

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN LATUNG LAWANG: EXPLORING CULTURAL VALUES IN BIRTH, MARRIAGE, AND DEATH CEREMONIES

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Abstract: This study is driven by the need to preserve the oral heritage of the Sikka Krowe community, particularly *Latung Lawang*, a traditional chant rich in symbolic meanings and cultural values. The research aims to identify the types of figurative language in *Latung Lawang*, interpret its cultural meanings, and analyze the cultural values reflected in birth (*Lodong Me*), marriage (*Wotik Wawi Dadi* and *Ro'a Mu'u*), and death ceremonies. A qualitative descriptive method was applied, with data collected through in-depth interviews and documentation, then analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that *Latung Lawang* employs various figurative devices, including metaphor, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, simile, and metonymy. These expressions reflect the Sikka Krowe worldview on human–nature–ancestor relationships and embody values such as freedom, respect, benevolence, achievement, conservatism, and tradition. The study concludes that *Latung Lawang* functions not only as a literary expression but also as a medium of moral education and cultural identity transmission across generations.

Keywords: *Figurative language; Latung Lawang, oral tradition, poetic chant; cultural values*

INTRODUCTION

Humans grow and develop within a cultural context that shapes their ways of thinking, behavior, and distinct ways of life within a community (Matsumoto, 2007). Culture serves as an essential framework for forming both individual and collective identities, influencing how societies perceive the world and life itself. According to Devianty (2017), culture encompasses human creations in the form of objects, behaviors, language, social organization, art, and belief systems—all of which play a crucial role in supporting the continuity of communal life. In the context of Indonesia as an archipelagic country, cultural diversity is reflected not only through customs and social structures but also through oral literary expressions passed down from generation to generation, such as traditional poetry recited in ceremonial rituals.

One form of oral literature that reflects community identity and values is *Latung Lawang*, a traditional poetic chant of the Sikka Krowe people on Flores Island. This chant is performed during three major

ceremonial events: birth (*lodong me*), marriage, and death. *Latung Lawang* is not merely an embellishment of ritual events but also functions as a medium for preserving history, values, and the community's worldview. However, scholarly research on *Latung Lawang*, especially regarding its figurative language and symbolic meanings in ceremonial contexts, remains limited. Most previous studies have focused on the general functions of rituals or the structure of the texts, without delving deeply into linguistic elements and the cultural values embedded within them.

Several previous studies indicate that figurative language plays an important role in conveying cultural messages (Bala, 2024). In *Figurative Language Analysis of Lado Ceremony in Kloangpopot Community*, found that personification, simile, and repetition were used to reflect spiritual beliefs and collective hopes in a ritual intended to ward off rain. Alanti (2023) identified simile, repetition, hyperbole, and symbolism in marriage chants from Kopong Village, used to express moral messages and

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traditional values. Meanwhile, Sawa et al. (2023) emphasized the functions of traditional poetry in wedding ceremonies in Wairbleler, reflecting values such as responsibility, perseverance, and humility through content and functional analysis. These studies highlight the importance of linguistic expression in ritual contexts but are limited to a single type of ceremony or general functional analysis.

In contrast to previous research, this study explores *Latung Lawang* in three major ceremonial contexts and conducts a deeper analysis of its figurative language, cultural meanings, and values. Based on Abrams' classification in Bouti et al. (2023), figurative language includes metaphor, simile, synecdoche, personification, metonymy, allegory, hyperbole, irony, symbolism, and paradox. Each serves semantic and aesthetic functions in expressing cultural messages. Rather than illustrating with general examples, this study focuses on how these types appear in *Latung Lawang*. Specific examples from birth, marriage, and death ceremonies will be analyzed in the results section to highlight their cultural significance.

This use of figurative language is not isolated but is rich with cultural meanings and noble values. Cultural meaning refers to symbolic interpretations embedded in historically inherited social practices in Mondani and Swedberg (2022), such as the mountain symbolizing ancestors or the sea as a mother bearing humanity. On the other hand, cultural values like reverence for ancestors, solidarity, and perseverance are reflected in the structure and content of the poetry. According to Koentjaraningrat in Sugiyartati et al. (2020), cultural values are abstract concepts that guide societal life. Schwartz (2021) further supports this by identifying universal values such as respect for tradition, security, and benevolence as foundational pillars of global culture, including that of the Sikka Krowe community.

By combining stylistic and hermeneutic approaches, O'Connor (2021) not only classifies types of figurative language but also interprets the cultural meanings and values embedded in *Latung Lawang*. Thus, this chant is understood as a transgenerational medium that transmits philosophical, spiritual, and social teachings to future generations. Therefore, this research aims to: (1) identify the types of figurative language used in *Latung Lawang*, (2) uncover the cultural meanings they convey, and (3) analyze the cultural values represented through this traditional poetic form. The findings of this study are expected to enrich the field of oral literature, deepen understanding of local wisdom, and support the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of the Sikka Krowe people.

METHOD

Research Design and Approach

This study applies a qualitative descriptive approach, which allows the researcher to provide a comprehensive and direct account of the use of figurative language in *Latung Lawang*, a traditional poetic chant performed in the Sikka Krowe community's ceremonies of birth, marriage, and death. As outlined by Hall and Liebenberg (2024), qualitative description focuses on answering the 'who, what, and where' of a phenomenon without heavy abstraction or theorization. It maintains a close connection to the data, offering factual representations of participants' experiences.

Respondent Selection and Sampling

The primary respondents in this study are traditional elders and local cultural figures within the Sikka Krowe community who possess a deep understanding of ceremonial practices and the symbolic meanings embedded in *Latung Lawang*. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of two key informants. The first is Firmus Philin Raja, a 75-year-old traditional elder and custodian of *Latung Lawang*, who not only memorizes the chant but also

possesses deep cultural knowledge of its meanings and its role in birth, marriage, and death ceremonies. The second is Mikhael Mior, a 65-year-old cultural figure who is familiar with *Latung Lawang* and understands the cultural values embedded within it. Both respondents were chosen for their expertise and active roles in preserving and interpreting *Latung Lawang* within the Sikka Krowe community. This targeted approach is aligned with qualitative research standards, aiming for depth rather than generalizability.

Data Collection Methods

Two instruments were employed in collecting the data for this study. First, an interview guideline in the form of a semi-structured interview was designed to explore the meanings, context, and functions of figurative language in *Latung Lawang*. This guideline consisted of open-ended questions aimed at encouraging detailed and reflective responses from the informants. Second, a document analysis sheet was used to extract data from written or transcribed *Latung Lawang* texts. This sheet helped identify and categorize figurative expressions systematically, allowing for effective coding based on figurative types and cultural content.

Data for this study were collected through in-depth interviews and documentation. The interviews were conducted directly with selected respondents, including knowledgeable elders and cultural practitioners, to gain first-hand interpretations of *Latung Lawang* and its figurative meanings. Meanwhile, documentation involved analyzing written manuscripts and transcriptions of *Latung Lawang*, gathered from cultural archives and recordings of oral performances during traditional ceremonies. As noted by Waham et al. (2023), documentation provides essential context for historical and linguistic analysis, supporting a deeper understanding of the text's origin and usage. This is particularly relevant for *Latung Lawang*,

since documenting manuscripts and transcriptions helps preserve its oral tradition and allows researchers to analyze how cultural meanings and figurative language are embedded in ceremonial performances.

Data Source

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained from the in-depth interviews, while secondary data consisted of written manuscripts and transcriptions from cultural archives. These texts served not only as references but also as triangulation materials to strengthen the validity of the findings. According to Guo et al. (2018), combining different sources enables researchers to verify interpretations and gain a more comprehensive view. This dual-sourced approach allowed for richer data analysis by integrating oral insights with textual evidence.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Tondang and Sembiring (2024). This includes four interrelated stages: analysis during data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification.

Analysis During Data Collection

During the data collection process, analysis began concurrently as the researcher conducted interviews and reviewed texts, taking field notes and identifying recurring figurative expressions, symbolic themes, and cultural references related to Sikka Krowe traditions. The data for this study were collected between February and March 2025 through interviews and documentation in Umuta Village, Dokar Hamlet. This location was chosen because the community continues to perform the three ceremonies, birth, marriage, and death, using *Latung Lawang*, and because Dokar Hamlet is also a cultural tourism village in Sikka Regency that actively preserves the Sikka Krowe oral tradition. During the data collection process, the researcher documented only the written manuscript of *Latung Lawang* from a death

ceremony, while interviews were conducted using audio recordings. Each verse of *Latung Lawang* recited by the respondent was transcribed verbatim for further analysis.

Data Reduction

In the data reduction stage, irrelevant or repetitive information was excluded, and only segments containing meaningful figurative language or cultural value were retained.

1) Data Display

These data were then coded based on figurative types such as metaphor, simile, or symbolism and categorized according to their occurrence in birth, marriage, or death rituals. The reduced data were visually organized into tables or thematic matrices to display patterns and functions of figurative language across ceremonies, enabling comparative interpretation.

2) Conclusion Drawing with Verification

In conclusion, the researcher interpreted the data to uncover how *Latung Lawang* reflects cultural identity and values.

Validity and Reliability Measures

To ensure validity, findings were verified through triangulation with source materials and confirmed by respondents, who reviewed and validated the interpretations based on their contributions. In addition, the study addressed credibility by employing triangulation and member checking, transferability by providing rich contextual descriptions of the Sikka Krowe ceremonies, dependability through systematic documentation of data collection and analysis procedures, and confirmability by grounding all interpretations in the data rather than researcher bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Types of Figurative Language in *Latung Lawang*

This study identified six types of figurative language used in *Latung Lawang* during birth, marriage, and death ceremonies: metaphor, symbolism, hyperbole,

personification, simile, and metonymy. Each type appears in specific contexts and serves different functions in expressing the cultural meanings of the Sikka Krowe community.

Metaphor

Metaphors in the *Latung Lawang* are used to express abstract ideas through vivid and meaningful images. For instance, in the birth ceremony (*Lodong Me*), the expression “*Me buan waten baken, pu lu'ur puhun pu'an*” (a child is the fruit of the womb) illustrates that the child is likened to the fruit of the womb without using comparative words such as “like” or “as,” symbolically illustrating the high value of a child.

In marriage, metaphor appears in phrases like “*Tilun beler diri rena*” (thin ears for hearing), symbolizing humility and the importance of listening.

In the funeral ceremony, metaphors such as “*Ela gepang ba'a matan, batu dotor ba'a wa'in*” (fallen, the eyes have closed; fallen, the legs have straightened) implicitly describe death with dignity.

These findings align with Bala (2024), who emphasized the central role of metaphor in representing life transitions. This study expands the discussion by identifying metaphors across multiple ceremonial stages. Unlike Bala, whose analysis was limited to the Lado ritual and highlighted personification, simile, and repetition with only a few instances of metaphor, this research documents a broader and richer use of metaphor in *Latung Lawang*. The metaphors span birth, marriage, and death ceremonies, drawing on imagery from the human body, nature, and ritual objects to express values of kinship, moral responsibility, and spiritual continuity. This demonstrates not only new types of figurative use but also deeper cultural nuances specific to the Sikka Krowe community that have not been previously recorded.

Symbolism

Symbolism is one of the most dominant figurative devices in *Latung Lawang*, present across the three major ceremonies.

In birth, the phrase “*Inan bua bur nora awu, amang ga’e sedon teren*” (The mother who scattered the ashes, father struck the bamboo) uses ashes and bamboo as symbols of life principles and intelligence to be instilled from early childhood.

In marriage, items such as betel nut, cigarettes, head-carrying straps, and areca leaves symbolize union, intimacy, and loyalty. The phrase “*Ami gea ba’a wua ta’a mera wiwir, musung ba’a bako gahu ahang,*” (We have chewed betel nut to redden our lips and smoked tobacco to warm the roof of our mouths) highlights betel nut as a unifier of families, while the cigarette represents intimacy and respect. “*Wua naha lopa gogo leku, ta’a naha lopa lanan baler*” (Betel leaves should not be rolled up, and areca nuts should not be spread out upside down) symbolizes the hope for steadfastness and fidelity, and “*Dadi hu’un naha gi’it, mata naha menon*” (be the foundation that should be firmly attached, and the bond hat should be strong) emphasizes strength, commitment, and responsibility in sustaining marital life.

In the funeral rite, the phrase “*Dadi nitu lau huler unen, noan lau kloang loran,*” (becoming a spirit and a soul in another realm) portrays death through a symbolic transformation into a spirit living in the “village of spirits.” This reflects the belief in the spiritual afterlife, a culturally significant concept in the worldview of the Sikka Krowe community.

These findings confirm the argument of Mitani and Nuwa (2022) that symbolism in oral tradition helps maintain social and moral balance. This study contributes by showing how such symbols are woven into poetic language rather than physical rituals alone.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is frequently used in *Latung Lawang* to amplify emotions and portray extraordinary commitment.

In wedding chants, phrases like “*Ami pulu mora nitun pitu halu nora noan watu*” (We are many people with seven villages of spirits, making requests together with the

stone of supernatural beings), it is hyperbole because the use of the numbers “seven” and “spirit stone” is an exaggeration to emphasize the multitude of ancestors present and the importance of blessings from the spiritual world, and “*Wua pone olan bala, gahar reta kewok wulan*” (The premium areca nut, high above the moon), describes the areca nut as being “high above the moon,” which is an impossible exaggeration. The expression is used to emphasize the extraordinary value and honor associated with the item, symbolizing the dignity and significance of the marriage bond in the traditional ceremony.

As for the poem, “*Jarang Dokar kumen sela sedu sedak, I’ur blon noni tana, Kedu redut bela blo*” (The Dokar horse with a rope and extraordinary seating, its tail reaches the ground, the soles of its hooves make a sound), it exaggerates the features of the Dokar horse, its extraordinary seating, a tail that reaches the ground, and hooves that make a sound. These exaggerated descriptions are not meant to be taken literally but are used to emphasize the pride, dignity, and readiness of the groom as he enters marriage with honor and responsibility.

Likewise, “*Plari nai nesek le’e, napun pitu lori loing, wolot walu lose lewak*” (Just running, not wanting to shift, stepping both feet to reach the hands, crossing seven hills, traversing eight valleys) describes an exaggerated and physically impossible journey running tirelessly, stepping with full force, and crossing seven hills and eight valleys. It emphasizes an extraordinary level of perseverance, determination, and readiness to face challenges in life and marriage.

These findings reinforce the idea from Nur et al. (2025) that hyperbole intensifies the ceremonial atmosphere. While previous studies often overlook this device, this research places hyperbole at the forefront of ritual poetry analysis.

Personification

Personification is present especially in wedding and funeral chants. In marriage, nature is addressed as living beings in “*Neni mora ina niang tanah wawa, hawong mora ama lero wulan reta*” (Asking Mother Earth, speaking to Father Sky).

In death, phrases like “*Nian beta mate ita mate, tana heron potat ita potat*” (The earth says we must die) give human voices to land and earth, reinforcing the belief in nature’s spiritual agency.

This supports Sofyaningrum (2021) claim that personification in traditional poetry reflects animistic worldviews. The present study adds nuance by showing how such personification affirms the interconnectedness between human life and the natural world in Sikka Krowe’s philosophy.

Simile

Simile is used to create soft, poetic comparisons that convey deeper cultural messages.

In marriage, the phrase, “*Buta naha ganu wunga wai paing, naha ganu lado gegan*” (Wrapped like flower petals, like a headband), uses the word “like” to compare a woman to flower petals and a headband. The flower petals symbolize softness and beauty, while the headband represents dignity and strength. The comparison suggests that a woman should be valued, protected, and treated with gentleness and respect in marriage. Another phrase, “*Mu’u lika laka sang, hewar ganu ata rewang, tetor data wawa tana*” (Its fruit like a fence, its heart reaches the ground) it uses the word “like” to compare the banana’s fruit to a fence. The comparison suggests that a married family should be fertile, strong, and protective like a banana tree that bears many fruits and a fence that provides safety. The banana’s heart reaching the ground symbolizes humility and closeness to the earth as a source of life.

In death, the line, “*Potat tat ganu noang, Meseng tat ganu wungun*” (Lost like a waluku star, set like a Salulu Star), presents

death as compared to stars that vanish and set, portraying the loss of a person subtly and poetically.

“*Bile ganu ata blinet, merang ganu ata rema*” (Silent as if no one is there, gone as if on a journey), presents uses the expression “as if” to compare the state of death to silence and a long journey. It suggests that death is not an absolute disappearance, but rather a transition, like someone going on a journey. This comparison provides a soft, poetic way to express the loss and the belief in spiritual continuation.

These poetic comparisons support Familia (2023) that similes universalize emotions, while in this study, they are firmly rooted in agricultural and familial symbolism unique to Sikka culture.

Metonymy

Metonymy is used in *Latung Lawang* to represent broader cultural practices through tangible elements. The phrase “*Wua ba’a mai lema lepo, ta’a ba’a mai rawit woga*” (The betel nut has arrived at the house, the betel leaves have reached the clan) refers to betel nut and areca leaves arriving at the house, which symbolically denotes a marriage proposal and the joining of two clans.

This aligns with the analysis of Bouti et al. (2023), who view metonymy as a means to encode cultural knowledge into familiar symbols. This study affirms that *Latung Lawang* employs metonymy to convey significant social actions through everyday ritual objects.

The Cultural Meanings Conveyed Through the Use of This Figurative Language in the Context of Sikka Krowe Traditional Ceremonies

Birth Ceremony (Lodong Me)

In the *Lodong Me* ceremony, *Latung Lawang* serves as a prayer, guidance, and reflection of core values in raising a child.

The metaphor, “*Me buan waten baken, pu lu’ur puhun pu’an*” (A child is the fruit of the womb that cannot be compared to

anything else or replaced), portrays a child as an irreplaceable gift, emphasizing love and responsibility in child rearing. This metaphor aligns with cultural principles such as *asi* (nurture with love), *asah* (educate with discipline), and *asuh* (protect and provide care), which are taught communally in Sikka Krowe families.

Moreover, the symbolic expression, “*Inan bua bur nora awu, Amang ga’e sedon teren*” (The mother who scattered the ashes, the father who struck the bamboo), uses ashes and bamboo as symbols of life boundaries and intellectual growth. These symbolic elements do not merely beautify the ritual but actively guide parents to instill values of respect, discipline, and environmental consciousness from an early age.

As echoed in Bala (2024), traditional metaphor and symbolism often function to transmit social and spiritual expectations, and this study confirms that role in the specific context of Sikka’s birth traditions.

Wedding Ceremony (Wotik Wawi Dadi and Ro’a Mu’u)

Marriage in the Sikka Krowe tradition is more than a union between individuals; it is a merging of clans, spirits, and life purposes. Figurative expressions in *Latung Lawang* during the wedding ceremony emphasize the sacredness, responsibilities, and emotional depth of this union.

The hyperbole phrase “*Ami pulu mora nitun pitu halu nora noan watu*” (We are many people with seven villages of spirits, making requests together with the stone of supernatural beings) reflects the spiritual authority of ancestors and the communal nature of marriage. The reference to “seven villages of spirits” is culturally significant in Sikka Krowe cosmology, where the number seven symbolizes completeness and sacred balance, while the “villages of spirits” represent the ancestral realm believed to guide and protect the living community during important rituals.

The personification in “*Neni mora ina niang tanah wawa, hawong mora ama lero*

wulan reta” (Asking Mother Earth, speaking to Father sky) invokes blessings from nature, portraying Earth and Sky as sacred guardians of marriage.

These lines align with Mitani and Nuwa (2022), who observed that symbolic language in East Nusa Tenggara traditions maintains social balance through sacred metaphor. However, this study adds new insights by showing that in the Sikka Krowe context, symbolic expressions in *Latung Lawang* are not only about social harmony but also convey distinct cultural nuances. For example, in marriage, the metaphor “*Tilun beler diri rena*” (thin ears for hearing) emphasizes humility and the moral importance of listening between spouses.

The symbolism and metonymy seen in expressions involving betel nut (*wua*) and areca leaf (*ta’a*), such as “*Wua ba’a mai lema lepo, ta’a ba’a mai rawit woga*” (The betel nut has arrived at the house, the betel leaves have reached the clan), signify familial acceptance and social legitimacy.

Similes like “*Buta naha ganu wunga wai*” (Wrapped like flower petals) elevate the role of women in marriage, emphasizing respect, dignity, and protection.

Overall, the cultural meanings embedded in these expressions serve to reinforce unity, loyalty, fertility, and the importance of ancestral and environmental harmony, as supported by Komalasari et al. (2024) who stresses the role of poetic ritual language in shaping societal expectations.

Funeral Ceremony

In Sikka Krowe’s funeral rites, *Latung Lawang* expresses the community’s philosophical view of death as a sacred transformation rather than an end.

The personification, “*Nian beta mate ita mate, tana heron potat ita potat*” (Earth says we must die, Land says we must disappear), shows the earth and land “speaking,” reminding humans that death is nature’s decree.

Similes like, “*Potat tat ganu noang, meseng tat ganu wungun*” (Lost like a

waluku star, set like a Salulu Star) compare the dead to fading stars, reflecting the belief that souls persist beyond the physical world.

Similarly, the metaphor, “*Ela gepang ba’a matan, batu dotor ba’a wa’in*” (Fallen the eyes have closed, Fallen the legs have straightened) presents death as peaceful surrender, reinforcing the cultural expectation of respectful departure.

Symbolic expressions such as “*Dadi nitu lau huler unen, Noang lau kloang loran*” (Becoming a spirit in the village of spirits, A supernatural being in the village of supernatural beings) depict the deceased as journeying to the spirit world, and “*Lau man lau nitu natar pitu, lau noan kloang walu*” (Going to the seven villages of spirits, going to the eight hamlets of supernatural beings) uses sacred numbers to express the multi-layered journey of the soul.

These poetic depictions parallel the findings of County and Kaberia (2019), who argue that figurative language in death rituals helps comfort the living and ensure proper transitions for the dead. Thus, *Latung Lawang* in funeral contexts not only communicates grief and reverence but also reaffirms the communal belief in life’s continuity through spiritual transformation and ancestral connection.

Cultural Values are Reflected Through the Use of *Latung Lawang*

Latung Lawang, as a living oral tradition, conveys a wide spectrum of cultural values that guide the Sikka Krowe community in understanding life, relationships, and rituals. These values are embedded within poetic expressions across birth, marriage, and funeral ceremonies, demonstrating how local wisdom is sustained through symbolic language and communal performance.

Birth Ceremony (*Lodong Me*)

In the *Lodong Me* ceremony, several cultural values are expressed through figurative language.

The value of security is symbolized in the verse, “*Inan bua bur nora awu, Amang ga’e sedon teren*” (The mother who scattered

the ashes, the father who struck the bamboo), in which ashes and bamboo represent life rules and protective boundaries. The child is not only physically protected but morally guided.

Wedding Ceremony (*Wotik Wawi Dadi and Ro’a Mu’u*)

Marriage ceremonies highlight values that promote social harmony and family unity.

The value of security is illustrated through simile in expressions such as “*Mu’u lika laka sang, Hewar ganu ata rewang, Tetor data wawa tana*” (The banana with a long bunch. Its fruit, like a fence, its heart reaches the ground). The banana symbolizes fertility and continuity of life, while the fence conveys protection and safety, reflecting the cultural belief that marriage should provide security for the family.

The value of respect is expressed through metaphor in lines like “*Tihun beker diri rena*” (Thin ears for hearing). This metaphor emphasizes humility and the willingness to listen, showing respect toward one’s spouse, elders, and community values qualities considered essential in sustaining harmony within marital life.

Benevolence appears in the use of metonymy in “*Wua ba’a mai lema lepo, ta’a ba’a mai rawit woga*” (The betel nut has arrived at the house, the betel leaves have reached the clan). Here, betel nut and betel leaves stand for the entire process of offering and acceptance in marriage. They symbolize generosity, kindness, and openness of families to embrace each other, representing the benevolent spirit of Sikka Krowe traditions.

The value of achievement is portrayed through hyperbolic challenges such as “*Napun pitu lori loing, wolot walu lose lewak*” (Crossing seven hills and eight valleys), which symbolize resilience and readiness to take on life’s demands. The exaggeration highlights the cultural expectation that couples must achieve strength and perseverance to overcome challenges in married life.

Universality is reflected in personification expressed in “*Neni mora in niang tanah wawa, hawong mora ama lero wulan reta*” (Asking Mother Earth, speaking to Father Sky). By addressing the earth and sky as parental figures, the community demonstrates reverence for the interconnectedness of humans, nature, and the cosmos, affirming universal values of harmony and balance in life.

The value of tradition is found in the hyperbolic phrase “*Ami pulu mora nitun pitu halu nora noan watu*” (We are many people with seven villages of spirits, making requests together with the stone of supernatural beings). This expression reflects loyalty to ancestral customs, where invoking the presence of spirits affirms the importance of collective identity and adherence to long-standing ritual practices.

Lastly, stimulation or the value of enthusiasm is conveyed through hyperbole in “*Jarang Dokar kumen sela sedu sedak, I’ur blon noni tana, Kedu redut bela blo*” (The Dokar horse with a rope and extraordinary seating, its tail reaches the ground, the soles of its hooves make a sound). The exaggerated description of the horse symbolizes vitality, energy, and pride, reflecting the cultural expectation that the groom enters marriage with passion, honor, and readiness to embrace responsibilities.

Funeral Ceremony

In funeral rituals, *Latung Lawang* carries deeply reflective cultural values that deal with life’s final transition.

Security is expressed in “*Potat tat ganu noang, Meseng tat ganu wungun*” (Lost like a waluku star, set like a Salulu Star), suggesting that death is not the end but a return, offering spiritual comfort and reassurance. Death does not mean the end. We die, but our death is like the Waluku star and the Southern Salulu star. In time, we will shine again at night.

Respect appears in lines such as, “*Dadi nitu lau huler unen*” (The deceased has become a being in the afterlife), “*Leda*

le’u reta gahar, ara ama lero wulan reta” (We place them in a high place, going to face the Father of the sky), which place the departed in a sacred position facing the sky, honoring the soul’s transformation and the ancestors’ presence.

Universality is powerfully encapsulated in “*Nian beta mate ita mate, tana heron potat ita potat*” (The earth says we must die, we will surely die, the land says we are gone, we will definitely be gone), affirming that death is a shared human destiny and a natural part of existence. This universal perspective reinforces humility and a collective acceptance of mortality, reflecting the Sikka Krowe belief that human life is inseparable from the cycles of nature and the authority of ancestral spirits. It guides behavior by encouraging respect for natural forces and solidarity within the community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that *Latung Lawang* is a traditional poetic chant rich in figurative language and cultural values, particularly within the contexts of birth (*Lodong Me*), marriage (*Wotik Wawi Dadi* and *Ro’a Mu’u*), and funeral ceremonies of the Sikka Krowe community. This study successfully addresses the three research problems: (1) identifying six out of ten types of figurative language, with symbolism and hyperbole as the most dominant, followed by metaphor, simile, and personification, while metonymy appeared least frequently; (2) interpreting the cultural meanings that reflect philosophical worldviews on the relationship between humans, nature, and ancestors; and (3) analyzing the cultural values reflected in *Latung Lawang*, including freedom, security, respect, benevolence, achievement, conservatism, universality, and tradition.

The contribution of this research lies in its integrative analysis between empirical data and Schwartz’s theory of universal cultural values, affirming that *Latung Lawang* is not merely an aesthetic expression

but also functions as a moral guide, a reinforcement of communal identity, and a medium for intergenerational transmission of values. These findings provide a new perspective on oral literature studies, showing how oral traditions can serve as strategic cultural instruments in shaping character and sustaining social order.

In practical terms, preserving *Latung Lawang* may involve documentation, teaching it in schools, and supporting elder performers who still master the tradition. Looking forward, this research is expected to serve as a foundation for future studies on the relevance of *Latung Lawang* to cultural education and the strengthening of local identity, while also contributing to broader discussions on the role of oral literature in the global context.

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