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# Identity Maintenance Strategy on the North Konawe Coast

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## Abstract

*This study explores the resilience of the Landawe language along the North Konawe coast amid rapid modernisation and socioeconomic transition. Beyond quantitative linguistic metrics, this study aims to uncover coastal communities' identity-maintenance strategies for preserving their linguistic heritage. Using qualitative methods and a phenomenological approach, the study systematically analysed data in MAXQDA 24 to map thematic triangulation and spatial intersections between categories. The results of the study reveal four main findings: (1) Language attitudes imbued with cultural identity and loyalty function as the psychological epicentre of speakers; (2) The dynamics of intergenerational transmission rely on informal teaching methods as an adaptive response to structural inheritance barriers; (3) The domestic space of the family and customary ritual activities act as the last, most sacred defence line; and (4) Landawe language resilience operates as a multidimensional ecosystem that requires organic synchronisation between mentality, availability of space, and inheritance agents. This study concludes that Landawe language maintenance is not a static entity, but rather a form of cultural resistance and the community's ethical responsibility to safeguard their existence and collective memory from social homogenization.*

**Keywords:** Language resilience, Landawe language, phenomenology, sociolinguistic ecology, North Konawe

## Introduction

The extinction of minority languages around the world represents more than just the loss of a lexical communication system; it also marks the collapse of collective memory, local wisdom, and the sociocultural autonomy of a civilisation (Crystal, 2014). In Indonesia, this vulnerability is increasing, particularly in coastal communities facing economic transformation, modernisation, and shifting living spaces. One entity in this critical transitional landscape is the Landawe-speaking community on the coast of North

Konawe, Southeast Sulawesi. The rapid flow of foreign cultural assimilation and socioeconomic vulnerability places the Landawe language at the crossroads of inevitable assimilation and resistance through identity maintenance.

Previous sociolinguistic studies on language vitality have remained trapped by competitive metrics that reduce language to mere statistics on the number of remaining speakers. Anhar's research, for example, highlights the shift from regional to national languages in public spaces as a result of urbanisation and economic pragmatism (Anhar, 2024). Meanwhile, Widodo's study confirms that marginalised communities often sacrifice their mother tongue for social mobility (Widodo, 2021). While these studies provide a macro-level foundation, the structural-functional approach often fails to capture the phenomenological dimension of grassroots communities: how language is subjectively experienced as a "safe space" and a form of communal resilience amidst external pressures.

Therefore, this study departs from the framework of Language Ecology (Dinku et al., 2025) and Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (Yagmur, 2011), which view language as a living organism whose survival depends heavily on interactions with the social environment. Coupled with the concept of Reversing Language Shift (Hill, 1994), this article positions intergenerational transmission in the domestic sphere as the most crucial line of defence. However, rather than simply measuring vitality, this study takes a different ethical stance: it views language maintenance not as a competitive arena, but as a "subsistence" effort to preserve the purity of the sounds and meanings embedded in the language by the informants themselves.

This article aims to uncover strategies for maintaining the identity and resilience of the Landawe language in North Konawe through the interplay of language attitudes, intergenerational transmission, and domains of use. By examining the daily experiences and speech of local communities, this research is expected to offer new theoretical contributions on the role of family and traditional rituals as the last line of defence. A comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon is not only crucial for mapping the vitality of the Landawe language but also an ethical responsibility in safeguarding the cultural sovereignty of coastal communities amid today's vulnerabilities.

## Materials and Methods

This research used qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Harrington et al., 2015; Moustakas, 2022). The choice of phenomenology was based on the study's primary objective: to explore and understand the essence of the lived experiences of the coastal communities of North Konawe in

maintaining the Landawe language. This approach allowed the researcher to go beyond mere structural linguistic analysis and delve into the intersubjective realities of speakers regarding how they define identity, feel loyalties, and face barriers to language inheritance in their daily lives.

This research was conducted in the coastal region of North Konawe, which is undergoing significant socioeconomic transition. Participants included native Landawe speakers across generations, traditional leaders, and family members identified through purposive sampling, totalling 65 informants. The researchers collected primary data through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and participant observation in the domestic sphere and during traditional ritual events.

The researchers systematically analysed the entire corpus of qualitative data using Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), namely MAXQDA 24. The phenomenological analysis followed the stages of horizontalization (inventorying important statements without an initial hierarchy), forming clusters of meaning, and extracting essential themes into a coding system. To uncover the complexity and relationships between themes, researchers utilised a series of analytical visualisation tools in MAXQDA 24, including:

Code Map: Used to map thematic triangulation and view macro-clustering between Language Attitudes, Intergenerational Transmission, and Domains of Use; Code-Subcodes-Segments Model: Applied to reveal the hierarchy and depth of data distribution for each key indicator, thus demonstrating the distribution of segmental contributions from each informant (for example, the dominance of Younger Generation Skills or the centrality of Cultural Identity); Code Co-occurrence Model (Intersection, Proximity, and Occurrence): Used to simultaneously track spatial intersections and the density of interactions between codes. This model facilitates the discovery of latent patterns, such as how language loyalty manifests organically within family environments and traditional activities.

This research was validated through reflexivity and informal member checking in the field. The researchers positioned themselves as "guardians of meaning," ensuring that the interpretations generated in the MAXQDA visual models were firmly rooted in the authentic experiences of the Landawe community, not in externally imposed theoretical assumptions.

## Results

This study yielded data on the resilience of the Landawe language, based on interviews systematically organised in tabular format. The interview data were processed using MAXQDA 24 software developed by VERBI GmbH, which allows researchers to code text, identify themes, analyse relationships between categories, and generate data visualisations, as illustrated in the following figure.

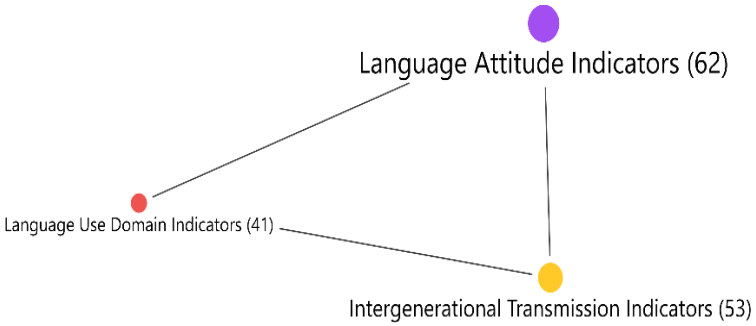



Figure 1. Code Map
Source: Field Data Processing with MAXQDA 24 Software

This code map visualisation depicts an integrated sociolinguistic ecosystem, where Language Attitude emerges as the primary determinant, with the highest frequency (62 points). This indicates that speakers' subjective perceptions and affective values are the most dominant psychological foundations in this research data. This attitude has a strong vertical relationship with the Intergenerational Transmission Indicator, which recorded 53 points, indicating that language sustainability depends heavily on older generations' motivation to pass it on to the next.

On the other hand, the Language Use Domain Indicator, despite having the lowest frequency at 41 points, serves as a practical manifestation that complements the circulation of this data. The triangular relationship among these three nodes confirms that language use in various social domains does not exist in isolation, but results from the accumulation of positive speaker attitudes and the success of intergenerational transmission. Qualitatively, this figure concludes that language vitality in this research is viewed as a unified, interconnected phenomenon, where mental aspects (attitudes) drive preservation mechanisms (transmission), which ultimately manifest in everyday communication practices (domains of use).

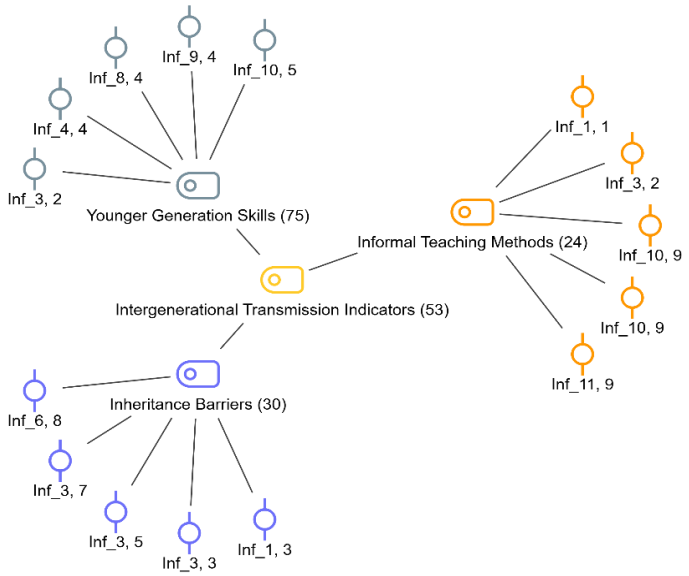



Figure 2. Intergenerational Transmission Indicator Segments
Source: Field Data Processing with MAXQDA 24 Software

The visualisation in Figure 2 presents a more in-depth hierarchical structure of cultural or language inheritance dynamics through the Code-Subcodes-Segments model. As the central category, the Intergenerational Transmission Indicator, with 53 segments, encompasses three main subcodes that interact in complex ways. The Younger Generation's Capabilities subcode emerged as the dominant cluster, with the highest frequency of 75 segments, supported by data from various informants (such as Inf_9, Inf_10, and Inf_4). This indicates that the research primarily focuses on the extent of the capacities and competencies the next generation truly possesses as an indicator of successful transmission.

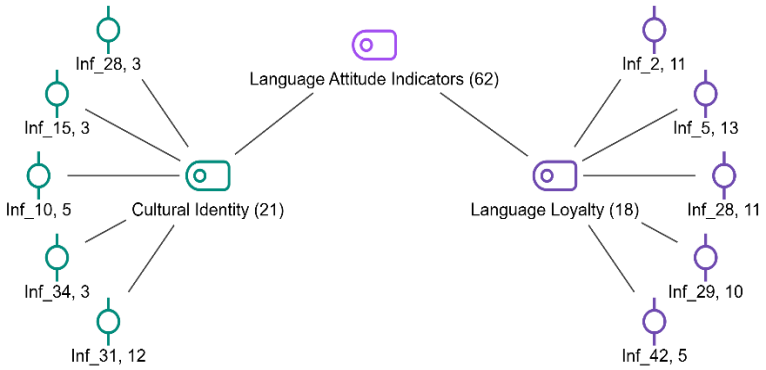



Figure 3. Language Attitude Indicator Segments
Source: Field Data Processing with MAXQDA 24 Software

The visualisation in Figure 3 outlines the psychosocial dimensions of community attitudes toward language through a Code-Subcodes-Segments model centred on the primary code, Language Attitude Indicator, with a total of 62 segments. Qualitatively, these attitudes fall into two main, complementary orientations: Cultural Identity (21 segments) and Language Loyalty (18 segments). The Cultural Identity subcode shows how language is perceived as a unifying symbol and a marker of community identity. Informants such as Inf_31 contributed a significant portion of the segments (12 segments), indicating a deep emotional connection between language use and pride in their origins.

Meanwhile, the Language Loyalty cluster illustrates the speaker's commitment to maintaining their language amidst social change. The dominant voices of informants Inf_5 (13 segments), Inf_2 (11 segments), and Inf_28 (11 segments) in this cluster reflect a strong desire to maintain the language as loyalty to the group. This structure confirms that the language attitudes in this dataset are not simply communication preferences, but rather manifestations of identity defence through collective loyalty. The integration of strong cultural identity and consistent loyalty is a key reason the language attitude indicator is the most frequent code in this study.

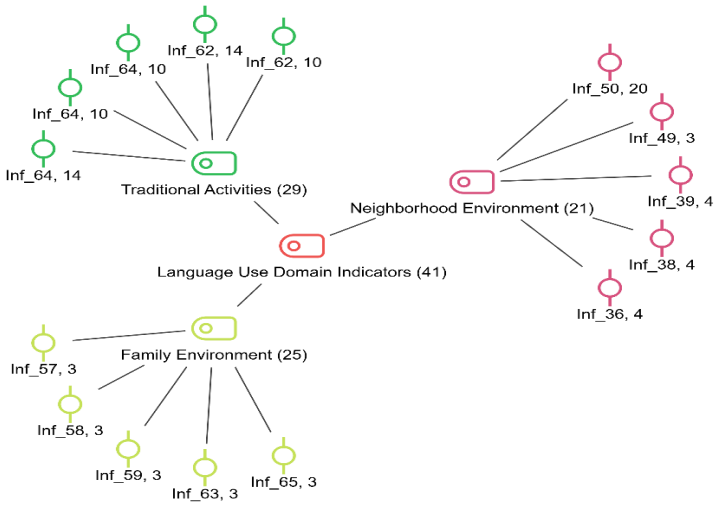



Figure 4. Language Use Domain Indicator Segment
Source: Field Data Processing with MAXQDA 24 Software

The visualisation in Figure 4 maps language-use domains through a Code-Subcodes-Segments model centred on the primary code, Language Use Domain Indicator, weighted by 41 segments. This structure indicates that the language is still alive and functioning in three main social domains: Traditional Activities with 29 segments, Family Environment with 25 segments, and Neighbourhood Environment with 21

segments. The dominance of segments in the Traditional Activities domain, strongly supported by the substantial contributions of informants Inf_64 and Inf_62 (each contributing up to 14 segments), indicates that the language plays a very strong sacred or functional role in traditional ceremonies or cultural activities typical of the local community.

Qualitatively, the close frequency between the Family Environment and Neighbourhood Environment domains indicates that this language remains the primary means of communication in intimate domestic and social settings. In the Family domain, data distribution appears more even among various informants (such as Inf_57, 58, 59, 63, and 65), reflecting consistent language use practices in the household. Meanwhile, in the Neighbourhood Environment domain, the very prominent involvement of informant Inf_50 (20 segments) suggests the existence of certain figures or community groups who act as guardians of language use in limited public spaces. Overall, Figure 4 concludes that despite modernisation pressures, this language retains a strong "stronghold" through traditional activities and daily communal social interactions.

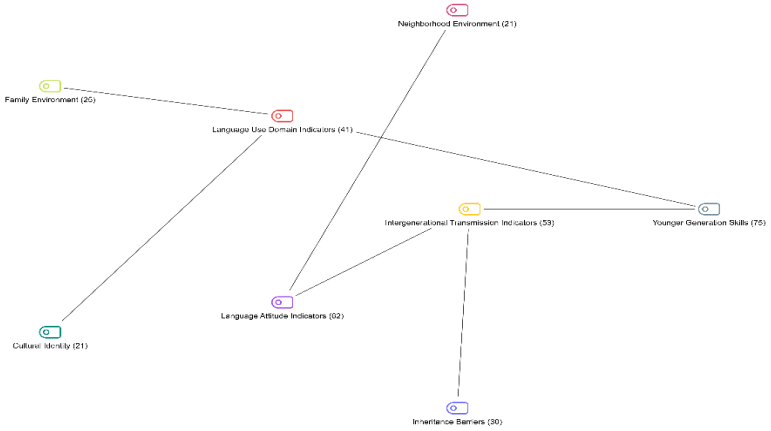



Figure 5. Intersection Between Codes
Source: Field Data Processing with MAXQDA 24 Software

The visualisation in Figure 5 presents cross-category interactions through the Code Co-occurrence model, revealing how various dimensions of language vitality intersect in society's social reality. Qualitatively, this model shows that the Intergenerational Transmission Indicator serves as a crucial meeting point between technical capacity and psychosocial orientation. A very strong relationship emerges between the transmission process, the abilities of the younger generation, and barriers to inheritance, suggesting that successful language transfer constantly confronts structural challenges on the ground.

Furthermore, this transit model highlights the role of language attitude indicators as a bridge connecting idealistic aspects, such as cultural identity, with practical aspects within friendships. This demonstrates that speakers' positive attitudes go beyond pride in identity and are also concretely manifested in interaction patterns in public spaces. The intersection of indicators of language-use domains with the family environment and cultural identity further emphasises that the household remains the most organic basis for language defence. Overall, Figure 5 concludes that language vitality in this study is not an isolated variable, but rather a web of interconnectedness in which mental attitudes, spheres of use, and inheritance mechanisms interlock and influence one another simultaneously.

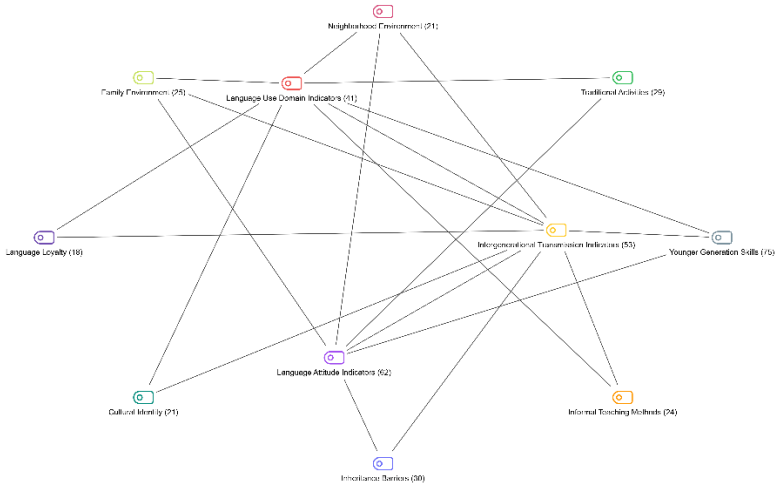



Figure 6. Proximity Between Codes
Source: Field Data Processing with MAXQDA 24 Software

The visualisation in Figure 6 presents the complexity of inter-code relationships through the Code Proximity model, which reveals the spatial proximity and frequency of co-occurrence among all elements of the study. Qualitatively, this map shows a neural network of data in which the Intergenerational Transmission Indicator and the Language Attitude Indicator act as the nucleus or energy centre connecting nearly all sub-codes. A very close relationship emerges between the transmission process, the abilities of the younger generation, and traditional activities, indicating that concrete cultural practices are the spaces where language inheritance occurs most intensively.

Furthermore, this proximity model highlights how language loyalty and cultural identity are interconnected and strongly connected to language use within the family environment. This suggests that language loyalty is not merely an abstract concept but is practised consistently in the domestic sphere. Meanwhile, the position of Inheritance

Barriers, at the bottom but still connected to the centre, suggests that the challenge of language preservation looms large over every aspect, from attitudes to informal teaching methods. Overall, Figure 6 concludes that language vitality in this ecosystem is multidimensional and circular; strengthening one point (for example, attitudes) will automatically spread and strengthen other points.

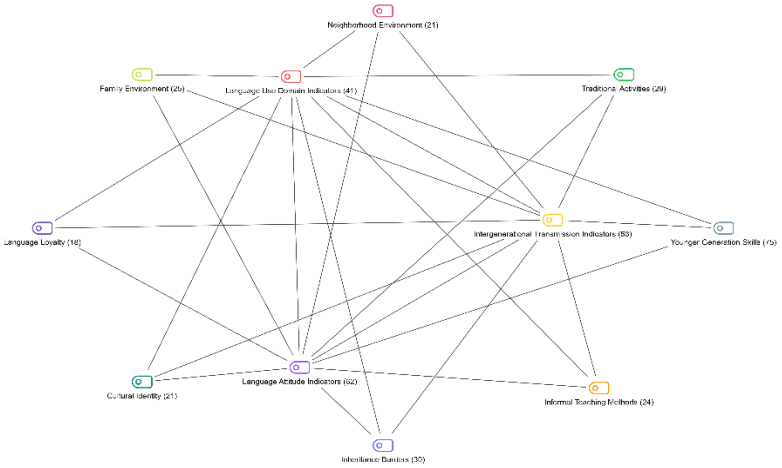



Figure 7. Code Emergence
Source: Field Data Processing with MAXQDA 24 Software

The visualisation in Figure 7 presents a very dense network of interconnections through the Code Occurrence model, which represents the frequency of co-occurrence across all categories in the dataset. Qualitatively, this model depicts a cohesive sociolinguistic system, where the Language Attitude Indicator (62 segments) and the Intergenerational Transmission Indicator (53 segments) serve as the main anchors binding all other variables. The density of the intersecting lines indicates that each aspect, from Cultural Identity and Language Loyalty to Inheritance Barriers, does not operate linearly but instead influences the others simultaneously in every context of the informants' conversations.

Furthermore, this model shows that Younger Generation Skills interact broadly, connected not only to teaching methods but also to language use within the family and neighbourhood. This indicates that the younger generation's language capacity is shaped by a combination of social domains. The presence of traditional activities as a meeting point connected to almost all nodes emphasises tradition as the primary medium that revitalises all indicators of language vitality. Overall, Figure 7 concludes that the linguistic phenomena in this study are holistic; success or failure in one indicator will have a domino effect on other indicators because of the strong network of connections between them

## Discussion

### Psychological Foundations of Landawe Language Resilience

The vitality of a language cannot be separated from the psychological dimensions of its speakers. In the coastal communities of North Konawe, the community's collective perception, pride, and mentality strongly drive Landawe language maintenance. Based on qualitative data extraction using MAXQDA 24, the visualisation in Figure 3 places Language Attitude at the epicentre, with the highest frequency weight (62 segments). This high level of attention confirms the view that positive language attitudes are an absolute prerequisite and the most accurate predictor of efforts to prevent language shift (Pepinsky et al., 2022).

A phenomenological reading of the data structure shows that the Landawe community's language attitudes fall into two main, mutually reinforcing orientations: Cultural Identity (21 segments) and Language Loyalty (18 segments). The high frequency of the Cultural Identity sub-code indicates that for the coastal communities of North Konawe, the Landawe language is lived not merely as an instrument of transactional communication, but as a "living space" and a reflection of their ontological existence. This aligns with Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory, where language acts as a boundary marker that distinguishes in-groups from out-groups while also providing a sense of security and historical pride amid the flow of external cultural assimilation (Yagmur, 2011).

Furthermore, the Language Loyalty sub-code in Figure 3 represents a form of social resilience. This loyalty is manifested in the speakers' commitment to continue using Landawe in various situations, even when faced with Indonesian hegemony. Citing the conceptual framework in Reversing Language Shift, language loyalty is an ideological driving force that resists cultural extinction. The informants' narratives in this segment are not reduced to mere numbers, but treated as authentic voices of a community striving to preserve meaning and safeguard ancestral heritage from erosion by time (Hill, 1994).

This language stance becomes even more undeniable when contextualised within the broader language preservation ecosystem. As shown in the data intersection model in Figures 1 and 7, Language Attitudes act as a foundational pillar that simultaneously fuels the success of Intergenerational Transmission and determines the expansion of the Language Use Domain. In other words, the resilience of the Landawe language in North Konawe stems from a psychological victory within the minds and hearts of its speakers; a sense of identity pride that then translates into informal teaching practices in households and daily customary rituals.

**Dynamics of Intergenerational Transmission and Challenges of Youth Competence**

In the study of language ecology and vitality, transmission from older to younger generations is the lifeblood that determines the life or death of a linguistic system. The Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) concept emphasises that intergenerational transition at the family level is the last line of defence; without this organic transfer, any institutional efforts will fail (Idaryani & Fidyati, 2022). Figure 2 clearly visualises this theoretical premise, where Intergenerational Transmission (53 segments) acts as a structural anchor that underpins the dynamics of Landawe language transmission on the coast of North Konawe.

A phenomenological reading of this model reveals intense social contestation in the field. The Younger Generation's Ability subcode dominates this cluster with a very high frequency (75 segments). This figure reflects the primary focus of the community and traditional elders, who continually evaluate how well the next generation can absorb, understand, and use the Landawe language. However, these high expectations for youth capacity clash directly with the sociological realities captured in the 30-segment sub-code "Barriers to Inheritance." These barriers suggest structural disruptions, such as massive exposure to the national language, migration, and shifting coastal economic orientations, which cumulatively make it difficult for older generations to fully pass on their mother tongue. Informants' lived experiences reveal that language transmission is not a smooth, mechanical process, but a daily cultural struggle.

Amid these pressures and obstacles, the Landawe community relies on Informal Teaching Methods (24 segments) for its maintenance strategy. Unlike structured language learning in schools, Landawe language transmission is fluid, organic, and embedded in everyday interactions. Drawing on Family Language Policy theory, these informal teaching practices show that households and coastal environments function as "natural classrooms" (Mirvahedi, 2024). In this space, Landawe's meaning, lexicon, and cultural values are transmitted not through a formal curriculum, but through admonitions, light-hearted traditional speech, and everyday conversation.

Figures 5 and 7 further confirm this dynamic relationship, where indicators of intergenerational transmission strongly intersect with language attitudes and the family sphere. Overall, these dynamics suggest that the greatest challenge to the survival of the Landawe language in North Konawe lies not in the absence of speakers, but in maintaining the language's purity and function among a younger generation living in an increasingly hybrid social environment. The community's approach, which relies on informal teaching, is an adaptive strategy to preserve their cultural voice and identity from being drowned out by the tide of modernisation.

**Domestic Space and Traditional Rituals as the Last Line of Defence**

In sociolinguistic ecological studies, a language's vitality largely depends on the space, or domain, allocated for its use. Following the classical postulate on language domains, language resilience is empirically measured by the availability of social spaces where the language maintains its communicative and symbolic functions (Rajeshwari & Meenakshi, 2022). The structural visualisation in Figure 4 confirms that for the coastal communities of North Konawe, the Landawe language still has a strong "sanctuary." This Domain of Language Use indicator (41 segments) is organically supported by three main interaction pillars: Traditional Activities (29 segments), Family Environment (25 segments), and Neighbourhood Environment (21 segments).

Phenomenologically, these spaces exist not merely as geographical or physical settings, but as fields of meaning where communal existence and resilience are nurtured. The dominant frequency in the Traditional Activities domain indicates that traditional rituals, lifecycle ceremonies, and subsistence cultural activities on the coast serve as the most sacred bastions. These spaces preserve a rich lexicon and a complete linguistic structure. Through a data analysis that prioritises ethical concerns, we can see that the voices of informants reverberating within this customary realm are essentially a form of "preservation of meaning." The Landawe language functions not merely to exchange transactional information, but as a vehicle for preserving the collective memory of ancestors, refusing to succumb to the homogenising tide of the national language.

This condition is reinforced by the relational closeness recorded in the neural network in Figure 6. The proximity map reveals a deeply organic bond between the family and neighbourhood environments, along with aspects of cultural identity and loyalty to language. The domestic environment becomes the epicentre of daily life, where the Landawe language is spoken authentically, flowing naturally across living rooms, verandas, and even informal conversations among neighbours on the coast.

Amid rapid socio-economic disruption and the vulnerability of changing livelihoods on the coast, the domestic space and traditional rituals become institutions of preservation. In these two realms, local community voices are tightly guarded, isolated from the metrics of linguistic competition in the formal public sphere. Thus, the integration of the domestic space and the traditional stage forms the last line of defence that keeps the Landawe language alive and breathing in the daily lives of the people of North Konawe.

**Synchronisation of Identity, Space, and Inheritance**

A language's resilience within a sociolinguistic ecological landscape never operates linearly or in isolation. Efforts to preserve a language are like maintaining a complex ecosystem, where each element feeds on and determines the survival of the others. This multidimensional relationship is captured with great precision in Figures 5 and 7. The dense network of interconnectedness in these visualisations reveals that preserving the Landawe language on the coast of North Konawe results from the simultaneous synchronisation of mental strength, the availability of physical-cultural media (space), and knowledge transfer mechanisms.

Through the lens of language ecology, this synchronisation is evident in how the Language Attitude Indicator and the Intergenerational Transmission Indicator act as twin axes that bind all preservation variables (Garner, 2017; Nareeman Jabbar Rasheed, 2023). The data intersection map demonstrates that mental attitudes imbued with pride in cultural identity and loyalty to language will have no significant impact if they are not given "breathing space" within the family environment and traditional activities. Conversely, the domestic and customary spheres become meaningless voids if the older generation lacks the ideological awareness to pass on linguistic competence to the younger generation. The strong intersection between Younger Generation Skills, Family Environment, and Cultural Identity confirms that the development of young Landawe people's language capacity does not arise in a vacuum, but is forged directly on the altar of everyday family life and tradition.

More than simply a reading of data frequencies, the density of these intercoded lines of interaction phenomenologically represents the collective resilience of the Landawe community. Facing the onslaught of modernisation and shifting coastal socioeconomic landscapes, this community does not separate social life from linguistic practice. Prioritising an approach that respects the autonomy of informants' voices, these findings conclude that for the North Konawe community, maintaining the Landawe language is synonymous with maintaining their sociocultural right to life. Failure or success in mitigating Inheritance Barriers will have a domino effect on the entire system. Thus, a true language resilience strategy is not an external intervention, but a strengthening one that originates from within: an organic synchronisation in which identity is celebrated, domestic and customary spaces are maintained, and language inheritance is nurtured as an ethical responsibility across generations.

## Conclusion

The resilience of the Landawe language on the coast of North Konawe is not static, but a living, dynamic, and multidimensionally integrated sociolinguistic ecosystem. Based on structural analysis and data intersection, the primary foundation for language preservation is firmly rooted in the psychological core of its speakers: pride in cultural identity and loyalty to the language. This ideological and emotional attitude drives intergenerational transmission. This collective awareness encourages older generations to continue passing on linguistic competence to younger generations through informal teaching methods, despite the constant structural obstacles posed by changes in the coastal socio-economic landscape.

Furthermore, this research reveals that the most authentic preservation strategies do not emerge from formal institutional interventions, but rather flow organically through the domestic realm of the family and traditional rituals. These spaces of daily interaction serve as the final bastion of defence, ensuring that the Landawe language remains alive not merely as a means of transactional communication, but as a guardian of the collective memory of ancestors. Ultimately, the vitality of the Landawe language depends heavily on the harmonious synchronisation between mentality (attitude), space (domain of use), and the agent of inheritance (transmission). Efforts to preserve the language in the North Konawe landscape are, in essence, a form of cultural resistance and ethical responsibility to safeguard the existence, dignity, and voice of coastal communities so that they are not drowned in the current of homogenization.

## Research Limitations

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach focused on the subjective experiences of grassroots communities, so its findings are highly specific and tied to the local context in the coastal region of North Konawe. The sample included 65 informants selected through purposive sampling, including native Landawe speakers, traditional leaders, and family members. This study focuses on the interaction between language and its social environment (language ecology), including language attitudes, intergenerational transmission, and domains of use, so it does not comprehensively measure language vitality through competitive metrics or macro-speaker statistics.

## Research Recommendations

Further research is recommended to expand the scope of language resilience studies to other coastal communities also facing vulnerabilities due to economic transformation

and modernisation. Future studies can design language maintenance models that practically empower the domestic family space and traditional ritual activities as the primary line of defence in language transmission. Further studies are recommended to not only map language vitality through qualitative evaluation but also formulate sociolinguistically informed language policies for the community.

## Acknowledgements

The authors express their deepest gratitude to the 65 informants who participated in this research. Special appreciation goes to native Landawe speakers across generations, traditional leaders, and family members in the coastal region of North Konawe who shared their daily experiences in both the domestic sphere and during traditional rituals.

## Author's Contribution

BSW: wrote the main text of the manuscript, prepared figures, and reviewed the manuscript. RTP: Data curation, resources, writing – review & editing. MDP: Writing – review & editing.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest that could influence the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article on the resilience of the Landawe language.

## Data Availability Statement

Data will be made available on request.

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