

RAMBU SOLO' AS A SOURCE OF ETHNOPEDAGOGY: INTEGRATING ETHNOMATHEMATICS AND INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LITERACY THROUGH TORAJAN LOCAL WISDOM

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ABSTRACT

Rambu Solo' is one of the most significant cultural traditions of the Torajan community. Beyond its ritual function, the tradition contains local knowledge that can be transformed into meaningful learning resources. This study aims to explore the potential of Rambu Solo' as a source of ethnopedagogy that integrates ethnomathematics and Indonesian language literacy. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive ethnographic design. Data were collected through observation of Rambu Solo' practices, interviews with traditional leaders, religious leaders, bereaved families, and community members, as well as documentation and literature review. Data were analyzed through data reduction, categorization, data presentation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that Rambu Solo' contains various forms of mathematical knowledge, including numbers, counting, measurement, comparison, proportion, geometry, spatial organization, and patterns. At the same time, the tradition provides rich linguistic resources, including cultural terms, oral expressions, narratives, interpersonal communication, and descriptions of ritual activities that can be developed into learning materials for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These findings suggest that Rambu Solo' can serve as an interdisciplinary learning context connecting mathematics, language, culture, and students' everyday experiences. Integrating ethnomathematics and Indonesian language literacy through local cultural practices can support contextual learning while strengthening students' cultural awareness and appreciation of local heritage.

Keywords: *Rambu Solo', ethnomathematics, Indonesian language literacy, ethnopedagogy, local wisdom, Toraja*

INTRODUCTION

Education should not be separated from the social and cultural environment in which learners live. Learning becomes more meaningful when academic knowledge is connected to students' experiences, communities, and cultural backgrounds. In culturally diverse societies such as Indonesia, local wisdom can provide valuable resources for connecting school knowledge with students' everyday realities. Ethnomathematics offers an important perspective in this context by recognizing that mathematical knowledge is not limited to formal mathematical concepts developed within academic institutions. Mathematical ideas can also be found in everyday cultural practices, including counting, measuring, classifying, comparing, designing, organizing space, and identifying patterns. Cultural practices can therefore become meaningful contexts for mathematics learning because they enable students to encounter mathematical concepts within situations that are familiar and relevant to their lives. The Torajan community possesses rich cultural traditions that contain various forms of local knowledge.

One of the most prominent traditions is Rambu Solo', a funeral ceremony that represents an important part of Torajan social and cultural life. The ceremony involves families and community members in a series of activities governed by cultural values, customary rules, social relationships, and symbolic meanings. Rambu Solo' should therefore not be viewed merely as a ceremonial practice. It also represents a cultural knowledge system through which values, social relationships, communication practices, and community knowledge are

transmitted across generations. Previous research has indicated that Rambu Solo' contains mathematical elements, including geometry, measurement, and proportional reasoning, suggesting its potential as a context for ethnomathematics-based mathematics education. In addition to mathematics, Rambu Solo' provides rich linguistic resources for Indonesian language education. The tradition involves oral communication, traditional terminology, narratives, explanations, descriptions, interpersonal interaction, and the transmission of cultural meanings. These elements can be transformed into authentic learning materials for developing students' Indonesian language literacy. Local cultural practices can provide meaningful contexts for teaching students how to observe, listen, interview, read, interpret, and produce texts. In this sense, culture becomes not merely an object of study but also a source of literacy development. The integration of ethnomathematics and Indonesian language literacy is particularly important because mathematics and language are interconnected in the process of learning. Mathematical reasoning requires students to understand information, interpret problems, communicate ideas, construct arguments, and represent solutions. Similarly, language learning can benefit from contexts that require students to analyze information, interpret quantitative data, and communicate mathematical ideas. Based on this perspective, Rambu Solo' offers an opportunity to develop an interdisciplinary ethnopedagogical approach that connects Mathematics Education and Indonesian Language Education. The present study therefore aims to explore the potential of Rambu Solo' as a source of ethnopedagogy by identifying mathematical concepts and language-literacy resources embedded in the tradition and examining how these cultural elements can be transformed into contextual learning activities.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive ethnographic design. The research was conducted in Rantekata Congregation, Issong Kalua' Village, Buntao' District, North Toraja Regency, Indonesia. The research site was selected because the community continues to practice and preserve various cultural traditions associated with Rambu Solo'. The research participants consisted of traditional leaders, religious leaders, bereaved families, and community members who possessed knowledge and experience regarding the implementation of Rambu Solo'. Participants were selected purposively based on their involvement in or understanding of the cultural practices being investigated. Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. Observation was conducted to identify activities, objects, symbols, patterns, measurements, spatial arrangements, and communication practices associated with Rambu Solo'. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' interpretations of cultural symbols, traditional practices, mathematical activities, and linguistic expressions used during the ceremony. Documentation was used to complement observational and interview data, while the literature review provided theoretical and empirical support for interpreting the findings. Data analysis followed several stages: data reduction, data categorization, data presentation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The data were organized into two major analytical domains: ethnomathematics and Indonesian language literacy. The ethnomathematics domain included numbers, measurement, comparison, proportion, geometry, patterns, and spatial organization. The language-literacy domain included cultural vocabulary, oral expressions, narratives, descriptions, explanations, procedural texts, observation reports, and communication skills. Data credibility was established through source and technique triangulation. Information obtained from interviews was compared with observational findings, documentation, and relevant literature.

RESULTS

Rambu Solo' as a Source of Mathematical Knowledge

The findings indicate that Rambu Solo' contains numerous activities that can be interpreted from an ethnomathematical perspective. Community members engage in counting, grouping, measuring, comparing, determining quantities, organizing spaces, and arranging activities according to particular sequences and customary rules. These activities demonstrate that mathematical reasoning exists within cultural practices before it is formally represented as mathematical knowledge in schools. Such findings support the view that mathematics can be identified in the everyday practices of communities.

For example, activities involving grouping and distribution can be connected to whole numbers, operations, fractions, ratios, and proportional reasoning. Measurement activities can be connected to units and measurement concepts, while spatial arrangements can be used to introduce geometric concepts. Patterns and sequences in cultural activities can also provide contexts for teaching mathematical reasoning. The educational significance of these findings lies in the possibility of transforming cultural activities into mathematical problems. Rather than presenting culture merely as an illustration in a mathematics textbook, teachers can use Rambu Solo' as a context in which students identify, formulate, and solve mathematical problems. This approach may help students recognize that mathematics is not an abstract discipline disconnected from their environment. Instead, mathematical thinking can be found in cultural practices and everyday decision-making.

Rambu Solo' as a Source of Indonesian Language Literacy

Rambu Solo' is also a rich environment for language and communication. The ceremony involves interactions among family members, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community members. These interactions generate various forms of oral communication, traditional terminology, cultural expressions, narratives, explanations, and descriptions. These linguistic resources can be transformed into authentic Indonesian language learning materials. Students, for example, can observe a cultural activity, interview community members, collect information, and transform the information into an observation report. The cultural context can also be used to develop descriptive, narrative, explanatory, and procedural texts. Students may describe the stages of a cultural ceremony, explain the meaning of particular symbols, narrate the experiences of community members, or write procedural texts describing particular cultural activities. Such activities provide opportunities for students to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while simultaneously strengthening cultural literacy. The integration of local culture into Indonesian language education is particularly relevant because students can learn language through authentic situations rather than relying exclusively on decontextualized examples. Rambu Solo' therefore provides a culturally meaningful source of texts and communicative activities.

Integrating Ethnomathematics and Indonesian Language Literacy

One of the major findings of this study is that mathematics and Indonesian language learning can be integrated through a shared cultural context. A single Rambu Solo' activity can generate learning opportunities in both disciplines. For example, students can observe a particular activity within the Rambu Solo' ceremony. During the observation stage, they record information, ask questions, conduct interviews, and identify important details. These activities develop listening, speaking, observation, and information-gathering skills. Students can then identify mathematical elements within the observed activity. They may analyze quantities, measurements, ratios, patterns, spatial arrangements, or classifications. The identified

mathematical elements can subsequently be transformed into mathematical problems. After solving the mathematical problems, students can communicate their findings through written texts. They may produce an observation report, explanatory text, descriptive text, or reflective essay explaining the relationship between the cultural practice and the mathematical concepts identified. Thus, one cultural context can facilitate the development of mathematical literacy and Indonesian language literacy simultaneously.

Rambu Solo' Context	Ethnomathematics	Indonesian Language Education
Grouping and counting	Numbers and operations	Presenting information
Measurement	Measurement and units	Procedural text
Comparison	Ratio and proportion	Explaining relationships
Spatial arrangement	Geometry	Descriptive text
Sequence of activities	Patterns and logical reasoning	Procedural/explanatory text
Interviewing traditional leaders	Data collection	Listening and speaking
Documentation	Data analysis	Observation report
Interpretation of symbols	Classification	Interpretation and cultural literacy

This integration demonstrates the potential of ethnopedagogy to bridge local knowledge and formal school knowledge. Culture is not treated as an additional topic outside the curriculum but as a learning context through which students construct academic knowledge.

A Conceptual Model for Rambu Solo'-Based Learning

Based on the findings, an interdisciplinary learning framework can be developed through five stages: cultural exploration, concept identification, mathematical modeling, text production, and cultural reflection. The first stage, cultural exploration, requires students to observe or investigate a Rambu Solo' practice. The second stage, concept identification, asks students to identify mathematical and linguistic elements within the cultural practice. The third stage, mathematical modeling, transforms cultural activities into mathematical problems that students analyze and solve. The fourth stage, text production, requires students to communicate their observations and mathematical findings through Indonesian texts. The final stage, cultural reflection, encourages students to discuss the cultural values, meanings, and social significance identified during the learning process.

The framework can be represented as follows:

Rambu Solo' → Cultural Exploration → Identification of Mathematical and Linguistic Elements → Mathematical Modeling → Text Production → Cultural Reflection → Mathematical and Language Literacy

This model provides opportunities for students to develop cognitive, communication, reasoning, and cultural competencies simultaneously.

Implications for Mathematics Education and Indonesian Language Education

For Mathematics Education, the findings indicate that local cultural practices can provide realistic and meaningful contexts for learning mathematical concepts. Students can encounter mathematics through activities that are familiar to them, thereby reducing the distance between abstract mathematical concepts and everyday experiences. For Indonesian Language Education, Rambu Solo' can serve as a source of authentic texts and literacy

experiences. Students can listen to cultural narratives, conduct interviews, read cultural documents, interpret information, and produce various forms of written and oral texts. The integration of the two disciplines also supports interdisciplinary learning. Students do not learn mathematics and language as completely separate forms of knowledge. Instead, they use language to understand and communicate mathematical ideas while using mathematical reasoning to analyze information contained in cultural contexts. Such an approach can contribute to the development of students' mathematical literacy, language literacy, cultural literacy, critical thinking, communication skills, and appreciation of local heritage.

DISCUSSION

Cultural Knowledge Embedded in Rambu Solo'

The findings demonstrate that Rambu Solo' represents more than a traditional funeral ceremony. It constitutes a complex cultural practice through which knowledge, values, social relationships, communication patterns, and collective identities are constructed and transmitted. The various activities involved in the ceremony require community members to make decisions, organize resources, communicate with others, follow customary rules, and interpret symbolic meanings. These practices indicate that cultural activities can function as informal learning environments in which community members acquire and reproduce knowledge through participation. This finding is consistent with the broader perspective of ethnopedagogy, which emphasizes the importance of local knowledge and cultural practices as sources for educational development. From this perspective, education should not merely transfer knowledge from textbooks to learners but should also recognize knowledge that has developed within communities. Rambu Solo' therefore provides an important cultural context for connecting formal education with the lived experiences of students. The educational value of Rambu Solo' lies particularly in its multidimensional character. The tradition contains mathematical practices, linguistic practices, social interactions, symbolic representations, and moral values simultaneously. Consequently, it provides an opportunity to develop interdisciplinary learning rather than treating mathematics, language, and culture as isolated domains.

Ethnomathematical Dimensions of Rambu Solo'

The findings reveal several mathematical activities embedded in the implementation of Rambu Solo', including counting, grouping, measuring, comparing, arranging, determining quantities, and organizing space. Although these activities are not necessarily expressed using formal mathematical terminology, they demonstrate mathematical reasoning embedded in everyday cultural practices. This finding supports the fundamental argument of ethnomathematics that mathematical ideas can be identified within the practices of different cultural communities. Mathematics is therefore not exclusively produced and practiced within formal educational institutions. Community members also use mathematical reasoning when dealing with quantities, measurements, spatial arrangements, patterns, and relationships. The counting and grouping activities found in Rambu Solo', for example, can be transformed into learning situations involving number operations, fractions, ratios, and proportional reasoning. Similarly, activities involving measurement can provide contexts for learning units, length, area, volume, and estimation. Spatial arrangements associated with the ceremony can provide opportunities to introduce geometric concepts, while patterns and sequences can be connected to algebraic and logical reasoning. The pedagogical significance of these findings lies in the possibility of transforming implicit mathematical knowledge into explicit mathematical learning. Students can be encouraged to observe a cultural practice, identify the mathematical

ideas embedded in it, represent those ideas using mathematical concepts, and then solve related problems. Such an approach can make mathematics more contextual and meaningful. Instead of encountering mathematics solely through abstract symbols and decontextualized exercises, students can begin with familiar cultural situations and gradually move toward formal mathematical representation. This transition from concrete cultural experience to mathematical abstraction is particularly relevant for mathematics learning because students often experience difficulties when mathematical concepts are presented without meaningful contexts. Furthermore, ethnomathematical learning may strengthen students' mathematical identity. When students discover that mathematical thinking exists within their own community, they may develop the understanding that mathematics is not a foreign or exclusively Western form of knowledge. Instead, they recognize mathematics as part of human cultural activity.

Rambu Solo' and Indonesian Language Literacy

The findings also indicate that Rambu Solo' provides a rich linguistic environment. The implementation of the ceremony involves communication among family members, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community members. The communication includes cultural terminology, oral expressions, explanations, narratives, instructions, questions, responses, and descriptions. These linguistic practices have considerable potential for Indonesian language education. Rather than relying exclusively on texts created outside students' cultural environments, teachers can use local cultural practices as sources for authentic literacy activities. For example, students can interview traditional leaders about the meaning of particular stages of Rambu Solo'. The results of the interview can subsequently be transformed into an observation report or explanatory text. Students can also document cultural terminology and develop a glossary, write descriptive texts about ceremonial activities, construct narratives based on community stories, or produce reflective texts concerning the cultural values they encounter.

Such activities develop several language competencies simultaneously. Interviewing requires students to formulate questions, listen actively, and record information. Reading cultural documents develops comprehension and interpretation. Writing reports requires students to organize information logically and use appropriate language structures. Presenting findings orally develops speaking and communication skills. Therefore, Rambu Solo' can function as an authentic literacy environment. Students learn language by engaging with meaningful information rather than simply completing isolated language exercises. The cultural context provides a communicative purpose for reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The Relationship between Mathematical Literacy and Language Literacy

An important implication of this study is that mathematical literacy and language literacy are not independent competencies. Mathematical learning itself requires substantial language competence. Students must understand questions, interpret information, identify relationships, formulate explanations, and communicate mathematical reasoning. Similarly, language literacy can involve the interpretation of quantitative information, classification, comparison, sequencing, and logical reasoning. Rambu Solo' provides a context in which these competencies can be developed simultaneously. For example, students may observe the organization of a cultural activity and collect quantitative information. They then analyze the information mathematically and communicate their findings in written or oral form. This process requires students to move across different forms of representation. A cultural activity may first be represented through observation and narrative, then through numerical information, mathematical models, tables, diagrams, and finally through explanatory or

argumentative text. Such movement between representations is educationally significant because it encourages students to interpret information from multiple perspectives. In mathematics education, students learn to represent and reason mathematically, while in Indonesian language education they learn to organize and communicate ideas effectively. The integration of these competencies may therefore contribute to a broader conception of literacy in which students are expected not only to read and write texts but also to interpret, analyze, represent, and communicate information in different forms.

Rambu Solo' as an Interdisciplinary Learning Context

The findings suggest that Rambu Solo' can provide a strong foundation for interdisciplinary learning. An interdisciplinary approach allows a single cultural phenomenon to be explored through different disciplinary perspectives without losing its cultural meaning. In Mathematics Education, students may investigate quantities, measurements, proportions, patterns, spatial arrangements, and data. In Indonesian Language Education, the same students may investigate terminology, oral traditions, narratives, descriptions, and communication practices. In cultural education, they may examine social values, kinship, solidarity, responsibility, and cultural identity. This integration can be implemented through project-based learning. Students could conduct a small-scale cultural investigation beginning with observation and interviews. They could then identify mathematical concepts from their observations, analyze quantitative information, and produce written reports in Indonesian. The final project could take the form of a digital cultural portfolio containing photographs, interview transcripts, mathematical analyses, explanatory texts, and reflections on cultural values. Such a project would allow students to demonstrate mathematical, linguistic, digital, collaborative, and cultural competencies simultaneously.

The interdisciplinary potential of Rambu Solo' is particularly relevant in contemporary education because learning increasingly emphasizes the ability to connect knowledge across disciplines and apply it to authentic problems. Local culture can provide a meaningful foundation for achieving this goal because it offers a real-world context that students can observe, investigate, analyze, and communicate.

Ethnopedagogy and Cultural Sustainability

The use of Rambu Solo' as a learning resource also has implications for cultural sustainability. Globalization and changes in young people's lifestyles may create challenges for the transmission of local cultural knowledge. Education can play an important role in ensuring that cultural knowledge remains meaningful to younger generations. However, cultural preservation through education should not simply involve memorizing traditional terminology or ceremonial procedures. Students should be encouraged to understand the meanings, values, and knowledge systems underlying cultural practices. In this regard, ethnopedagogy offers an alternative approach. Cultural practices become sources for inquiry and critical reflection. Students can ask why particular practices exist, what mathematical or linguistic knowledge is embedded within them, how their meanings have changed, and how the tradition relates to contemporary society. This approach positions students not merely as passive recipients of cultural heritage but as active interpreters and producers of cultural knowledge. Such a position is important for sustainable cultural transmission because traditions are more likely to remain meaningful when younger generations understand their significance rather than merely reproducing their external forms.

Implications for Teacher Education

The findings also have implications for teacher preparation in both Mathematics Education and Indonesian Language Education. Prospective teachers need to develop the ability to identify educational resources within their students' cultural environments. For mathematics teachers, this means developing competence in identifying mathematical ideas within cultural practices and transforming them into mathematically appropriate learning activities. Teachers must nevertheless distinguish between genuine mathematical structures within cultural practices and superficial cultural references. Cultural contexts should be used to support mathematical understanding rather than simply decorate mathematics lessons. For Indonesian language teachers, cultural contexts can be used to develop authentic reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. Teachers can encourage students to collect local narratives, interview cultural practitioners, document cultural terminology, and produce various types of texts based on their findings. Teacher education programs can therefore incorporate local cultural inquiry as part of their pedagogical preparation. Prospective teachers can conduct ethnographic mini-research projects and transform their findings into lesson plans, teaching modules, worksheets, or project-based learning activities.

Proposed Interdisciplinary Learning Framework

Based on the findings, an interdisciplinary Rambu Solo'-based learning framework can be developed through five interconnected stages.

First, cultural exploration. Students observe, document, or investigate a particular aspect of Rambu Solo'. They interact with community members and collect information about the practice.

Second, knowledge identification. Students identify mathematical and linguistic elements embedded in the cultural activity. At this stage, teachers facilitate students' recognition of mathematical concepts and language resources.

Third, disciplinary analysis. Students analyze the identified elements using appropriate mathematical and linguistic concepts. Mathematical analysis may involve measurement, ratios, geometry, patterns, or data, while language analysis may involve vocabulary, text structure, discourse, and meaning.

Fourth, knowledge representation and communication. Students communicate their findings through mathematical representations and Indonesian texts. They may create tables, diagrams, mathematical models, observation reports, explanatory texts, or presentations.

Fifth, cultural reflection. Students reflect on the cultural meanings, social values, and relevance of the knowledge they have learned. This stage allows academic learning to be connected with cultural identity and social responsibility.

The framework can therefore be conceptualized as:

**Cultural Practice → Observation → Mathematical and Linguistic Identification
→ Mathematical Analysis + Language Analysis → Representation and Communication
→ Cultural Reflection**

This framework demonstrates that Rambu Solo' can function as a bridge between cultural knowledge and formal education.

Theoretical and Practical Contribution

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of ethnopedagogy by demonstrating how a single cultural practice can accommodate multiple domains of knowledge. The findings extend the discussion of ethnomathematics beyond the identification of mathematical concepts by connecting mathematical knowledge with language,

communication, and cultural interpretation. Practically, the study provides a foundation for developing interdisciplinary teaching materials. Rambu Solo' can be transformed into culturally responsive worksheets, teaching modules, project-based learning activities, digital learning resources, and authentic assessment tasks. The most important contribution is therefore not simply identifying mathematics or language within Rambu Solo', but demonstrating how cultural knowledge can become a starting point for students to construct, analyze, and communicate knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. However, the use of cultural practices in education should be conducted carefully. Teachers need to respect community values, obtain appropriate consent when documenting cultural practices, and avoid reducing complex traditions to simplified classroom examples. Cultural knowledge should be presented accurately and respectfully, while community members should be recognized as important knowledge holders.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Rambu Solo' has considerable potential as a culturally responsive learning context. Its mathematical, linguistic, social, and symbolic dimensions create opportunities for interdisciplinary education that is academically meaningful and culturally grounded.

CONCLUSION

Rambu Solo' has substantial potential to serve as an ethnopedagogical resource for Mathematics Education and Indonesian Language Education. From an ethnomathematical perspective, various activities within Rambu Solo' contain mathematical ideas related to numbers, measurement, comparison, proportion, geometry, patterns, and spatial organization. From the perspective of Indonesian Language Education, the tradition provides rich linguistic and literacy resources, including cultural terminology, oral expressions, narratives, descriptions, explanations, and communicative practices. The integration of these two disciplines can be implemented through a learning framework consisting of cultural exploration, identification of mathematical and linguistic concepts, mathematical modeling, text production, and cultural reflection. Such an approach positions local culture not merely as an object of preservation but as a source of knowledge that can be transformed into meaningful educational experiences. Future research should focus on developing and testing concrete learning materials, such as ethnomathematics-based worksheets, Indonesian language teaching modules, interdisciplinary project-based learning models, or digital learning resources based on Rambu Solo'. Experimental and design-based research could subsequently be conducted to examine the effectiveness of these resources in improving students' mathematical literacy, Indonesian language literacy, and cultural awareness.

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