THE SEMANTIC OF COLOURS IN THE SIKKA LANGUAGE: A STUDY OF CONNOTATION

SEMANTIK WARNA DALAM BAHASA SIKKSA: SEBUAH KAJIAN KONOTASI

Carmelita Riayanti Sareng[1], Stefanus Igolois Grenga Uran[2] & Maria Kartini[3]
[1,2,3] Nusa Nipa University
Jl. Kesehatan, No 03, Maumere 86111, NTT, Indonesia
Email:sarengcarmelita@gmail.com[1], uranstefanus@gmail.com[2], mariakartini1992@gmail.com[3]

Abstract

The study aims to identify the names of colours in the Sikka Language, analyse the connotations associated with these colours, and investigate their functions within the Sikka community. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through observation, interviews, and data elicitation with native speakers from Wolomotong Village. Data analysis employed the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) theory to uncover the semantic and cultural meanings of colour terms. The findings reveal that the Sikka Language categorizes colours into three groups: basic colours, such as red (merak), white (bura), and black (mitan); derived colours, such as yellow (heret), green (daan), blue (daan wair) and brown(meran); and modern or borrowed colours, such as purple (langor), orange (heret duan), and pink (meran nurak). Colours in the Sikka Language carry profound connotative meanings tied to cultural and social contexts, including symbolic associations with beauty, courage, purity, and prosperity. Additionally, colours serve vital functions as markers of social identity, integral components of traditional rituals, and mediums for conveying cultural values. This study contributes to the field of semantics by offering insights into the interplay between language, culture, and cognition. Furthermore, it supports the preservation and promotion of local languages and cultural heritage.
Keywords: *Sikka Language, semantics, colour connotation, Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), cultural function.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi nama-nama warna dalam Bahasa Sikka, menganalisis konotasi yang terkait dengan warna-warna tersebut, dan menyelidiki fungsi warna-warna tersebut dalam masyarakat Sikka. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan penggalian data dengan penutur asli di Desa Wolomotong. Analisis data menggunakan teori Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) untuk mengungkap makna semantik dan budaya dari istilah-istilah warna. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Bahasa Sikka mengkategorikan warna ke dalam tiga kelompok: warna dasar, seperti merah (merak/meran), putih (bura), dan hitam (mitan); warna turunan, seperti kuning (heret),hijau(daa), biru (daan wair) and coklat (meran); dan warna modern atau warna pinjaman, seperti ungu (langor), merah muda (meran nurak), jingga (heret duan) dan

coklat (meran). Warna dalam Bahasa Sikka memiliki makna konotatif yang mendalam yang terkait dengan konteks budaya dan sosial, termasuk asosiasi simbolis dengan keindahan, keberanian, kemurnian, dan kemakmuran. Selain itu, warna memiliki fungsi penting sebagai penanda identitas sosial, komponen integral dari ritual tradisional, dan media untuk menyampaikan nilai-nilai budaya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada bidang semantik dengan menawarkan wawasan tentang interaksi antara bahasa, budaya, dan kognisi. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga mendukung pelestarian dan promosi bahasa lokal dan warisan budaya.
Kata kunci: *Bahasa Sikka, Semantik, konotasi warna, Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), fungsi budaya.*

Introduction

Sikka is one of the local languages used by people in Sikka Regency, especially widely spoken by the Ata Sikka Ethnicity with other sub-ethnicities such as Ko'ung Sikka-Lela, Ko'ung Koting, Ko'ung Nele-Halat-Baluele, Ko'ung ili Wetak-Arat, Ko'ung Tie Hewokloang Watublapi, Ko'ung Waigete–Mudung-Hoder, Ko'ung Bola-Wokololi-Wolon Walu and Ko'ung Doreng Halehebing (Jayanti et al., 2016, p.36). This language reflects the history and unique characteristics that mirror the cultural and ethnic diversity of the region. Therefore, the language serves as a daily communication tool in various contexts, including everyday conversations, traditional rituals, and religious ceremonies.

The Sikka language goes beyond simple communication, serving as a reflection of the community's social, cultural, and spiritual values. Colour, one of the cultural products, plays a significant role in this language, not only conveying visual imagery but also embodying deep cultural significance. For instance, words like "Merak" for red and "Bura" for white hold more than just visual representation; they encapsulate cultural meanings and beliefs. Colours in Sikka culture are laden with symbolic associations, drawing from traditions, myths, and spiritual beliefs. Paterson (2004, as cited in Daulay & Mulyadi, 2022, p.39) states that colour is not ordinary and meaningless. Colour has an important role in culture and language, as it is not only a visual phenomenon, but also carries deep symbolic, emotional and cultural meanings in society. Each colour can trigger different associations and feelings, which is reflected in language to convey complex meanings and nuances in everyday communication.

Based on the concept of language according to Chaer (as cited in Sutedi, 2003, p.11), language is a system that uses sound symbols to convey meaning and is arbitrary, conventional, productive, unique, universal, dynamic, varied, and owned by humans.

Therefore, in every language, the naming of colours is arbitrary, changeable, and not fixed. For example, in Indonesia, the yellow flag symbolizes death, but the question is why the colour of death is not designated as red, green, or blue. This is due to the arbitrary nature of language. Similarly, the naming of colours differs from country to country due to the arbitrary nature of language. Due to their arbitrary nature, the naming of colours in a language depends on the preference and usage by the speakers of the language, without the need for official approval from a country. In addition, according to Woolman (2009, as cited in Purbasari & Rahardja, 2016, p.180), whether it is a single colour or a combination of palettes, they possess the capacity to convey symbolic significance, stir emotions or particular moods, deliver a message, or simply capture attention.

This study selects the topic of semantics of colour in the Sikka Language: a study of Connotations. The focus of this study is to explore the concept of colour within the culture of the Sikka community, especially in Wolomotong Village by employing the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach. This approach categorizes the concept of colour based on basic colours, natural signs, and descriptive adjectives. The aim is to

understand and elucidate the analysis results, along with the nuances of colour naming and connotations embedded in the Sikka culture. The overarching significance of this study is anticipated to contribute to the field of semantics, particularly regarding colour. Furthermore, the findings are expected to offer fresh insights into colour naming and connotations, potentially benefiting other cultures as well. The Sikka Language itself is introduced, outlining its linguistic classification and cultural context, emphasizing its importance as a vehicle for cultural transmission. While previous study has explored colour semantics in other languages using frameworks like NSM (e.g., Daulay & Mulyadi, 2022; Fadhilah et al., 2019; Hendrawati, 2018; Amalia & Mulyadi, 2022), the Sikka Language remains unexplored from this perspective.

This study aims to fill this gap by addressing the following study question: what are the names of colours in the Sikka Language? what connotations are associated with these colours? and what functions do these colours serve for the Sikka people? By employing the NSM approach, this study seeks to uncover the nuances of colour naming and connotations embedded within the Sikka culture, contributing to the broader.

The First study entitled Colour in Madailing Language: A Semantic Study of Connotation was conducted by Daulay and Mulyadi (2022). This study aimed to describe the study of colour semantics in Mandailing language. The method of this study was to use qualitative descriptive methods that produce word descriptions. This is because colour holds significant importance in human life, serving as a powerful tool to convey specific impressions. It is an intriguing subject for analysis due to the unique vocabulary associated with colours in each language. In this context, the authors utilized the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach to explore the colours in the Mandailing Language, focusing on semantic connotations. Colours in the Mandailing language serve more than just aesthetic purposes; they also play a practical role in communication and assist in social adaptation.

The second study entitled The Cultural Semantics of Colour Naming Concept in Madurese (An Ethnolinguistics Perspective) was conducted by Fadhilah et al.,(2019). This study aimed to describe the cultural meaning of the colour naming concept in Madurese by using an ethnolinguistics approach. Information was gathered through in-depth interviews with informants and a review of

relevant literature. The findings revealed that striking colours in Madurese culture are classified into five categories: object, plant, nature, limb, and brightness level. Additionally, these colour classifications hold meanings that reflect Madurese cultural values and characteristics, such as bravery, resilience, industriousness, religiosity, and a strong connection to nature. Consequently, the concept of colour naming conveys specific messages that describe the user's environment.

The third, study entitled A Semantic Analysis of Colour Terms in Saput Poleng was conducted by Hendrawati (2014).This study aimed to describe the meanings of the four colours - red, grey, black, and white - found on the Poleng cloth using a basic triangular diagram and to explain the use of the Poleng cloth in Balinese society. The results of this study indicate, using Ogden and Richard's (1923) basic triangle theory, that the colours black, white, and red carry different meanings in each type of Poleng cloth. Meanwhile, Wierzbicka's (1972) theory of natural semantic metalanguage addresses the subsequent issue: the meaning of a particular type of Poleng cloth changes when one colour is paired or separated from another colour.

The fourth, study entitled the Concept of Colour in Batak Mandailing Communities: Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach was conducted by Amalia and Mulyadi (2022). This study aimed to elucidate the lexicon of colours and their respective meanings in the Batak Mandailing language, employing the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) theory. The study methodology utilized is descriptive qualitative, employing recording and note-taking techniques to gather data from both written and spoken language usage. Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data consisted of library study on colour names, while secondary data was obtained through interviews with native speakers of the Batak Mandailing Language.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate colour semantics in the Sikka Language, spoken in Wolomotong Village, Doreng Subdistrict, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The study focused on understanding the names, connotations, and functions of colour terms within the community's cultural context. Data was gathered from the spoken language of the Sikka community through observations of daily interactions, elicitation techniques using a list of Indonesian colour terms, face-to-face interviews with key informants, and field notes. Informants were selected based on their proficiency in Sikka and Indonesian, native speaker status, knowledge of Sikka culture, and willingness to participate.

The process of analysing the data involved several key steps. First, all audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed verbatim. These transcriptions, along with the information gathered from observations and field notes, were then subjected to data reduction. This involved carefully reviewing the data to identify key themes and patterns related to colour semantics, and condensing the information into manageable units for analysis. Following data reduction, the data was organized and presented using a combination of tables, charts, and descriptive narratives. This allowed for a clear and structured presentation of the identified colour terms, their associated connotations, and their functions within the Sikka community. Finally, the study engaged in a process of drawing conclusions and verification. This involved interpreting the presented data, identifying recurring patterns and relationships, and drawing conclusions about the meaning and significance of colour in the Sikka language

and culture. These conclusions were then verified by revisiting the original data and ensuring they were firmly grounded in the evidence collected.

This study aims to understand the meanings and functions of colours within the cultural context of the Sikka community. It seeks to shed light on how colour is perceived, categorized, and utilized in their daily lives, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and colour perception within a specific linguistic community.

Result and Discussion

The study findings are categorised based on the names of colours, their connotative meanings, and functional roles within the Sikka culture. The NSM framework, developed by Anna Wierzbicka and further refined by Cliff Goddard, provides the theoretical lens to systematically deconstruct the meanings of colours into semantic primes and cultural interpretations.

Name of Colours in the Sikka L*anguage*

The Sikka Language features a diverse array of colour terms that represent both traditional and modern influences. These terms reflect the community's unique linguistic categorization and offer insights into how colours are named and classified. These colour terms not only describe visual phenomena but also reflect the community's traditions, worldview, and interactions with the natural and modern world.

The primary colour terms in the Sikka Language are classified into three groups: basic colours, derived colours, and modern or borrowed colours. The basic colours group includes *merak* (red), *bura* (white), and *mitan* (black), which form the foundation of the Sikka colour system. These colours are deeply rooted in the community's traditional practices and symbolic meanings. For instance, *merak* (red) signifies vitality, courage, and energy and plays a central role in rituals and symbols of life. Meanwhile, *bura* (white) is associated with purity, peace, and sacredness, often featured in ceremonial contexts. *Mitan* (black), on the other hand, represents mourning, mystery, and protective power, highlighting its role in spiritual and emotional expressions.

Moreover, the derived colours group builds upon the basic colours, extending the range of hues with *heret* (yellow), *daan* (green), *daan wair* (blue), and *meran* (brown). These colours often reference natural elements and their interconnectedness. For instance, *heret* (yellow) symbolizes

happiness and prosperity and is prominently used in decorations and ceremonial clothing. *Daan* (green) and *daan wair* (blue) reflect a cultural perspective that views these hues as interconnected expressions of nature and tranquillity. This fusion underscore the Sikka community's holistic view of the environment. *Meran* (brown) derives its meaning from the earth and natural elements, grounding its significance in daily life and traditional contexts.

Lastly, the modern or borrowed colours group, which includes *langor* (purple), *heret duan* (orange), and *meran nurak* (pink), illustrates the influence of globalization and cultural exchanges on the Sikka language. These colours, introduced more recently, reflect linguistic and cultural adaptation. For example, *meran nurak* (pink) and *heret duan* (orange) are loanwords adopted from another language, which is Malay or Indonesian, highlighting the dynamic nature of the Sikka language. *Meran nurak* (pink), a lighter shade of *merak* (red), conveys gentleness or tenderness, expanding the semantic range of the original term.

The Sikka Language also employs a descriptive approach to articulate certain colour variations, drawing inspiration from tangible objects in the environment. For instance, *merakganuwuataa* (red like siripinang* (betel nut)) emphasizes the cultural significance of *siripinang* in Sikka life. Similarly, *buraganuanjo* (white like an angel) links the purity of white to spiritual ideals. This descriptive tendency showcases the community's rich imaginative capacity to relate colours to the physical and metaphysical world. Notably, the colour *daan*, encompassing both blue and green, reflects a unique cultural phenomenon in the Sikka language. Unlike many Western languages that distinctly separate these colours, the Sikka perspective merges them into a single term, suggesting a holistic understanding of nature's hues. This shared category emphasizes the unity between earth (green) and sky or water (blue), underscoring the importance of ecological and spiritual balance.

As a nutshell, the classification of colour terms in the Sikka Language basic, derived, and modern or borrowed illustrates how language evolves while retaining its cultural essence. Basic colours anchor traditional beliefs, derived colours enrich expressive possibilities, and modern colours reflect the dynamic interplay between local identity and external influences. Together, these colour terms encapsulate the cultural significance, environmental awareness, and linguistic adaptability of the Sikka community,

offering a vivid lens through which to explore their worldview.

Connotative Meanings of Colours

Colours in the Sikka language carry rich connotations closely tied to cultural and social contexts. These meanings reflect the deep interconnection between the language and the traditions, beliefs, and daily life of the Sikka people. The connotative meanings of these colours can be seen in the tables below. Analysis of Black (*Mitan*):

The black colour (*mitan*) carries both positive and negative connotations depending on the context. In examples such as *mitanmanispauroun* (black sweet, always smiling), the term is used euphemistically to compliment beauty or a pleasant demeanour. This contrasts with instances like *me iamitakganutubonapiropen* (the child is black like charcoal), where black is used as a dysphemism to mock or insult. The duality of black reflects its multifaceted role in Sikka culture, ranging from admiration to ridicule.

Table 1.Table of Connotative Meaning of Black (Mitan) Colour in Sikka Language

Name of Colours	Expression			Symbolic Meaning
	SL (Sikka Language)	IL *(Indonesian Language)*	EL *(English Language)*	
Mitan/ mitak (black)	*Mitan manis pau roun, to pi poi moro eon*	*(panggilan pria/wanita) Hitam manis, selalu tersenyum tidak pernah marah*	Black sweet, always smiling, never angry	Compliment, beauty
	Mitandonen	*Menjadi saksi*	Bearing witness	The arbiter
	Mitankowan	*Kabut gelap*	Dark fog	Nature
	Limannimunmitakkalang	*Tangannya kotor sekali*	His hands are so dirty	Mock
	Moat mitan deri cerita nora rimu	*Moat Mitan sedang duduk bercerita dengan mereka*	Moat mitan is sitting talking to them	Someone's name
	Me ia mitak ganu tubon api ropen	*Anakitu (kulitnya berwarna) hitam seperti arang*	The child is black like charcoal	Mockery

Table 2.Table of Connotative Meaning of Yellow (Heret) Colour in Sikka Language

Name of Colours	Expression			Symbolic Meaning
	SL (Sikka Language)	IL *(Indonesian Language)*	EL *(English Language)*	
Heret /kuning (yellow)	*Heretganutelowagan*	*Cantik seperti cangkang telur*	Beautiful like an egg shell	Compliments to a girl
	Raikleroheretba, ina no amanjaga me butuklopalebeblawir	*Kalau sudah senja, ibu dan bapak melarang anak-anak untuk bermain di tempat yang jauh*	When it's dusk, parents forbid children from playing far away.	State of nature
	Au du heretngenge, ele ma obatwi	*Wajahmu pucat sekali, kenapa tidak pergi berobat?*	Your face is so pale, why don't you go for treatment?	Concerns

Analysis of Yellow (*Heret*):

The yellow colour (*heret*) generally conveys positivity in contexts like *heretganutelowagan* (beautiful like an eggshell), where it is used to compliment a girl's beauty. It also reflects the state of nature, as in *raikleroheretba* (at dusk, parents forbid children from wandering far). However, in certain cases, such as *au du heretngenge* (your face is so pale), yellow takes on a negative connotation, symbolizing concern or illness. This dual use demonstrates yellow's connection to both aesthetics and practical observations of life.

Analysis of White (*Bura*)

The white colour (*bura*) embodies purity, peace and harmony, as seen in *buraganuanjo*(pure like an Angel) and *waten min bura dame* (a clean heart full of peace). However, when white is associated with *waeburaawungtanah*(lazy like the ashes of the earth), it takes on negative connotation, symbolizing laziness. This dual representation highlights the contrasting ways white is perceived within the cultural context.

Table 3. Table of Connotative Meaning of White (Bura) Colour in Sikka Language

Name of Colours	Expression			Symbolic Meaning
	SL (Sikka Language)	IL *(Indonesian Language)*	EL *(English Language)*	
Bura /putih (White)	*Buraganuanjo*	*Suci seperti malaikat*	Pure like an angel	Praise
	Waeburaawungtanah, huwarburaheringheret	*Malas seperti abu tanah*	Lazy like the ashes of the earth	Ridicule
	Bura Wulang	*Albino*	Albino	Identity
	Bura noramiu	*Berdamai denganmu*	Make peace with you	Peace
	Waten min *bura* dame	*Hati yang bersih penuh dengan kedamaian*	A clean heart is full of peace	Peace
	Me iawae*bura* rakang	*Anak itu sangat malas*	The child is very lazy	Lazy

Table 4. Table of Connotative Meaning of Red (Merak) Colour in Sikka Language

Name of Colours	Expression			Symbolic Meaning
	SL (Sikka Language)	IL *(Indonesian Language)*	EL *(English Language)*	
Merak/Merah/ (Red)	*Mata tadan merak sara ami gai raning*	*Mata yang merah bertanda mereka marah atau siap berperang*	red eyes are a sign they are angry or ready to fight	expression of anger, brave
	Apiolormerakiaodidaha begasawe	*Nyala api yang besar itu akan membuat nasi hangus*	The big flame scorched the rice	Carelessness
	Merakmesang	*Merah sekali*	So angry	expression of anger
	Waematannimunmerak saweloningmoroia	*Mukanya merah semua karena marah*	His face is all red from anger	expression of anger
	Ami geawuataadadiwiwiram inmeraksawe	*Kami makan sirih pinang sehingga bibir kami merah semua*	We ate betel nut so that our lips were all red	togetherness, cultural identity.

Table 5. Table of Connotative Meaning of Green (Daan) Colour in Sikka Language

Name of Colours	Expression			Symbolic Meaning
	SL (Sikka Language)	IL *(Indonesian Language)*	EL *(English Language)*	
Daan/hijau (green)	Daandading	*Sampai selama-lamanya*	Forever and ever	Faith or believe
	Daanganu mea	*Seperti ular hijau*	Like a green snake	Connectivity with nature

Analysis of Red (*merak)*

The red colour (*merak)* in the Sikka Language predominantly symbolizes strong emotions and cultural identity. For example, *matatadanmerak* (red eyes) signifies anger or readiness for battle, associating red with bravery and power. Similarly. *Ami geawuataadadiwiwiraminmeraksawe (*We ate betel nut so that our lips were all red) reflects cultural identity and togetherness, as the act of chewing betel nut is a communal tradition. However, red also has negative connotations, such as in *Apiolormerakiaodidahasbegasawe* (The big flame scorched the rice), where it represents carelessness. These contrasting meaning highlight reds as a symbol of both strength and caution in Sikka culture.

Analysis of Green (Daan*)*

In the Sikka Language, green (*daan*) carries both positive and negative connotations, depending on context. For example, in *daandading* (forever and ever), it symbolizes faith or enduring belief, portraying a strong spiritual connotation.

However, in *daanganu mea* (like a green snake), it takes on a more ambiguous meaning, suggesting connectivity with nature or, in some interpretations, deceit. Notably, *daan*en compasses both green and blue in Sikka, reflecting the cultural perception of these hues as interconnected rather than distinct. This unique linguistic feature highlights the community's close relationship with nature and its holistic worldview.

Based on the analysis above, colours in the Sikka language possess connotative meanings that embody both euphemistic (positive) and dysphemistic (negative) interpretations. Each colour reflects the Sikka people's cultural values, traditions, and connection to nature:

a. Red (*merak*): Symbolizes courage, energy, and life. It is used in traditional rituals as a symbol of power and readiness for war.

b. White (*bura*): Represents purity, harmony, and peace. It is often used in religious ceremonies and weddings to signify holy intentions.

c. Black (*mitan*): Associated with mourning, sadness, and protective power. It is used in funeral ceremonies to show respect for the deceased.

d. Yellow (*heret*): Symbolizes happiness and prosperity. It is commonly used in festive decorations and ceremonial attire as a sign of good luck.

e. Green (*daan*): Reflects fertility, hope, and tranquility. Green appears in agricultural contexts, while blue is associated with the sea and stability.

The connotative meanings of these colours show how they function not only as visual elements but also as symbols of social and cultural values. A comparison with other cultural practices reveals that colour symbolism in Sikka shares similarities and differences with other traditions. For instance, study by Hendrawati (2014) on *saputpoleng* in Bali highlights similar meanings for red, white, and black in traditional rituals, symbolizing balance. In contrast, Sikka's interpretation of colours leans more toward their connection to nature and daily life. For example, *daandading* (forever) reflects an eternal bond tied to faith and nature, emphasizing the unique cultural identity of the Sikka people.

Functions of Colours in the Sikka Language

Colours hold a profound significance in the lives of the Sikka people. They are not merely aesthetic elements but serve as symbols imbued with deep social, ritual, and cultural meanings. The functions of colours in the Sikka community can be categorized into four main aspects: social function, ritual function, communication, and cultural identity. The following sections provide an in-depth explanation of each function.

Social Function

In Sikka society, colours are used to signify social status and roles, making them an integral part of traditional events and daily life. For instance, fabrics with black, red, and white patterns are often reserved for traditional leaders during specific ceremonies. These fabrics are not just clothing items but symbols that denote a person's position and authority within the community.

The patterns and colours in textiles can distinguish various social roles, such as customary leaders or members of particular families. During traditional gatherings, the use of specific colours in clothing reflects honour, authority, and power. For example, elders or traditional leaders often wear attire with distinct colours to set the apart from

other community members, underscoring their significance and respect in Sikka culture.

Ritual Function

In Sikka culture, colours play a pivotal role in traditional ceremonies and religious rituals, carrying specific spiritual meanings and purposes. They are used to convey prayers, messages, and connections between the physical and spiritual worlds. The colour red is prominently featured in offerings to ancestors, symbolizing life, energy, and strength. It is associated with courage and is used to seek blessings, abundance, and protection from ancestral spirits. Conversely, white represents purity, peace, and sacred intentions. It is often employed in ceremonies such as weddings and offerings, accompanying prayers and hopes for blessings and harmony.

Each colour in ritual context is carefully chosen for its symbolic resonance, ensuring that offerings and prayers are meaningful and well-received by spiritual entities. This meticulous selection highlights the depth of cultural and spiritual significance attributed to colours in Sikka traditions.

Function in Communication

Colours in the Sikka Language also serve as symbolic tools in oral communication,

enriching expressions and conveying emotions, feelings, or circumstances. For example, the phrase *matamerak*(red eyes) describes someone who is angry or emotionally intense. This expression demonstrates how colour adds depth and nuance to language, illustrating psychological or emotional states vividly and expressively.

Similarly, colours are used metaphorically to depict qualities such as bravery, strength, or joy. Red is often associated with passion and high energy, while white conveys calmness and peace. These symbolic uses of colour enhance the communicative richness of Sikka Language, making it more expressive and connected to live experiences.

Cultural Identity Function

Colours are central to shaping and expressing the cultural identity of the Sikka people, particularly through traditional textiles like *ikat*weaving. These textiles carry profound symbolic meanings, where colour combinations tell cultural stories passed down through generations. Each colour in *ikat*weaving holds a specific meaning linked to myths, stories, or values. For instance, yellow symbolizes prosperity and happiness, while red represents energy and life. The colour patterns often narrate relationships

with nature, ancestors, or deities, embedding cultural heritage into every thread.

Moreover, the use of colours in traditional textiles reflects group identity, distinguishing people from specific villages or regions. These fabrics are not just clothing items but symbols of pride, belonging and the preservation of cultural heritage. They embody the Sikka people's deep connection to their traditions and serve as a testament to their enduring cultural legacy.

Discussions

The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) theory offers a systematic and universal framework for understanding meaning by breaking it down into semantic primes—the most basic and irreducible units of meaning that exist in all human languages. These semantic primes, such as *Good*, *Bad*, *Someone*, and *Something*, serve as foundational building blocks for analysing complex concepts and expressions across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. By utilizing NSM, this study investigates the connotative meanings of colours in the Sikka Language, allowing for an objective and culturally sensitive analysis.

One of the key advantages of NSM is its ability to transcend the biases that may arise from culturally specific linguistic frameworks. Instead, it provides a neutral and universally accessible set of tools for interpreting meaning. In the context of this study, NSM facilitates the exploration of how colours function not only as linguistic units but also as cultural symbols that embody deep societal values, emotions, and identities within the Sikka community. By deconstructing the meanings of colour terms in the Sikka Language into their semantic components, the study bridges linguistic description with cultural interpretation, offering a nuanced understanding of how colours are perceived and encoded.

Through the application of NSM, this study reveals the multifaceted connotative meanings of colours in the Sikka Language. These findings highlight how colours serve as powerful cultural markers that extend beyond their physical or aesthetic properties. For example, the colour *merak* (red) signifies bravery and vitality, yet it also carries connotations of anger and readiness for conflict in specific contexts. Similarly, *bura* (white) symbolizes purity and peace, while *mitan* (black) represents both protective power and mourning. By dissecting these meanings using NSM, the study demonstrates the intricate interplay between language, thought, and culture, illustrating how the

Sikka community perceives, categorizes, and applies colour symbolism in daily life and rituals.

NSM also enables a comparative perspective, situating the findings from the Sikka Language within broader linguistic and cultural contexts. For instance, while the universal primes in NSM highlight shared human experiences with colour, the specific connotations in the Sikka Language reflect the community's unique worldview. Unlike Western linguistic traditions that distinguish between green and blue, the Sikka term *daan* merges these colours into a single category, emphasizing their interconnectedness and association with nature. This underscores how the Sikka people's linguistic system is deeply rooted in their relationship with the environment, spirituality, and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, NSM sheds light on the communicative and symbolic functions of colours in the Sikka Language. As shown in this study, colours are not merely descriptive but serve as tools for social differentiation, ritual practices, and expressions of cultural identity. For example, the colour combinations in *ikat* weaving communicate stories, values, and myths, while specific colours in ceremonies convey prayers or mark social hierarchies. NSM provides a framework to analyse how these symbolic roles of colours are encoded linguistically, enriching the understanding of the Sikka people's cultural practices.

In conclusion, the application of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) in this study demonstrates its value as a theoretical and methodological tool for analysing the connotative meanings of colours. By uncovering the deep connections between language, cognition, and culture, the study highlights how the Sikka Language encapsulates universal semantic principles while preserving unique cultural perspectives. This duality of universality and specificity in colour semantics reflects the richness of Sikka cultural heritage, contributing to broader discussions on the relationship between language, thought, and cultural diversity.

The Connotative Meaning of Colours in Sikka Language through the Lens of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM). The application of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) offers a powerful framework for understanding the connotative meaning of colors in Sikka Language, which goes beyond simple denotation to explore the complex relationship between language, culture and thought. This study, by analyzing color terms and their associated symbolism, particularly in the context of ikat weaving, reveals how

color serves as a powerful cultural signifier, embodying deep social values, emotions, and identity in Sikka society. The strength of the NSM lies in its ability to dissect complex meanings into universal semantic primes, allowing cross-cultural comparisons while respecting the unique nuances of each language and culture.

Analysis of colour terms in Sikka Language through NSM reveals a wealth of connotative meanings. As already mentioned, *merak* (red) not only symbolizes courage and vitality but also carries connotations of anger and readiness for conflict. Breaking it down further using the semantic elements of NSM, we can see that *merak* (red) also incorporates elements such as "good" (vitality), "strong" (courage), and possibly "bad" (anger, conflict). Similarly, *bura* (white) symbolizes purity and peace, which harmonizes with the universal semantic elements of "good" and "peace." However, its use in certain rituals may also connect it with "spiritual" or "holy," highlighting the importance of context in NSM analysis. *Mitan*(black), which represents protective power and mourning, demonstrates the complexity of colour symbolism. It can be analyzed through semantic elements such as "strong" (protective

power) and "sad" (mourning), indicating the multifaceted nature of its meaning.

A study by Cicerone and Corra (2008) Cicerone and Corra (2008,as cited in Hanafy & Sanad, 2016) published in the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology provides important insights into the relationship between colours and their meanings in various cultures around the world. In this study, they highlighted the fact that while many colours in many cultures have deep connotative meanings, not all colors are associated with complex symbolism or associations. Some colours are simply used as visual markers or as a way to describe objects in the physical environment, without having deeper connotative meanings or involving significant emotional, social or spiritual dimensions. In this case, color is better understood in a more pragmatic and functional context, according to people's need to describe their physical world.

Cicerone and Corra emphasize that cultural influences on color perception vary widely, depending on the social, historical and ecological factors prevailing in each society. For example, some colours such as red or black may carry strong connotative meanings, as seen in symbolism of courage or strength, or in connotations of sadness and loss, depending on the cultural

background in which they are used. However, in other cultures, the same color may not have the same meaning or even be considered not so symbolically important, but rather only serve as a way to distinguish objects or clarify physical descriptions without any deeper meaning.

In the context of Sikka Language, the same principle can be found, although there are some colours in the language that carry rich connotative meanings. For example, the red colour (*merak*) in Sikka Language clearly has strong connotations, which are often associated with values such as courage, vitality and passion. *Merak* is not just a colour but also symbolizes individual or group characteristics in Sikka culture, such as courage in facing challenges or passion in celebrating life. Similarly, the white colour (*bura*), which has connotations of peace, purity and even holiness in certain rituals, depicts the spiritual side of Sikka culture.

However, although some colors such as red or white have deep symbolic meanings, there are other colours in Sikka Language that are more descriptive and do not carry the same connotative meaning in social or ritual life. For example, the colour leaf (green) in Sikka language is often used to refer to green objects, such as plants or tree leaves. Although green is a colour clearly associated with nature and life, in some Sikka cultural contexts, it does not always have deep symbolism, except perhaps in depictions of nature or the more physical elements of life. In many instances, green is used more as a marker for visual categories than as a rich spiritual or social symbol.

This phenomenon shows that while many colours are associated with rich symbolic meanings in many cultures, there are also colours that have no such connotations at all. As discussed by Cicerone and Corra, this variation in colour meanings reflects how strongly culture influences the way people interpret and use colours in their daily lives. In cultures that rely heavily on their relationship with nature and daily life, such as Sikka culture, some colours function more as descriptions of the physical world and are not necessarily associated with more complex values or symbolism.

Thus, both in the study conducted by Cicerone and Corra (2008, as cited in Hanafy & Sanad, 2016) and in the study of colours in Sikka Language, it can be concluded that the meaning of colours is highly dependent on the cultural context in which they are used. While many colours have deep connotative meanings in many cultures, there are also colours whose functions are limited to descriptive or visual roles and do not have

culturally significant connotations. This reflects how the meaning of colours is strongly related to the social and cultural context in which they are used and how each society develops their colour system based on their experiences, values, and interactions with the world around them.

Conclusion

This study investigates the semantics of colours in the Sikka Language, focusing on the names, meanings, and functions of colours as observed in Wolomotong Village. The study reveals that the Sikka Language contains a rich and diverse array of colour terms that reflect both linguistic categorization and cultural significance.

The names of colours in the Sikka Language are classified into the groups: basic, derived, and modern or borrowed colours. Basic colours include *merak* (red), *bura* (white), and *Mitan* (black). Derived colours consist of *heret* (yellow), *daan* (green) *daan wair* (blue), and *meran* (brown), while modern or borrowed colours include *langor* (purple), *heret duan* (orange), and *meran nurak* (pink).

The function of colours in the Sikka Language are categorized into four main aspects: social, ritual, communication, and cultural identity. Colours serve as markers of social status, play integral roles in traditional

ceremonies, enrich oral communication through metaphorical expressions, and embody cultural identity through elements like traditional textiles and symbols.

This study also highlights how the Wolomotong community's use of colour reflects their values, social norms, and collective identity. The semantic analysis shows that colour terms are not merely descriptive but are imbued with deeper cultural and emotional meanings. This reinforces Anne Wierbicka(1996, as cited in Daulay & Mulyadi, 2022, p. 46)assertion that colour concepts are shaped by the values and identity of the people using them. The study confirms that understanding that cultural context is essential for interpreting the meanings and appropriate usage of colours, which vary significantly across different cultural settings.

Reference

Amalia, D., & Mulyadi, M. (2022). The concept of color in Batak Mandailing Communities: Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach. *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, Dan Budaya*, *12*(1), 85–99. https://doi.org/:10.26714/lensa.12.1.2022.85-99

Darmaprawira, S. (2002). *Warna: teori dan*

kreativitas penggunaannya. Penerbit ITB.

Daulay, E., & Mulyadi, M. (2022). Color in Mandailing Language: a Semantic study of connotation. *Lakhomi Journal Scientific Journal of Culture*, *3*(2), 39–48.https://doi.org/10.33258/lakhomi.v3i2.682

Eci, P. M. N. (2020). *Perencanaan dan Perancangan kawasan Pantai Tanjung Kajuwulu sebagai obyek wisata di Maumere. Skripsi. Universitas Katolik Widya Mandira*

Endriani, W., & Indrawati, D. (2022). Klasifikasi penamaan warna dalam Bahasa Indonesia: kajian Antropologi Linguistik. *Sapala*, *9*(2), 133—143.

Eni, G. D. (2018). An analysis of meanings of euphemism used by Sikka Krowe Ethnic in Habi Village Sikka Regency. *J. Edu. Sci Eni/AJES*, *2018*(1), 18–22.

Fadhilah, N., Rais, W. A., & Fernandez, I. Y. (2019). The cultural Semantics of color naming concept in Madurese (an Ethnolinguistics perspective). *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)*, *November*.https://doi.org/10.2991/icalc-18.2019.42

Hanafy, I. M., & Sanad, R. A. (2016). A Cross-cultural study of emotional Responses on Colours. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*, *2*(1), 53–60. https://doi.org/10.18844/prosoc.v2i1.277

Hendrawati, P. A. (2014). A Semantic analysis of colour terms in Saput Poleng. *Humanis*, *9*(1), 1–8.

Jayanti, I. G. N., Yudha, I. P. K., Sudharma, I. W., Gria, R. A. ., & Sanjaya, I. P. K. (2016). *Kearifan lokal masyarakat nelayan tradisional Desa Sikka , Kecamatan Lela , Kabupaten Sikka*.

Koban, M. N. M., Darmawan., & Nasa, R. (2020). Unrecorded Idiomatic Expressions of Sikka Krowe Dialect in Flores Island East-Nusa Tenggara. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, *3*(3), 459–466. https://doi.org/10.34050/elsjish.v3i3.10534

Purbasari, M., & Rahardja, A. (2016). Documenting the richness of Indonesia through the cultural color of Sumatera's traditional textile and culinary product. *Humaniora*, *7*(2), 179–188. https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v7i2.3517

Sutedi, D. (2003). *Dasar-dasar linguistik bahasa Jepang*. Bandung: Humaniora Utama Press.

Tiouw, A., & Kamagi, S. (2023). The use of song in increasing students' vocabulary. *Journal of Teaching English, Linguistics, and Literature*, *2*(8), 1070–1077. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36582/jotell.v2i8.5586

Yulianti, S. (2016). Kosakata Warna Bahasa Sunda (Pendekatan Metabahasa Semantik Alami). *Ranah: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa*, *5*(1), 74–86