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Acquisition Planning for Local Wisdom: Sustaining the Jambi Malay Seloko Tradition through Curriculum Integration

Mohd. Norma Sampoerno[1], Nazurty[2], Eko Kuntarto[3], Hary Soedarto Harjono[4], Mar Atun Saadah[5], and Agustiyara[6]
[1] UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia
[2,3,4,5] Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia
[6] Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

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ABSTRACT

This study examines *Seloko Adat*, a traditional oral tradition of the Jambi Malay community, through the lens of anthropolinguistic pragmatics and language planning. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research analyses *Seloko* performances across six stages of the wedding ceremony to determine how linguistic structures regulate social interaction and sustain communal identity. Findings reveal that these rituals utilize elaborate metaphors and indirect speech acts to uphold Malay social norms and interpersonal politeness. Pragmatic analysis demonstrates that *Seloko* serves as a critical mechanism for building inter-family relationships and managing social expectations within the ritual context. However, facing a critical decline in intergenerational transmission, the study explores the pedagogical potential of integrating these linguistic traditions into local curricula as a form of acquisition planning. By documenting this diminishing oral tradition, the research highlights the vital role of ritualized language in maintaining social cohesion and proposes concrete language-in-education frameworks for its curriculum integration to support language revitalization and character development within contemporary Indonesian society.

Corresponding Author: mohdnormasampoerno@uinjambi.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In societies that rely primarily on oral modes of knowledge transmission, oral traditions—such as poetry, myths, songs, proverbs, and legends—play a fundamental role in conveying cultural knowledge, and values, making their preservation essential for sustaining local wisdom and cultural identity across generations (Caesarine & Setyaningsih, 2023; Melati & Rahardi, 2022). In Indonesia, a country rich with diverse ethnic cultures, oral literature (*tradisi lisan*) functions as a repository of collective memory and values (Prastio & Nurzafira, 2021). It provides guidance for proper conduct and social order through stories and sayings handed down by elders (R Sibarani, 2018; Taussogarova et al., 2024). Such local wisdom, when applied in daily life, embodies moral teachings and norms that regulate community behaviour (Lubis, 2019). However, as

modernization and globalization continue to advance, many oral traditions face the risk of attrition (Iroth & Tatipang, 2025; Warami et al., 2025). This necessitates an increased urgency for researchers to both document and research such traditions.

Seloko Adat Jambi is an example of a vibrant oral tradition from Jambi Province on the island of Sumatra (Purba et al., 2025). *Seloko* refers to traditional Malay proverbial expressions or poetic aphorisms that are recited in ritual and daily contexts (Indrayani & Syuhada, 2020; Karim, 2017). Jambi's *Seloko* are famed for their elegant language and deep metaphorical meanings (Fajar et al., 2024; Nurzafira et al., 2020), encapsulating religious, moral, and social values (Rahmatullaili & Putri, 2022). Historically, the practice of *Seloko* in Jambi dates back to the 7th-century Malay kingdom era and has been passed down orally in the Malay-speaking communities of Seberang Kota Jambi (the old quarter of Jambi City) (Gafar, 2012; Indrayani & Syuhada, 2020).

In essence, *Seloko* expressions articulate the worldview of the Jambi Malay people – the relationship between humans and the Creator (Prastio & Nurzafira, 2021), among fellow humans (Indrayani & Syuhada, 2020), and with the natural environment (Fajar et al., 2024). For example, many *Seloko* lines take the form of *peribahasa* (proverbs) that impart moral guidance and social sanctions (Prastio & Nurzafira, 2021). These proverbial sayings are intended to *enforce* social norms by praising virtuous conduct and cautioning against violations, thus strengthening communal ethics (Nurzafira et al., 2020). The Provincial Customary Institution has catalogued seven categories of *Seloko*, covering various domains of life – including customary law, leadership, social life, family, and marriage – thereby emphasising the breadth of wisdom encapsulated in this oral tradition.

In contemporary practice, not all categories of Jambi's *Seloko* remain active in daily life (Fajar et al., 2024; Rahmatullaili & Putri, 2022). The form that endures most prominently is *Seloko Adat Perkawinan (SAP),* the marriage customary *Seloko* recited during traditional wedding ceremonies (Nurzafira et al., 2020; Oktariza & Efendi, 2023). In fact, prior studies confirm that SAP is considered an essential ritual element in the majority of Jambi Malay weddings (Hasnidar et al., 2021), performed at every major stage from the initial introductions between families through the proposal and finally the wedding reception (Gafar, 2012; Rahmatullaili & Putri, 2022). The continued vitality of *Seloko* in weddings suggests a remarkable adaptability of this oral tradition to modern contexts (Caesarine & Setyaningsih, 2023; Purba et al., 2025).

The content and language of the *Seloko* have evolved subtly to remain relevant to contemporary audiences, while still preserving their core traditional meanings (Robert Sibarani & Lubis, 2022; Simamora et al., 2024). This adaptability is evident in how speakers modify interpretations and emphases in the *Seloko* to suit present-day social sensibilities without departing from customary protocol (Fajar et al., 2024; Gafar, 2012). However, the very use of archaic metaphor and indirect allusion in *Seloko* poses a challenge for younger generations (Nurzafira et al., 2020; Oktariza & Efendi, 2023). Local cultural experts observe that many people, especially youth, cannot readily grasp the intended meanings of *Seloko* verses because they are expressed in figurative and idiomatic language (Fajar et al., 2024; Gafar, 2012; Purba et al., 2025). For instance, an ethnographic survey Supian et al., (2025) found that in one Jambi village only a small fraction of respondents understood the messages of *Seloko* adat.

Although this was a limited case study, it supports broader concerns of a failing transmission of local knowledge to the next generation (Nurzafira et al., 2020). Andryadi et al., (2025) similarly argue that there has been a breakdown in the preservation of *Seloko* knowledge in the digital era. These findings highlight a critical gap: as the bearers of the tradition age, the nuanced meanings of *Seloko* risk being lost if not systematically documented, analysed, and taught to younger members of the community.

Previous research on Jambi's *Seloko* provides valuable background but also indicates several gaps that the present study aims to address. A number of studies have examined how *Seloko* principles remain relevant to modern social life – highlighting, for instance, traditional leadership ideals, local concepts of democracy and consensus (Gafar, 2012; Karim, 2017), conflict resolution through tolerance (Indrayani & Syuhada, 2020; Rahmatullaili & Putri, 2022), inter-religious harmony (Purba et al., 2025), and multicultural coexistence in the Jambi community (Fajar et al., 2024). Several works focus specifically on *Seloko Adat Perkawinan*, describing its role in wedding ceremonies (Nurzafira et al., 2020). There has also been linguistic interest in the distinctive metaphors and idioms of *Seloko*; recent studies began interpreting the figurative language and implicit meanings in these expressions (Fajar et al., 2024; Prastio & Nurzafira, 2021).

Nevertheless, no prior study has undertaken a comprehensive discourse-level analysis of *Seloko adat* in context, examining how entire sequences of *Seloko* are used interactively through the course of an actual ritual. Moreover, while the importance of preserving *Seloko*'s wisdom is often noted, few have investigated why contemporary audiences struggle with comprehension or how the tradition might be revitalized for future sustainability (Andryadi et al., 2025; Supian et al., 2025). However, a key gap has been identified in the educational integration process (Supian et al., 2025). One initiative has produced a supplemental textbook on local oral traditions; yet, the potential for incorporating *Seloko* into the school curriculum has not been fully explored.

In addition, this study investigates the *Seloko Adat Perkawinan* Jambi in depth, focusing on its discourse structure, pragmatic meaning, and functions within the wedding context. It also explores the implications of these findings for cultural preservation and education. By analysing authentic *Seloko* performances from multiple weddings, the study aims to elucidate how the Jambi Malay community uses this oral tradition to negotiate social relationships and convey values. Therefore, we seek to document and analyse the *Seloko* in its living context, and to provide insights that can aid in safeguarding this intangible cultural heritage. Thus, the objective is firstly to enhance the academic comprehension of Malay oral traditions and secondly to facilitate the incorporation of local cultural content into contemporary educational frameworks.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Anthropolinguistic Perspectives on Language and Oral Tradition

Anthropological linguistics, also referred to as linguistic anthropology (Hesami et al., 2021), offers a theoretical framework for the examination of the interaction between language and culture (Hesami et al., 2021; Iroth & Tatipang, 2025). In this view, language is not merely a neutral conduit for information, but a cultural resource that encodes a community's values, beliefs, and social structures (Khotimah et al., 2020; Prastio & Nurzafira, 2021). A key concept in anthropolinguistics is indexicality – the idea that linguistic elements point to (or index) aspects of the social context (Robert Sibarani & Lubis, 2022). In ritual speech, for instance, the choice of pronouns or honorifics can index social identities and relationships (Fajar et al., 2024). A relevant example is provided by Kasmawati et al. (2025) in their study of a Makassar wedding ritual: the ritual *Anrong Bunting Karaeng* speech features pronoun systems that distinguish internal participants (the bride, groom, and ritual performers) and external participants (families, guests) (Kasmawati et al., 2025). These pronouns not only fulfil grammatical roles but actively construct social hierarchy and authority within the ceremony (Rahmatullaili & Putri, 2022).

Pragmatics complements anthropolinguistics by providing tools to analyse how meaning is conveyed in context. In pragmatic terms, many ritual utterances can be seen as indirect speech acts (Setiawan, 2022) – the literal semantic content differs from the

intended social act. In a wedding *Seloko*, a speaker might utter a flowery metaphor that literally describes natural phenomena, but pragmatically it is a polite request or a proposal (Nurzafira et al., 2020). This indirectness is closely tied to politeness strategies and face-saving behaviour in many cultures (Sanaliati & Iswatiningsih, 2025). Malay communication norms, in particular, place a high value on *halus* (refined, gentle speech) and aversion to direct confrontation (Prastio & Nurzafira, 2021; Purba et al., 2025). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously described the Indonesian concept of avoiding *kasar* (coarse) behaviour in favor of *halus* social interaction (Geertz, 2025). We can see this at play in ritual contexts: to be effective and culturally appropriate, a speech act must be couched in polite and often figurative language (Geertz, 2025).

Oral Traditions, Cultural Identity, and Education

Beyond analysis of the tradition itself, there is a growing recognition of the value of integrating indigenous oral traditions into contemporary education and community life (Andryadi et al., 2025; Robert Sibarani & Liando, 2020). Oral literature embodies local wisdom (kearifan lokal) – a set of principles proven over generations to guide behaviour and strengthen social cohesion (Lubis, 2019). In the context of Jambi Malay society, Seloko adat has long functioned as a moral compass and a means of cultural continuity (Supian et al., 2025). However, as noted earlier, younger people today often find it difficult to understand or appreciate these traditional expressions. This disconnect poses a risk to cultural sustainability: if the meanings behind the words are lost, the practice may eventually become a hollow performance. Therefore, scholars and educators argue for proactive measures to bridge the gap between generations (Andryadi et al., 2025; Lubis, 2019; Robert Sibarani & Liando, 2020).

One strategy is the formal inclusion of local oral traditions in school curriculum (Supian et al., 2025). In Indonesia, the concept of *muatan lokal* (local content) in education was established by policy to ensure that regional languages and cultures could be taught as part of the curriculum (e.g., per national education regulations) (Andryadi et al., 2025). Lubis (2019) illustrates this with the case of the *Nandong* oral tradition from Simeulue, Aceh. Nandong, a form of sung poetry rich in Islamic values and local history, was introduced as a subject in schools to counteract cultural erosion by outside influences (Lubis, 2019). The results were promising: students who learned Nandong in class not only gained skills in that oral art, but also internalized its messages of mutual help, resilience, and respect (Lubis, 2019). Lubis found that incorporating Nandong into lessons improved students' understanding of their heritage and nurtured character traits like persistence and cooperation, which are embedded in the Nandong verses (Lubis, 2019).

Additionally, a collaboration between teachers and tradition-bearers (local Nandong artists) was key to success, ensuring authenticity and community involvement. This case demonstrates how educational institutions can play a role in safeguarding intangible culture while enriching students' moral and cultural education. By learning an oral tradition, young people effectively *learn about themselves*: their community's history, values, and identity (Robert Sibarani & Lubis, 2022). In this study, three distinct domains – namely, anthropological analysis, pragmatic discourse theory, and traditional marriage customs – provide the foundation for the present inquiry into *Seloko Adat Perkawinan* in Jambi. The interconnections among these fields are illustrated in the literature framework (see **Figure 1**), which highlights how each contributes to the central exploration.

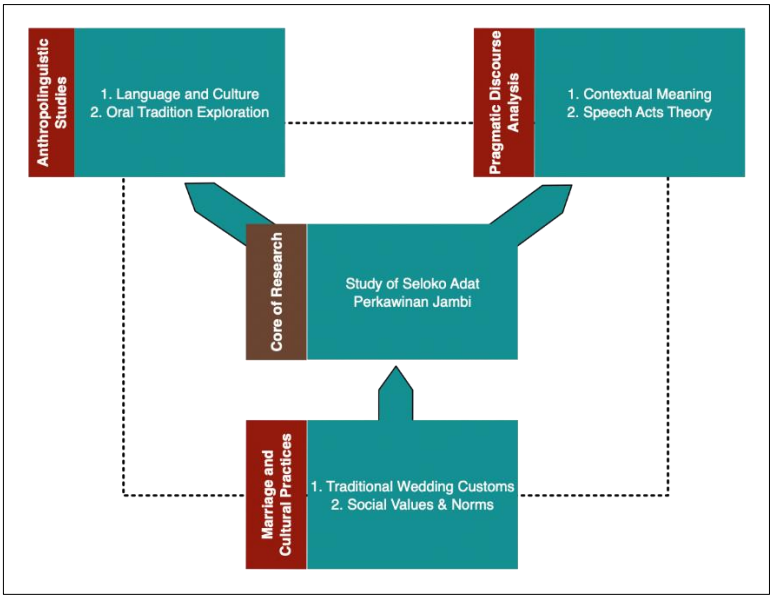

Figure 1. Conceptual Literature Framework for the Anthropolinguistic and Pragmatic Study of *Seloko Adat Perkawinan* in Jambi Malay Tradition

The Jambi Malay *Seloko* holds similar potential for educational integration. Its content aligns with many values promoted in character education and the national curriculum, such as respect for elders, social harmony through deliberation (*musyawarah*), and religious piety. Indeed, research in developmental psychology and multicultural education supports the idea that engaging students with their own local culture can enhance their cognitive and social development (Gafar, 2012; Purba et al., 2025). When students see their culture reflected in the curriculum, it validates their identity and can strengthen their self-esteem and sense of belonging. Moreover, learning through culturally familiar material can make abstract concepts more concrete and meaningful (Indrayani & Syuhada, 2020; Karim, 2017). In the *Seloko*'s case, the use of nature metaphors and local idioms might help students grasp lessons about ethics and social behaviour more intuitively than if those lessons are delivered through best practices. **Table 1** summarises the key gaps identified in prior research on *Seloko* and similar oral traditions, highlighting where further work (including the present study) is required to advance knowledge and preservation efforts.

Table 1. Research Gaps in Studies of *Seloko Adat* and Related Oral Traditions

Focus of Previous Studies	**Gap Identified**
Isolated analysis of *Seloko* content (e.g. values of leadership, tolerance, religious principles in *Seloko*). *Prior works examined specific themes or sources of Seloko wisdom.*	Lack of holistic discourse analysis of *Seloko* in context. *No study has yet analysed the full sequence of wedding Seloko performance (text, co-text, context) to understand how meanings are constructed interactively.*
Documentation of *Seloko* texts without ensuring community understanding. *Many Seloko recorded only as text or translation.*	Low comprehension among the younger generation. *Metaphorical and archaic language leaves many youths unable to interpret Seloko, indicating a breakdown in intergenerational transmission.*
Cultural significance of *Seloko* often noted in general terms. *Seloko cited as important cultural heritage in concept.*	Limited exploration of pragmatic function. *Previous research does not explain how Seloko speech acts achieve politeness, conflict avoidance, or agreement-building in practice (the pragmatic mechanisms).*

Calls for preservation through education (e.g. adding to local curriculum). *Some initiatives (textbooks, local content classes) proposed.*	Need for implementation frameworks. *No detailed model for integrating Seloko into schools or community programs has been documented; impact on learners remains under-studied.*

Note: Gaps derived from analysis of relevant literature and reports. This study addresses these gaps by performing an in situ discourse analysis of *Seloko adat perkawinan* and proposing concrete steps for educational integration.

The existing literature on the subject indicates that a comprehensive study of *Seloko adat* Jambi should encompass not only a description of the linguistic and cultural features of the tradition, but also a discussion of the ways in which such traditions can be maintained in the face of social change.

METHODS

Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a qualitative phenomenological design grounded in anthropological and pragmatic discourse analysis. This multifaceted approach was chosen to explore Seloko Adat Perkawinan Jambi in its natural context and to interpret its ritual significance. A phenomenological strategy is employed to describe ritual speech performances and uncover embedded cultural values. From an anthropological lens, the study views Seloko Adat as a living cultural practice, while the pragmatic framework analyses how ritual utterances convey implicit meanings and regulate social behaviour. The researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and reflexive interpretation.

Data Collection

The research was conducted in *Kota Jambi*, Indonesia, focusing on four districts purposively selected to capture both traditional cultural centres and more multicultural areas. Multiple techniques were used to collect data from both oral tradition and participant perspectives (see **Table 2** for a summary of data sources and methods). Data were then gathered through the following methods:

1) Documentation: Collection and review of textual and visual materials. This included *archival documents* (such as historical manuscripts, letters, and transcripts of *Seloko Adat*) and *photographic evidence* of wedding ceremonies. These documents provided background and confirmed the authenticity of *Seloko* texts.
2) Interviews: In-depth, open-ended interviews were conducted with participants. Unstructured interviews with community members and semi-structured interviews with key informants were used to elicit interpretations of the Seloko Adat's meaning, social function, and cultural values. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent. Ethical approval for this research involving human participants was granted by the Ethics Committee of Universitas Jambi.
3) Participant Observation: The researcher took on a participant-observer role at traditional wedding events. *Seloko Adat* utterances were observed and recorded during actual wedding ceremonies and related cultural events.

Table 2. Data Sources and Collection Methods.

Data Source	Collection Method
Seloko Adat utterances at ceremonies – Live oral wedding speech performances in Jambi Malay weddings.	*Participant Observation:* Attended wedding ceremonies to observe *Seloko* recitations in situ; audio-recorded performances and took field notes on context and interaction.
Archival texts and manuscripts – Historical documents, written	*Documentation:* Collected and reviewed archival materials (e.g., old Malay letters, transcribed *Seloko* verses, cultural

Data Source	Collection Method
transcripts, or records of *Seloko Adat.*	records) from libraries and local *adat* institutions to gather authentic text examples.
Community members – General public participants (various demographics).	*Interviews:* Conducted open-ended, unstructured interviews with community members (selected randomly across the four districts) to capture everyday understandings and personal interpretations of *Seloko Adat* meanings and functions.
Cultural experts – *Adat* elders, cultural leaders, and practitioners (key informants, *n* = 6).	*In-depth Interviews:* Used purposive sampling to interview knowledgeable cultural figures about the significance, proper usage, and values embodied in *Seloko Adat*. Interviews were semi-structured to guide topics yet allow detailed narrative responses.

Data Analysis

The analytical process for this study involved organizing and interpreting all collected data through a series of qualitative techniques. This began with the transcription of oral performances and interviews, which included translating local Jambi Malay dialects into standard Indonesian. Through a systematic data reduction step, raw textual information was read and coded for salient themes, allowing recurring motifs regarding linguistic meaning and social function to emerge inductively.

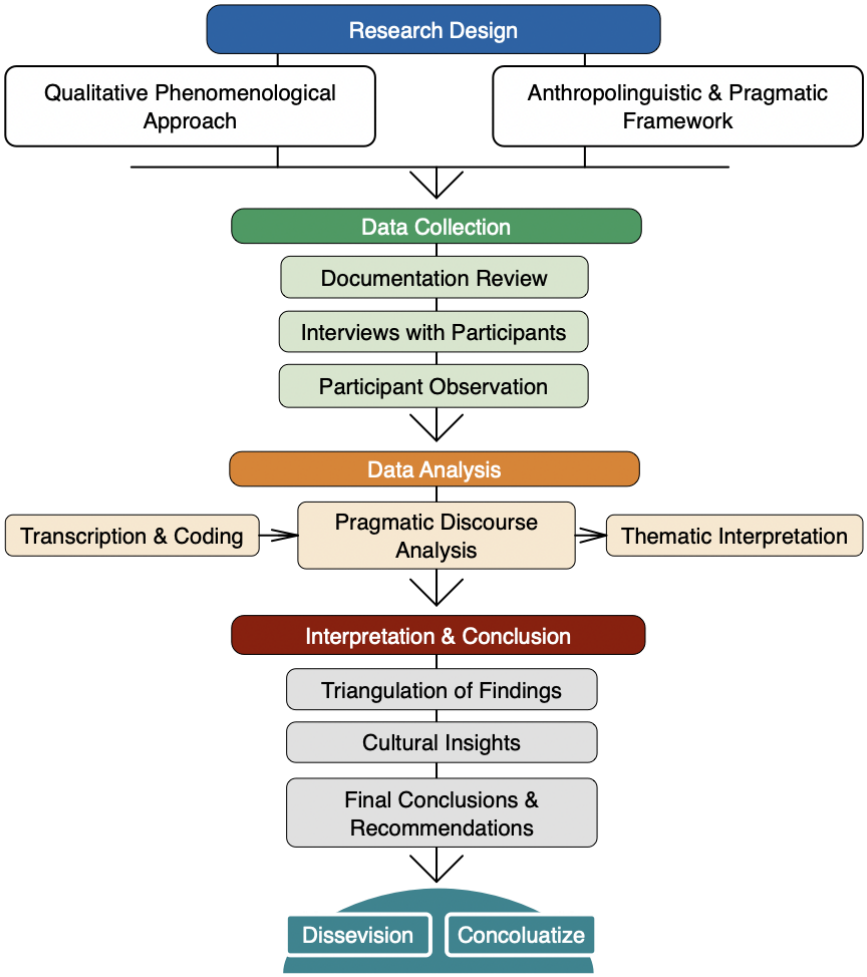

Figure 2. Flowchart illustrating the research procedure, including the qualitative design, data collection methods, and analytical steps

Central to the analysis was a focused pragmatic discourse evaluation that examined each Seloko text in relation to its textual form, co-text, and cultural setting. This lens enabled the identification of implied meanings, culturally specific implicatures, and the specific inferences required by listeners during ritual interactions. These linguistic interpretations were further refined through an anthropological linguistic perspective to ensure that the findings remained grounded in Jambi Malay cultural norms and values. As illustrated in Figure 2, this structured procedure moved from initial transcription and coding through thematic interpretation and final triangulation to reach the study's conclusions and recommendations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Six Stages of the Jambi Malay Wedding Seloko Tradition

The findings respond to the study's purpose and are presented systematically. They are supported by sufficient and relevant quotations, examples, tables, and diagrams.

The Jambi Malay Wedding Series consists of a structured sequence of six stages, in which Seloko adat serves as a cultural discourse to negotiate relationships and confer ritual legitimacy. Identified through interviews with adat elders, these stages represent the continuity of Jambi's linguistic and ritual traditions (see **Figure 3**).

Figure 3. The six stages of the *Seloko* tradition in the Jambi Malay wedding ceremony

Berusik Sirih Bergurau Pinang (BSBP): This initial stage initiates exploratory communication between families, metaphorically described as "stirring the betel" *(berusik sirih)* or "joking the areca" *(bergurau pinang)*. *Tegak Batuik Duduk Betanyo:* This phase formalizes the interaction into a deliberative exchange to assess the compatibility of the union. Intentions are expressed through respectful requests, such as likening the visit to a betel leaf "asking to be chewed" *(sirih terletak minta dimakan). Meletak Tando (Melamar):* During the formal proposal, exchanging items such as rings or cloth signifies

betrothal. *Seloko* performances emphasize humility, frequently using metaphors such as the owlet desiring the moon *(anak pungguk ingin di bulan)* to convey reverence. *Ulur Antar Serah Terima Adat:* Also known as *seserahan*, this stage involves the delivery of the dowry and ceremonial gifts to fulfil customary obligations. Ritual declarations in pantun form are used to highlight cultural alignment and the legitimacy of the agreement. *Serah Terima Pengantin dan Tunjuk Ajar:* This stage encompasses the symbolic transfer of the couple and the transmission of moral instructions from elders. *Seloko* verses frame marital responsibilities by emphasizing cooperation and communal values. *Buka Lanse:* The final ritual signifies closure and the transition to married life, often involving the bride's public appearance as a wife. The *Seloko* performed here is concise, focusing on gratitude, communal affirmation, and blessings for the couple. These six stages constitute a codified system in which *Seloko adat* functions as both linguistic and cultural mechanism. Each phase transforms interpersonal negotiation into ritual performance, embedding marriage within a collective framework of social and moral legitimacy.

Tradition Pragmatic Characteristics of Seloko Adat: Text, Co-Text, and Context

In fact, one of the key findings is the pragmatic richness of the *Seloko* language. Textual analysis reveals the deliberate choice of words (diction) that carry layered meanings. **Table 3** provides a representative sample of lines from the first stage (BSBP) along with their denotative (literal) meaning, connotative interpretation, and function in context, to illustrate how complex messages are woven into brief poetic phrases.

Table 3. Example *Seloko* Lines in Stage 1 (Berusik Sirih Bergurau Pinang) – Denotative and Connotative Meanings

***Seloko* Line (Original Jambi Malay)**	**Denotative Meaning (Literal)**	**Connotative Meaning (Cultural interpretation)**	**Function in Context**
Ramo-ramo menyambar buih	A butterfly snatching at foam/bubbles.	Symbolizes a gentle, cautious approach to something fragile (the bubble). Implies the need for delicacy in initiating contact.	Politeness/soft approach: Sets a courteous tone for starting communication, suggesting "we come softly and carefully" rather than aggressively.
Sirih terletak mintak dimakan	Betel leaf is set down asking to be chewed.	An indirect offer or invitation. In Jambi Malay custom, offering betel implies welcoming or agreeing. Here it connotes that the visiting party humbly requests acceptance.	Eliciting response: Signals that the groom's side has presented their request and awaits the hosts' reciprocation (a subtle way to ask "please respond to our proposal").
Apo benamo rajo sirih	"What is the name of the king of betel?"	*Rajo sirih* (king of betel) refers figuratively to the most honored person in the gathering. It's a respectful term for the host or elder. Connotatively, the line is asking, "Who is the leader here whom we should address?"	Honorification: Marks respect by acknowledging the highest-status elder present. It ensures proper protocol by directing speech to the acknowledged authority in the bride's family.
Siapo dulu, siapo kudian	"Who first, who later?"	Emphasizes order and procedure. It implies that things should be done in the correct sequence and with proper precedence (e.g., let the elders speak first, then the younger).	Structuring interaction: Reinforces adherence to *adat* hierarchy and turn-taking, thereby maintaining decorum and preventing anyone from speaking out of turn.

As **Table 3** illustrates, a small phrase in *Seloko* can convey multiple levels of meaning. The denotative meaning is often drawn from nature or everyday life (butterfly, betel leaf, etc.), which makes the *Seloko* picturesque and relatable. The connotative meaning is the culturally embedded message – often about how to behave or what attitude to adopt. For instance, the image of a butterfly touching a bubble encapsulates the idea of *softness and care in communication*, teaching that one should approach sensitive discussions gingerly. Notably, many of the lines serve a pragmatic function of *politeness and face-saving*. By using metaphors, speakers avoid direct reference to potentially face-threatening acts. Asking "Who is the king of betel here?" is far more polite (and charming) than asking "Who's in charge here so we can talk to them?" – it flatters the addressee and eases the interaction.

Discussion

Integrating *Seloko Adat* into Education and Cultural Preservation Efforts

Given the rich cultural and pedagogical content of *Seloko Adat*, a key outcome of this study is the proposed integration of *Seloko* into formal education and community preservation initiatives. Based on the analysis, *Seloko Adat* embodies local wisdom, values and linguistic heritage that are highly relevant to the learning of younger generations. However, current practice sees *Seloko* encountered passively (and rarely) by youth during family ceremonies, with little explanation of its meaning. In order to prevent the tradition from fading, institutional support and curriculum development are needed.

Interviews with local educators and cultural officials, supported by analysis of regional education policy documents, reveal two primary pathways for integrating *Seloko adat* into formal education: curricular integration and project-based implementation (**see Figure 4**)

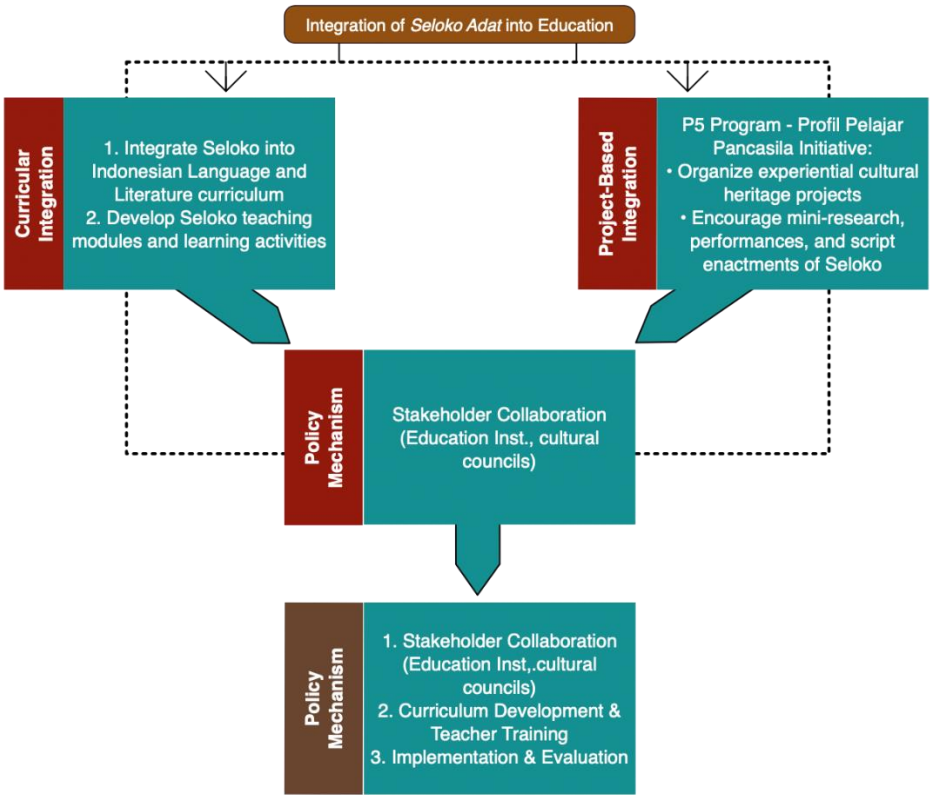

Figure 4. Approaches for Incorporating *Seloko Adat* into Education

Curricular integration represents one of the most strategic approaches for preserving and revitalizing Seloko Adat Perkawinan Jambi in contemporary society. As an important component of Jambi Malay cultural heritage, Seloko contains linguistic, philosophical, and moral values that remain relevant for younger generations. However, the increasing dominance of global culture and the declining use of traditional oral expressions in everyday communication have created challenges for the continuity of this tradition. Integrating Seloko into formal education provides an opportunity not only to preserve cultural heritage but also to ensure that students understand the values and meanings embedded within it. Through educational institutions, Seloko can be transmitted systematically and sustainably to future generations.

One of the most appropriate avenues for this integration is the Indonesian Language and Literature curriculum, particularly at the senior high school level. The curriculum already includes competencies related to literary appreciation, figurative language analysis, cultural texts, and regional literary heritage. Consequently, Seloko can be positioned as an authentic local literary resource that supports existing curriculum objectives without requiring substantial structural changes. Students can be introduced to Seloko as a form of oral literature characterized by metaphorical language, symbolism, indirect communication, and cultural meaning. Such integration allows students to develop linguistic competence while simultaneously strengthening their understanding of local cultural identity.

A dedicated instructional module can serve as the primary medium for integrating Seloko into classroom learning. The proposed module may include collections of Seloko texts, explanations of cultural contexts, linguistic analyses, interpretive activities, and reflective exercises. Annotated texts can help students understand archaic vocabulary, symbolic expressions, and culturally specific references that may be unfamiliar to contemporary learners. Furthermore, explanatory notes can provide historical and sociocultural information regarding the role of Seloko in traditional Jambi Malay wedding ceremonies. Such contextualization is important because understanding Seloko requires more than linguistic analysis; it also requires an appreciation of the cultural values that shape its meaning.

The module can be aligned with national learning competencies, particularly those related to analyzing figurative language, identifying rhetorical devices, interpreting connotative meanings, and evaluating cultural texts. Through these activities, students are encouraged to explore how language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge and social values. The integration of Seloko therefore contributes to the development of higher-order thinking skills by requiring students to interpret meaning, evaluate cultural messages, and connect traditional wisdom with contemporary realities. Such an approach is consistent with recommendations from Andryadi et al. (2025), Lubis (2019), and Supian et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of integrating local wisdom into educational practices to strengthen cultural literacy and national identity.

Successful curricular integration requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders. The Provincial Education Department, Lembaga Adat Melayu (LAM), language educators, curriculum developers, and researchers all play important roles in ensuring that Seloko is represented accurately and meaningfully within educational settings. Collaborative efforts can facilitate the development of supplementary teaching materials such as a module entitled Seloko Adat dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. Such a resource would not only provide standardized instructional content but also ensure that cultural interpretations remain consistent with traditional understandings. Collaboration is

particularly important because Seloko represents a living cultural tradition whose meanings are often preserved through community knowledge and oral transmission.

Beyond conventional classroom instruction, project-based learning offers a highly effective approach for introducing Seloko to students. Project-based learning emphasizes active participation, inquiry, collaboration, and authentic engagement with real-world issues. Within the framework of Indonesia's Profil Pelajar Pancasila initiative, Seloko can become a valuable resource for developing students' cultural awareness, communication skills, and civic responsibility. Rather than merely reading and analyzing texts, students can actively explore the social and cultural contexts in which Seloko is practiced and transmitted.

One potential project involves student-led interviews with community elders, traditional leaders, and Seloko practitioners. Through these interactions, students gain firsthand exposure to cultural knowledge that may not be fully captured in textbooks. Interviews allow learners to explore the meanings, functions, and contemporary relevance of Seloko from the perspectives of those who continue to practice and preserve the tradition. Research by Purba et al. (2025) and Rahmatullaili and Putri (2022) suggests that such community-based learning experiences contribute significantly to students' cultural understanding while fostering respect for local knowledge systems.

Another possible activity involves reenactments of traditional wedding dialogues that incorporate Seloko exchanges. Students can study selected Seloko texts, interpret their meanings, and perform them within simulated cultural contexts. Such performances encourage students to appreciate not only the linguistic features of Seloko but also its communicative functions in negotiation, diplomacy, and social interaction. By experiencing Seloko as a performative practice rather than merely a written text, students gain a deeper understanding of its role within Jambi Malay society.

Thematic cultural events, such as Cultural Heritage Week, can further support experiential learning initiatives. Students may participate in storytelling sessions, cultural exhibitions, dramatic performances, and oral literature competitions centered on Seloko traditions. These activities transform cultural preservation into an engaging and meaningful educational experience. They also provide opportunities for schools to strengthen partnerships with local communities and cultural institutions. Such initiatives contribute to the creation of learning environments that value cultural diversity while promoting active student participation.

The educational value of Seloko extends beyond language learning. The content of many Seloko expressions reflects ethical principles, social responsibilities, and communal values that remain relevant in contemporary society. Concepts such as musyawarah (deliberation), gotong royong (mutual assistance), respect for elders, social harmony, and collective responsibility are frequently embedded within Seloko discourse. Consequently, integrating Seloko into character education and civics education can reinforce moral development and citizenship education. Students are encouraged to reflect on how traditional values can inform responsible behavior in modern social contexts.

The implementation of Seloko integration within educational institutions requires a comprehensive and coordinated policy framework. Educational innovation involving local cultural content cannot rely solely on individual teacher initiatives. Instead, systematic support from government agencies, educational authorities, and cultural organizations is necessary to ensure sustainability and consistency. Previous studies by Fajar et al. (2024), Nurzafira et al. (2020), and Supian et al. (2025) emphasize that successful integration of local wisdom into education requires institutional commitment at multiple levels.

The first stage of implementation involves policy initiation through the establishment of an academic task force. This task force may consist of university researchers, representatives from the regional Language Centre, curriculum experts, educational

practitioners, and members of Lembaga Adat Melayu. The primary objective of this group is to conduct research, develop recommendations, and identify strategies for integrating Seloko into formal education. Their findings can serve as the basis for policy proposals submitted to relevant government authorities.

The second stage involves policy formulation and legal endorsement. Regional governments may issue regulations or Governor's Decrees supporting the inclusion of local cultural content within educational programs. Such policies provide legitimacy and institutional support for curriculum development efforts. Official recognition also encourages schools and teachers to incorporate Seloko into instructional activities without concerns regarding curriculum compliance or administrative constraints.

Curriculum development constitutes the next phase of implementation. This stage includes the preparation of teaching materials, lesson plans, assessment instruments, and teacher training programs. Educators need adequate preparation to teach Seloko effectively, particularly because many teachers may not possess extensive knowledge of traditional Jambi Malay oral literature. Professional development workshops can equip teachers with the necessary cultural understanding, pedagogical strategies, and instructional resources. Teacher preparedness is crucial because the effectiveness of curricular integration depends largely on how cultural content is presented and interpreted within the classroom.

Community responses to the proposed integration have generally been positive. Traditional leaders and cultural practitioners often view educational initiatives as important mechanisms for preserving cultural heritage. Many elders express concern regarding the declining familiarity of younger generations with traditional oral expressions and therefore welcome efforts to incorporate Seloko into school curricula. Educational institutions are seen as strategic spaces for cultural transmission because they reach large numbers of students during formative stages of development.

Students also tend to respond positively to learning experiences involving local cultural content. Many young people express curiosity about traditions that are closely connected to their regional identity but are rarely discussed within formal educational settings. Exposure to Seloko provides opportunities for students to explore aspects of their cultural heritage that may otherwise remain unfamiliar. Such experiences can strengthen cultural pride and encourage greater appreciation for local traditions.

Despite these positive responses, several challenges and concerns have been identified. One frequently expressed concern relates to the potential dilution of Seloko's cultural and spiritual significance when transferred from ceremonial contexts into classroom settings. Some community members worry that excessive simplification or decontextualization could reduce the depth and authenticity of Seloko traditions. This concern highlights the importance of culturally sensitive instructional approaches that respect the integrity of traditional knowledge.

Another challenge concerns linguistic accessibility. Many Seloko expressions contain symbolic language, archaic vocabulary, and cultural references that may be difficult for contemporary students to understand. Without appropriate instructional support, students may struggle to appreciate the richness of the texts. To address this issue, educators can employ scaffolding strategies, provide explanatory notes, and invite cultural practitioners to participate in classroom activities. Direct interaction with knowledgeable practitioners can help students develop a more authentic understanding of Seloko traditions while maintaining cultural accuracy.

The findings of this study ultimately highlight Seloko Adat Perkawinan Jambi as a culturally embedded speech genre that functions far beyond aesthetic expression. Rather than serving merely as decorative language, Seloko operates as a mechanism for

regulating social relationships, reinforcing cultural norms, and facilitating respectful communication. Through metaphor, symbolism, and indirect expression, Seloko enables participants to negotiate social interactions while preserving dignity and maintaining harmony. These communicative functions reflect broader principles of politeness and context-sensitive interaction described in studies of language and social behavior.

Moreover, Seloko serves as a medium through which collective identity is expressed and maintained. Its continued use within wedding ceremonies affirms the authority of customary institutions, reinforces social cohesion, and preserves cultural continuity across generations. In this sense, Seloko represents not only a linguistic tradition but also a repository of social memory and cultural knowledge. The values embedded within Seloko continue to provide guidance for interpersonal conduct and communal life.

Therefore, integrating Seloko into education represents more than an effort to preserve traditional literature. It constitutes an investment in cultural sustainability, character formation, and identity development. By introducing students to the linguistic artistry and ethical wisdom contained within Seloko, educational institutions can help ensure that this cultural heritage remains meaningful in contemporary society. Through thoughtful curricular integration, supportive policy frameworks, and collaboration among educators, cultural practitioners, and government institutions, Seloko can continue to serve as a living tradition that guides future generations with dignity, wisdom, and cultural depth.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored *Seloko Adat Perkawinan Jambi* as a communicative tradition rich in cultural, social, and sociolinguistic significance. *Seloko* is not simply a decorative oral art; it performs vital pragmatic functions in Malay wedding rituals—negotiating alliances, expressing respect, and maintaining harmony through metaphor, politeness, and structured interaction. At its core, *Seloko* is a cultural discourse which reflects and reinforces traditional Jambi Malay perspectives. It encodes values such as humility, deliberation, and communal respect, transmitted through poetic language. As a ritual speech genre, it links the act of marriage to broader community norms, involving elders and *adat* authorities in the ceremonial process. This affirms social cohesion and the continuity of linguistic and cultural identity.

However, challenges still remain. The intergenerational understanding and transmission of *Seloko* is decreasing, in particular among young people who are unfamiliar with traditional dialects and metaphors. Without meaningful revitalization efforts and deliberate language planning, *Seloko* risks becoming a hollow performance devoid of interpretive depth. To address this, the study proposes educational integration through both curricular inclusion and experiential projects, acting as a vital strategy for acquisition planning. By incorporating *Seloko* into language and literature curricula and engaging cultural practitioners in pedagogy, schools can cultivate cultural pride and interpretive abilities. Backed by language-in-education policy and multi-stakeholder collaboration, this model offers a way to sustain *Seloko* as both a living tradition and a dynamic subject of learning.

In sum, the *Seloko Adat Perkawinan Jambi* is a living archive of cultural wisdom and social negotiation. Preserving it through active acquisition planning is a cultural duty and a way of contributing to a broader understanding of respectful communication, language revitalization, and identity in a modern world.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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