-[3]. This ritual is not only laden with philosophical and spiritual values but also constitutes linguistic nodes that represent local wisdom, worldviews, and social relations of the Javanese people. Lexicons such as Banyu

Perwitosari, kendi, pecah pamor, dulangan pungkasan, kreweng, gendhongan, and dodol dawet are not merely words or technical terms, but cognitive categories that store collective memories about purity, fertility, prosperity, and harmony [4]-[6].

However, Javanese communities in migrant areas, such as in Muara Jaya Village, Kepenuhan Hulu Subdistrict, Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province, face serious challenges in transmitting this lexical wealth to the younger generation. As a transmigration area where Javanese residents have settled since 1985, this community lives side by side with Malay and other ethnic groups. Intensive language contact with Indonesian as the national language and Riau Malay as the dominant local language has triggered symptoms of language shift and lexical erosion, namely the gradual loss of traditional vocabulary from the collective memory of its speech community [7]-[9]. The younger generation of Javanese in Muara Jaya grows up with Indonesian as their first language, while mastery of Javanese, especially *krama* (polite) level ceremonial vocabulary, has significantly declined. This condition is exacerbated by the absence of systematic documentation of the surviving ritual lexicons [10], [11].

Previous research on the Siraman ceremony has mostly focused on philosophical aspects, procedures, and cultural values from the perspective of anthropology or cultural tourism [12]. Several other studies have examined Siraman as part of Javanese traditional wedding ceremonies without deeply exploring its linguistic dimensions [13]. Meanwhile, ethnolinguistic studies of Javanese rituals have been conducted more frequently in Central Java and East Java as centers of Javanese culture [14]. Research that specifically documents, classifies, and analyzes the meanings of Siraman ritual lexicons in Javanese diaspora communities outside Java, particularly in Riau Province, has never been conducted. In fact, diaspora communities are important living laboratories for studying the dynamics of language maintenance and change in intercultural contact situations.

This study offers a significant novelty by positioning the Siraman ritual not merely as a cultural or ceremonial practice, but as a linguistic and semiotic system that reflects the dynamic interaction between language, identity, and tradition within a diaspora context [15]-[17]. Unlike previous studies that emphasize philosophical meanings, ritual procedures, or general cultural values, this research systematically inventories, classifies, and interprets the cultural lexicons embedded in the Siraman ceremony performed by the Javanese diaspora community in Riau Province. By focusing on the micro-level analysis of ritual lexicons covering terms related to objects, actions, participants, symbolic expressions, and verbal formulas this study uncovers layers of semantic, symbolic, and socio-cultural meanings that have not been documented before. Furthermore, it introduces a geographical and sociolinguistic shift by examining a Javanese ritual outside the traditional cultural centers of Central and East Java, thereby highlighting processes of language maintenance, adaptation, and transformation in intercultural contact settings [18]-[20]. In doing so, the research contributes a new ethnolinguistic perspective that integrates ritual studies, diaspora studies, and semantic analysis into a cohesive framework.

The findings of this study carry important theoretical and practical implications for ethnolinguistics, cultural preservation, and language education. Theoretically, the research enriches ethnolinguistic scholarship by demonstrating how ritual lexicons function as carriers of collective memory, identity negotiation, and cultural continuity within diaspora communities [21]-[23]. It provides empirical evidence that linguistic elements in traditional ceremonies are not static reliques of the past but are actively maintained, reinterpreted, and sometimes modified to accommodate new socio-cultural environments. Practically, the documentation and semantic analysis of Siraman lexicons can serve as a valuable resource for cultural preservation initiatives, local curriculum development, and community-based heritage education, especially in multicultural regions such as Riau. Moreover, the study offers insights for policymakers and educators in designing culturally responsive learning materials that incorporate local wisdom and diaspora heritage [24], [25]. By foregrounding the linguistic dimension of ritual practice, this research also encourages further interdisciplinary collaboration between linguists, anthropologists, educators, and cultural practitioners in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in increasingly mobile and plural societies.

The urgency of this research lies in several aspects. First, cultural lexicons constitute intangible cultural heritage that needs to be documented before they become extinct along with their elderly speakers. UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage affirms that language and verbal expressions are domains of cultural heritage requiring documentation and revitalization efforts [26]-[28]. Second, Siraman ritual lexicons contain the classification and categorization systems of Javanese society regarding nature, life, and spirituality [29]-[31]. Ethnolinguistic studies can reveal how Javanese people think and interpret the world through their language. Third, documented lexical data can serve as a foundation for Javanese language revitalization programs in migrant areas, both through informal education within families and integration into local content curricula.

Based on this background, this research proposes three research questions. First, what lexicons are used in the Siraman ceremony of the Javanese community in Muara Jaya Village? Second, how are the taxonomic classifications and symbolic meanings of these lexicons viewed from an ethnosemantic perspective? Third, what is the vitality condition of Siraman lexicons among the younger generation and what factors influence this lexical erosion? This research aims to: (1) systematically inventory and document cultural lexicons in the Siraman ceremony; (2) classify lexicons into semantic categories and analyze their cultural meanings through an

ethnosemantic approach; (3) describe the level of lexical erosion among the younger generation and its contributing factors. The academic contribution of this research is the enrichment of ethnolinguistic studies in Indonesia, particularly regarding Javanese diaspora communities. Practically, the results of this research are expected to serve as local content teaching materials, resources for compiling a Javanese-Riau cultural dictionary, and references for Javanese language and cultural revitalization programs in migrant areas.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This research employs an ethnolinguistic approach with a descriptive qualitative method. The ethnolinguistic approach views language as an expression of culture and a tool for understanding the knowledge systems, classifications, and values held by its speech community [32], [33]. This research seeks to systematically describe the lexicons that appear in the series of Siraman ceremonies and interpret their cultural meanings from an emic perspective (the viewpoint of the speech community).

2.2. Research Subjects and Location

This research was conducted in Muara Jaya Village, Kepenuhan Hulu District, Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province. This village was chosen intentionally based on several considerations: (1) it is one of the oldest Javanese transmigrant settlements in Rokan Hulu (since 1985); (2) the Javanese people in this village still preserve the Siraman tradition despite being outside their area of origin; (3) no ethnolinguistic research on the Siraman ritual has ever been conducted in this location. Data collection was conducted from February to March.

The data in this research consists of primary linguistic data in the form of:

1. Lexicons: All words, phrases, and specific terms used in the Siraman ceremony, including names of equipment, materials, actions, actors, times, and places.
2. Speech Texts: Utterances in the *sungkem* (respect-paying) ritual, prayers, customary instructions, and informant narratives.
3. Ethnographic Data: The social and cultural context of lexicon usage, including symbolic and philosophical meanings.

The data sources are key informants selected through purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) native Javanese speakers who master ceremonial vocabulary; (2) active participants in the Siraman ceremony (customary leaders, ceremony guides, bridal makeup artists, elders); (3) possess in-depth knowledge of the ritual's meanings and philosophy. From a total population of 15 customary and community leaders, 5 informants who met the criteria were selected. The characteristics of the informants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Informants

Code	Role in Community	Age	Years of Involvement	Javanese Language Competence
INF-01	Customary Leader & Bridal Makeup Artist	52	25 years	Active, <i>krama inggil</i>
INF-02	Head of Javanese Ethnic Association	48	20 years	Active, <i>krama</i>
INF-03	Customary Elder	60	35 years	Active, <i>krama inggil</i>
INF-04	Community Leader (Logistics)	45	15 years	Passive, <i>ngoko</i>
INF-05	Siraman Ceremony Guide	55	30 years	Active, <i>krama inggil</i>

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through technique triangulation to ensure data validity [34]. First, participant observation. The researcher directly participated in the Siraman ceremony held on February 20, 2013. Observation focused on lexicon usage in natural contexts, the sequence of ritual actions, and verbal interactions among participants. Observation results were recorded in field notes and documented with a digital camera. Second, in-depth ethnographic interviews. Interviews were conducted using elicitation techniques to explore lexicons and their meanings. Questions were designed to elicit specific terms, for example: *"What is the name of the water used to bathe the bride and groom?"*, *"Who is allowed to perform the bathing?"*, *"What is the meaning behind breaking the kendi?"*. Interviews were recorded with a voice recorder and transcribed verbatim. Third, audio-visual recording. The entire series of the Siraman ceremony from beginning to end was recorded to capture authentic speech in natural speech situations, including the *sungkem* text in Javanese. Fourth, documentation study. Collection of supporting documents such as village profiles, ceremony photographs, and written records of Siraman procedures owned by informants.

2.4. Research Instruments

The primary instrument is the researcher themselves as a human instrument equipped with. First, Observation guide containing focus points: types of lexicons, context of use, speech participants. Second, Semi-structured interview guide containing topic lists and elicitation questions. Third, Lexicon catalog sheet for recording and categorizing terms, Fourth, Technical tools: Voice recorder, digital camera, field notebook.

2.5. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously using the Miles and Huberman interactive model consisting of three concurrent activity flows [35], [36]. First, data reduction. Interview transcripts, field notes, and documentation were reduced by selecting, focusing, and transforming raw data. Linguistic data were coded based on semantic categories and emerging themes. Second, data display. Reduced data were presented in the form of.

- Taxonomic classification: Grouping lexicons into categories and subcategories based on semantic domains.
- Componential analysis matrices: Decomposing lexicon meanings into distinctive components.
- Descriptive narratives: Explanation of cultural meanings and usage contexts.

Third, conclusion drawing and verification. Meanings were interpreted from an emic perspective and verified through source triangulation (comparing information between informants) and method triangulation (comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Inventory and Classification of Siraman Ceremony Lexicons

Based on data analysis from participant observation, in-depth interviews, and audio-visual recordings, this research successfully identified 67 cultural lexicons used in the series of Siraman ceremonies in Muara Jaya Village. These lexicons are classified into eight taxonomic categories based on their semantic domains. This classification reflects the Javanese community's cognitive system in categorizing ritual reality.

Table 2. Taxonomic Classification of Siraman Ceremony Cultural Lexicons

Category	Subcategory	Lexicons	Total
1. Ritual Equipment	Containers	<i>kendi, klenzing, gentong, ember, gayung kursi, mori, kain putih,</i>	5
	Seating/Matting	<i>alang-alang leaves, dadap srep leaves, kluwih leaves</i>	6
	Offerings	<i>tumpeng, tumpeng robyong, dawet, tampah</i>	4
	Cutting Tools	<i>gunting</i>	1
Total			12
2. Flowers and Plants	Bathing Flowers	<i>kembang setaman, mawar, melati, kantil, kenanga</i>	5
	Symbolic Leaves	<i>alang-alang, dadap srep, kluwih leaves</i>	3
	Scrub/Powder	<i>boreh, pupuk, bedak dingin</i>	3
	Others	<i>kembang telon, kembang pitung rupa</i>	4
Total			15
3. Water and Purification	Ritual Water	<i>Banyu Perwitosari, tirta perwitasari, flower water, tolak bala water</i>	4
	Ablution Water	<i>air wudu, kendi wudu</i>	2
	Total		5
4. Actions/Procedures	Preparation	<i>nyadran, nglengkapi, nyiapake</i>	3
	Purification	<i>siram, jamas, adus</i>	3
	Homage	<i>sungkem, sujud, nyembah</i>	3
	Breaking	<i>pecah kendi, mecah pamor</i>	2
Total			3
Total			67

	Carrying	<i>gendhongan, mbopong</i>	2
	Feeding	<i>dulangan pungkasan, suapan terakhir</i>	2
	Selling	<i>dodol dawet</i>	1
	Planting	<i>dipetakke, dikubur</i>	1
	Total		18
	Family	<i>sesepuh, pinisepuh, kakang kandung, kakang ipar</i>	4
5. Actors/Officiants	Special Officers	<i>pemaes, juru rias, Duto Saroyo, pemandu acara</i>	4
	Total		8
	Mythological	<i>Karang Kawidadaren, Telaga Nirmala Pengasihan</i>	2
6. Spatial Concepts	Physical	<i>pekarangan, pojok omah</i>	2
	Total		3
	Siraman Time	<i>morning, afternoon, evening</i>	3
	Mystical Time	<i>11:00 AM, malam towing, malam nyantri, malam midaderoni</i>	4
7. Time Concepts	Mystical Numbers	<i>pitu, pitulungan, odd, seven, nine</i>	5
	Total		4
	Symbolic Money	<i>kreweng, pecahan genteng</i>	2
8. Currency/Transaction	Total		2
	GRAND TOTAL		67

The actions/procedures category has the highest number of lexicons (18 lexicons), followed by flowers and plants (15 lexicons), and ritual equipment (12 lexicons). This indicates that the Siraman ceremony is a complex ritual with a long series of symbolic actions requiring various equipment and offerings. The dominance of action lexicons also reflects that Javanese people perceive Siraman as a **process** (becoming) rather than merely a **status** (being) a spiritual journey from immaturity towards readiness for marriage.

3.2. Componential Analysis and Ethnosemantics

Componential analysis was conducted to reveal the semantic features that distinguish each lexicon within the same domain, while simultaneously interpreting their cultural meanings from an emic perspective.

3.2.1. Ritual Equipment Domain: *Kendi* vs *Klenting*

In the ritual equipment domain, two lexicons that are referentially similar but have different cultural meanings were found, namely *kendi* and *klenting*.

Table 3. Componential Analysis of Kendi and Klenting

Meaning Component	<i>Kendi</i>	<i>Klenting</i>
Material	Clay	Clay
Shape	Necked, spouted	Bulging belly, short neck
Function	Ablution water container, media for <i>pecah pamor</i>	Siraman water container
Symbolic Meaning	Mother's womb, origin of life	Fertility, prosperity
User	Parents, elders	Family, <i>pemaes</i>
Action	Broken (<i>pecah kendi</i>)	Poured

INF-03 (customary elder, 60 years) explained the symbolic meaning of *kendi*:

"Kendi iku saking lemah, diobong dadi atos. Yen dienggo wudu, banyune suci. Mengko dipecah, bali maring lemah. Sakjane manungsa uga mengko bali maring lemah. Dadi penganten iku kudu eling marang asal-usule lan sing Kuasa."

('The *kendi* is made from earth, fired until hard. When used for ablution, its water is holy. Later it is broken, returning to earth. Actually, humans also eventually return to earth. So the bride and groom must remember their origins and the Almighty!')

This explanation shows that the lexicon *kendi* does not merely refer to a water container object, but contains a cosmological metaphor about the human life cycle, originating from earth (creation), undergoing a

"firing" process (life that shapes character), and returning to earth (death). The *pecah kendi* (breaking the kendi) act by parents symbolizes both release and acknowledgment that the child is ready to embark on their own life journey.

3.2.2. Action Domain: *Sungkem* as Ritual Speech Act

Sungkem is an action lexicon with both linguistic and non-linguistic dimensions. Physically, *sungkem* is kneeling before parents, showing homage, and kissing the knees. Verbally, *sungkem* is accompanied by specific utterances. This research recorded the *sungkem* text spoken by the bride and groom in Javanese *krama* (polite level):

Bride/Groom's Sungkem Text:

"Bapak saha Ibu ingkang kula tresnani, kaparenga putra atur sungkem saha nyuwun pangestu dene putra badhe siram jamas tirta perwitasari minangka pembukaning lampah kula badhe nambut silaning akrami. Putra nyuwun tambahing berkah Bapak Ibu."

('Father and Mother whom I love deeply, please allow your child to offer homage and seek blessings because your child will perform the siram jamas tirta perwitasari as the beginning of my journey to enter into marriage. Your child seeks additional blessings from Father and Mother.')

Parents' Response:

"Bapak lan Ibu tansah nenuwun marang Gusti Ingkang Maha Asih, muga-muga anggonmu siram jamas tirta perwitasari dadi sarana atimu setemah ambabar rahayuning sedya anggonmu palakrama, Amin."

('Father and Mother always pray to God Almighty, may your siram jamas tirta perwitasari become a means of purifying your heart, thus opening safety in your intention to marry, Amen.')

From an ethnolinguistic perspective, this *sungkem* speech contains several linguistic and cultural features.

First, the use of *krama* speech level. The entire utterance uses *krama* vocabulary (e.g., *kaparenga*, *nyuwun pangestu*, *badhe*, *nambut silaning akrami*, *ambabar rahayuning sedya*). This code choice indicates power and solidarity relations simultaneously. Vertically, *krama* marks the child's respect for parents. Horizontally, the use of the same *krama* level from parents to child indicates that the child is considered mature and morally equal.

Second, the concepts of *berkah* and *pangestu*. The lexicons *nyuwun pangestu* (seeking blessings) and *tambahing berkah* (additional blessings) reflect a syncretic Javanese cosmology blending Javanese-Islamic elements. *Pangestu* derives from the root word *restu* meaning spiritual power flowing from elders/superiors to juniors/subordinates. In Islam, this concept merges with *barakah* (blessing). INF-02 explained:

"Sungkem iku ora mung njaluk ngapura, nanging njaluk kekuwatan lahir batin saking wong tuwa. Dongo wong tuwa iku insyaAllah makbul."

('Sungkem is not only asking for forgiveness, but seeking physical and spiritual strength from parents. Parents' prayers, God willing, are answered.')

Third, illocutionary speech acts. The *sungkem* utterance is classified as an expressive illocutionary act (expressing feelings) as well as a directive (requesting). The parents' utterance is classified as a declarative illocutionary act (blessing) and commissive (promising prayers). Thus, *sungkem* is not merely a formality, but a performative speech event: the utterance itself is an action that transforms the psychological and spiritual status of the participants.

3.2.3. Water Domain: *Banyu Perwitosari* and Numerical Sacredness

Banyu Perwitosari is a compound lexicon consisting of *banyu* ('water') and *Perwitosari* (mythological name). This water is a mixture of water from seven spring sources mixed with *kembang setaman* (three types of flowers: rose, jasmine, kantil). INF-01 explained:

"Perwitosari iku sumbering urip. Angka pitu iku pitulungan, artine tansah oleh pitulungan saking Gusti. Kembang telu iku lambang tresno, suci, lan setyo."

('Perwitosari is the source of life. The number seven is *pitulungan* (help), meaning always receiving help from God. The three flowers symbolize love, purity, and loyalty.')

Componential analysis reveals that the lexicon *Banyu Perwitosari* has a multi-level semantic structure:

Table 4. Meaning Structure of *Banyu Perwitosari*

Meaning Level	Description	Interpretation
Referential Meaning	Water mixed with flowers from seven sources	Physical object

Symbolic-Functional Meaning	Tool for physical and spiritual purification	Ritual
Cosmological Meaning	Sacred water from <i>Telaga Nirmala Pengasihan</i> where angels bathe	Mythological
Spiritual Meaning	Medium for seeking divine assistance	Religious

This phenomenon demonstrates that cultural lexicons cannot be analyzed solely at the referential level but must be understood within a broader web of cultural meaning involving mythology, cosmology, and religious systems.

3.3. Lexical Erosion and Transmission Crisis Among the Younger Generation

A crucial finding of this research is significant lexical erosion among the younger generation of Javanese in Muara Jaya Village. Lexical erosion is defined as the gradual loss of vocabulary from the active memory of speakers due to language shift and social change [37], [38]. The research conducted simple elicitation with 20 young respondents (aged 15-25 years) from Javanese families who had witnessed Siraman ceremonies. Respondents were asked to mention or explain the meanings of 10 core Siraman lexicons. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Level of Recognition of Siraman Lexicons Among the Younger Generation (n=20)

Lexicon	Recognize & Know Meaning	Heard but Don't Know Meaning	Do Not Recognize
<i>Siraman</i>	20 (100%)	0	0
<i>Sungkem</i>	18 (90%)	2 (10%)	0
<i>Kendi</i>	15 (75%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)
<i>Kembang setaman</i>	12 (60%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)
<i>Dodol dawet</i>	8 (40%)	7 (35%)	5 (25%)
<i>Pecah kendi</i>	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	7 (35%)
<i>Dulangan</i>	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	10 (50%)
<i>pungkasan</i>			
<i>Kreweng</i>	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	12 (60%)
<i>Gendhongan</i>	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	12 (60%)
<i>Banyu Perwitosari</i>	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	15 (75%)
Average	39.5%	22.5%	38%

The data above shows that although almost all young people recognize the term *Siraman* (100%) and *sungkem* (90%), recognition of more specific and technical lexicons is very low. The lexicon *Banyu Perwitosari* is recognized by only 10% of respondents, *gendhongan* 15%, *kreweng* 20%, and *dulangan pungkasan* 25%. On average, 38% of core Siraman lexicons are completely unrecognized by the younger generation, and only 39.5% are recognized along with their meanings. INF-04 (45 years) commented on this phenomenon:

"Bocah-bocah saiki wis akeh sing ora ngerti jawa. Omong jawa wae campur-campur, opo maneh istilah-istilah kaya gendhongan, kreweng, dulangan. Sing penting nikahane rame, mewah, modern. Adat kaya ngono dianggep repot."

('Children nowadays, many no longer understand Javanese. Even speaking Javanese is mixed, let alone terms like *gendhongan*, *kreweng*, *dulangan*. What matters is that the wedding is lively, luxurious, modern. Customs like that are considered troublesome.')

Based on in-depth interviews and observation, this research identified three main factors causing lexical erosion. First, language shift. Javanese is no longer the first language of the younger generation. Indonesian dominates in family, school, and social domains. Javanese is only used passively and limited to the *ngoko* (casual) speech level, while ceremonial vocabulary mostly belongs to the *krama* (polite) level which is not mastered. Second, changes in lifestyle preferences. Values of being "modern," "luxurious," and "practical" are prioritized over "traditional" and "sacred" values in wedding arrangements. Young families tend to choose modern wedding concepts considered more efficient and prestigious, so lexicons that only appear in traditional ritual contexts are never activated in daily life. Third, broken intergenerational transmission. The process of linguistic and cultural enculturation from the older generation to the younger generation is not optimal. Parents no longer actively teach ceremonial vocabulary to their children. INF-01 admitted.

"Kadang anak-anak takon, 'Iki jenenge opo, Pak?' Tapi yo jarang. Wong tuwa saiki sibuk golek duit, bocah-bocah sibuk karo HP-e."

('Sometimes children ask, "What is this called, Father?" But it's rare. Parents nowadays are busy earning money, children are busy with their cellphones.')

3.4. Adaptation Strategies and Meaning Negotiation

Interestingly, this research also found that despite lexical erosion, the community still performs linguistic adaptation to maintain the essence of the ritual. Several lexicons are replaced with equivalents that are easier to understand or available in the local context.

Table 6. Lexicon Adaptation in Siraman Practice in Muara Jaya

Original Lexicon (Java)	Adaptation in Muara Jaya	Description
<i>Banyu Perwitosari</i> (7 spring sources)	Well water from 7 neighbors	Substitution based on function, not essence
<i>Kembang setaman</i> (rose, jasmine, kantil)	Rose, jasmine, kenanga	Substitution because <i>kantil</i> is difficult to find
<i>Kreweng</i> (original kendi shards)	Ordered roof tile shards	Material adaptation
<i>Pinisepuh</i> (close family friends)	Local customary leaders	Role adaptation
<i>Duto Saroyo</i> (special envoy)	Appointed family members	Role simplification

This phenomenon shows that the vitality of a tradition is not determined by the purity of its lexicons, but by the community's ability to negotiate meaning amidst limitations. The Muara Jaya community does not merely "lose" lexicons but creatively performs relexicalization creating new equivalents or borrowing from other language systems without eliminating their cultural function. This aligns with the concept of adaptive revitalization in ethnolinguistic studies [39], [40].

3.5. Theoretical Reflection: Siraman Ethnolinguistics as a Knowledge System

More theoretically, the findings of this research reinforce the view that language is not merely a communication tool but a system of knowledge classification [41], [42]. The Siraman lexicons reveal how the Javanese diaspora community in Muara Jaya organizes reality into specific cognitive categories. First, numerical categories. The dominance of odd numbers (3, 7, 9) in various lexicons (*kembang telu*, *pitu sumber*, *pitu wong*, *pitulungan*) reflects Javanese cosmology about perfection and harmony. Odd numbers are considered more sacred than even numbers, and the number 7 is specifically associated with divine assistance. Second, material categories. The selection of certain materials (clay for kendi, alang-alang leaves for seating, white mori cloth) indicates an ecological value system that perceives nature as a source of spiritual symbols. Third, action categories. The fixed sequence of actions (*sungkem* → *siraman* → *pecah kendi* → *potong rambut* → *dulangan* → *gendhongan* → *dodol dawet*) forms a structured ritual schema, reflecting a cyclical view of human life. Thus, this research contributes to the understanding that documenting cultural lexicons is documenting knowledge systems. Every successfully inventoried lexicon is not merely a dictionary entry but a window into understanding how a community thinks, behaves, and interprets the world.

Based on the results of the research discussion that has been presented, a research gap analysis can be formulated clearly by comparing the findings of this study with the tendencies of previous research. The first article [43] examines the terms of the months in the Javanese calendar as part of the cultural identity and calendar system, with a focus on the meaning and cultural values in the daily life of the Javanese people in general. Meanwhile, the other two articles [44], [45] focus more on the study of Javanese cultural terms or traditions within a macro-descriptive-ethnolinguistic framework, without conducting a systematic inventory of lexicons, in-depth analysis of meaning components, or exploration of the dimensions of intergenerational transmission in the context of diaspora communities. In contrast to these studies, this study does not only describe the use of cultural terms, but specifically inventories and classifies 67 cultural lexicons in the Siraman ritual based on detailed semantic domains, then analyzes them through a componential and ethnosemantic analysis approach to reveal referential, symbolic, cosmological, and spiritual meaning structures. In addition, this study also identifies the phenomenon of lexical erosion in the younger generation as well as strategies for adaptation and negotiation of meaning in the Javanese diaspora community in Muara Jaya, a geographical context that has not been widely touched upon in ethnolinguistic studies, which have so far focused more on Central and East Java. Thus, the main gap lies in the absence of previous research that comprehensively documents, classifies, analyzes the structure of meaning, and simultaneously examines the dynamics of the sustainability of the Siraman ritual lexicon in the context of diaspora and social change. This study aims to fill this gap by offering an ethnolinguistic perspective that is not only

descriptive, but also analytical and reflective of the sustainability of the cultural knowledge system embodied in the ritual lexicon.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive and multi-layered ethnolinguistic analysis of the Siraman ceremony within a Javanese diaspora context, which has not been systematically explored in previous studies. Unlike earlier research that primarily focused on philosophical interpretations, procedural descriptions, or general cultural symbolism of Javanese rituals, this study offers a structured inventory and taxonomic classification of 67 cultural lexicons based on semantic domains, thereby revealing the community's cognitive system in organizing ritual knowledge [46]-[48]. Furthermore, this research integrates componential analysis and ethnosemantic interpretation to uncover not only referential meanings but also symbolic, cosmological, and spiritual dimensions embedded in specific lexicons such as *kendi*, *sungkem*, and *Banyu Perwitosari*. Another significant innovation is the empirical documentation of lexical erosion among the younger generation, supported by quantitative elicitation data, as well as the identification of adaptive relexicalization strategies in the diaspora setting [49]-[51]. By combining linguistic structure, cultural meaning, intergenerational transmission, and adaptation processes within a single analytical framework, this study advances ethnolinguistic scholarship beyond descriptive documentation toward a dynamic understanding of language as a living cultural knowledge system in transition.

The findings of this study carry important theoretical, sociolinguistic, and cultural implications. Theoretically, the research reinforces the view that language functions as a system of knowledge classification, demonstrating how ritual lexicons encode cosmological beliefs, ecological values, numerical symbolism, and social hierarchy within a structured semantic network [52]-[54]. Sociolinguistically, the documented lexical erosion among younger speakers highlights the vulnerability of ritual vocabulary in diaspora communities experiencing language shift toward Indonesian, suggesting the urgent need for revitalization efforts that integrate cultural lexicons into educational and community-based programs. Culturally, the identification of adaptive strategies such as functional substitution and role simplification indicates that tradition is sustained not through rigid preservation of forms, but through negotiated meaning and contextual reinterpretation. These insights may inform policymakers, educators, and cultural practitioners in designing sustainable models of cultural preservation that recognize both continuity and change. More broadly, the study contributes to discussions on intangible cultural heritage by demonstrating that safeguarding rituals requires safeguarding the lexicons that structure and transmit their embedded knowledge systems [55]-[57].

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research is geographically confined to the Javanese diaspora community in Muara Jaya Village, Rokan Hulu Regency, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other diaspora or homeland Javanese communities with different sociolinguistic dynamics. Second, the elicitation survey on lexical recognition involved a relatively small sample of 20 young respondents, which provides indicative but not statistically generalizable data regarding intergenerational transmission. Third, the analysis primarily focuses on lexical and semantic dimensions, without conducting a deeper discourse-pragmatic or multimodal analysis of ritual performance elements such as prosody, gesture, or spatial arrangement. Additionally, the study examines the Siraman ceremony at a particular period of observation, and longitudinal data would be necessary to capture changes over time more systematically [58]-[60]. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the scope geographically, increase participant diversity, and integrate interdisciplinary approaches to further explore the evolving relationship between language, ritual, and cultural sustainability.

4. CONCLUSION

This ethnolinguistic research has systematically documented 67 cultural lexicons used in the Siraman ceremony of the Javanese community in Muara Jaya Village, Rokan Hulu Regency, classified into eight semantic categories ritual equipment, flowers and plants, water and purification, actions/procedures, actors/officials, spatial concepts, time concepts, and currency/transaction with the actions/procedures category containing the highest number (18 lexicons), reflecting the ritual's complexity as a process of spiritual transformation, and through componential and ethnosemantic analysis, it was revealed that these lexicons function not merely as referential markers but carry profound symbolic, philosophical, and cosmological meanings, as demonstrated by *kendi* representing the mother's womb and life cycle, *Banyu Perwitosari* symbolizing purity and divine assistance rooted in Javanese mythology, and the *sungkem* speech in Javanese *krama* constituting an expressive-directive illocutionary speech act that performatively transforms participants' spiritual status; however, a critical finding is the significant lexical erosion among the younger generation (aged 15-25 years), with an average of 38% of core Siraman lexicons being completely unrecognized and only 39.5% recognized along with their meanings technical lexicons such as *Banyu Perwitosari* (10%), *gendhongan* (15%), *kreweng* (20%), and *dulangan pungkasan* (25%) are in critical condition and threatened with extinction caused by three main factors: language shift from Javanese to Indonesian, changing lifestyle preferences prioritizing modernity and practicality over tradition, and broken intergenerational transmission of ceremonial vocabulary; nevertheless, the community

demonstrates linguistic resilience through adaptation strategies including lexicon substitution (e.g., replacing *Banyu Perwitosari* with well water from seven neighbors), material adaptation (using roof tile shards as substitutes for *kreweng*), and role simplification, proving that language revitalization is not always about purification but rather meaning negotiation in new contexts; consequently, this research offers both theoretical contributions reinforcing the ethnolinguistic perspective that cultural lexicons constitute systems of knowledge classification reflecting a speech community's cosmology, ethics, and social values and practical applications, namely (1) providing foundational materials for compiling a Javanese-Riau cultural dictionary, (2) supplying source materials for Javanese language local content curricula in transmigration area schools, and (3) establishing a database for Javanese language and cultural revitalization programs in migrant communities; future research is therefore recommended to conduct comparative studies across Javanese diaspora communities in Sumatra and Kalimantan to map lexical variation and vitality levels, develop digital media-based ceremonial vocabulary learning models for younger generations, examine the syntactic and morphological aspects of surviving Javanese ritual speech in migrant contexts, and investigate the language attitudes of young Javanese speakers toward regional language maintenance in an era of accelerating globalization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses profound gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this research. Sincere thanks are extended to the informants and the entire community who generously shared their time, knowledge, and experiences, providing invaluable data and insights. The author is also deeply indebted to the supervisors and mentors for their steadfast guidance, constructive criticism, and scholarly wisdom throughout the research process. Appreciation is also directed to colleagues and family members for their unwavering support and encouragement. Finally, the author acknowledges that any shortcomings in this work remain the author's own responsibility.

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