

A Semiotic Analysis and Cultural Values in the Lyrics of the Sumbawa Song “Poto Tano”

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SUBJECT

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Introduction

Humans use language to exchange information and convey messages in various ways. Language possesses characteristics that make it a unique form of communication. Effendi and Sukri (2024) state that the features of language include being systematic, arbitrary, flexible, diverse, and complex. Communication through language occurs between individuals with purposes such as education, entertainment, persuasion, and the exchange of specific messages (Hakim & Rukmanasari, 2023). The messages communicated can yield various meanings depending on the recipient’s perspective or point of view. One medium of communication is through songs.

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the semiotic meaning and cultural values contained in the lyrics of the Sumbawa song “Poto Tano” by Ace Let Luar, which Yuni Shara has popularised. The approach employed is Ferdinand de Saussure’s semiotic theory, which is used to identify the elements of the signifier and signified, and Clifford Geertz’s interpretive anthropology theory, which is utilised to explore the cultural values of the Sumbawa people. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, with the data source consisting of the song’s lyrics. The results of the analysis reveal that the lyrics of “Poto Tano” convey various symbolic meanings and cultural values, including local patriotism, the values of maritime community life, spirituality, traditional art expressions, social and family relationships, as well as hope and optimism. This song not only describes the natural beauty of Sumbawa but also serves as a medium to preserve the cultural identity of the Sumbawa people in the face of modernisation challenges. The song “Poto Tano” serves not only as a medium for preserving cultural identity but also conveys profound messages about people’s lives in Sumbawa. Future studies are recommended to examine other regional songs or cultural artefacts from Sumbawa to enlarge the understanding of local identity and strengthen the efforts in cultural preservation.

In every lyric, songwriters can express the meaning and messages they wish to convey (Larasati et al., 2022). Through these lyrics, both songwriters and singers communicate with their listeners. Pohan et al. (2023) further explain that songwriters can establish indirect interactions with music listeners. Moreover, the feelings or emotions expressed by songwriters are often well-conveyed and deeply felt by the audience. According to Larasati et al. (2022), songs have a significant impact on humans in various aspects, including physical, emotional, behavioural, educational, and imaginative aspects. Additionally, songs serve as a communication medium that can provide satisfaction and evoke specific emotions linked to cultural values.

In everyday communication, Indonesians use both the Indonesian language and regional languages (Effendi & Sukri, 2024). Indonesia is home to many different ethnic groups, scattered from Sabang to Merauke, each with its own distinctive characteristics. Beyond linguistic diversity, these ethnic groups possess a rich cultural heritage encompassing dances, folklore, rituals, traditional clothing, traditional houses, cuisine, traditional games, music, and regional songs (Larasati et al., 2022). Astifaijah (2007) emphasises the importance of regional languages not only in relation to fostering, developing, and strengthening the national language but also in advancing and preserving the regional languages themselves. These languages are integral elements of both local and national cultures. One regional language that remains widely spoken among its speakers is Sumbawa.

Sumbawa is the language of the Samawa ethnic group, who inhabit Sumbawa Island in West Nusa Tenggara. As explained by Burhanuddin et al. (2025), the Sumbawa language is genetically classified as part of the West Malayo-Polynesian subgroup of the Austronesian language family. It shares linguistic affinities with several neighbouring languages such as Sasak, Balinese and Malay. This language has four dialects, namely the Sumbawa Besar dialect, the Taliwang dialect, the Jereweh dialect, and the Tongo dialect (Mahsun, 1994). Additionally, the current state of the Sumbawa language warrants attention, as it is increasingly influenced by the dominant regional and national languages, such as Indonesian and Sasak. The Sumbawa language had an estimated 300,000 speakers in 1989, but its speaker population has gradually decreased since then (Esabella et al., 2024). This shift has contributed to a gradual decline in everyday use among younger speakers, raising concerns about the vitality of the language and its intergenerational transmission. Clarifying this sociolinguistic condition highlights the urgency and relevance of the present study, particularly in documenting linguistic expressions and cultural values that may be at risk of fading over time. Language preservation can be achieved in various ways, one of which is through regional-language songs that anyone can sing, yet retain the cultural elements of the region.

According to Alfiani and Hidayat (2023), the development of music in the Sumbawa region began to emerge around the 1980s when music groups such as Sejora Group, Plamboyan, Cempaka, and Arafah started producing recordings of Sumbawa-language songs. These regional Sumbawa songs carry cultural messages that reflect the local community's way of life, one of which is the song "*Poto Tano*." According to TribunLombok.com (2022), the song "*Poto Tano*" was composed by the musician Ace Let Luar and sung by the famous singer Yuni Shara. The lyrics of Sumbawa-language songs often utilise old or poetic language, allowing each line or word in the verses to hold multiple interpretations.

In this research, the study refers to three literature reviews. The first is a study by Vitri Alfiani and Ofi Hidayat (2023) entitled "*Semiotic Analysis of Sumbawa Song Lyrics*

as a Communication Medium of the Sumbawa Community (A Study on the Songs Alam Sumbawa, Poto Tano, Barapan Kebo, and Kapal Kalumpak)", which applies Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory. The second study, by Aditya Wardhani (2012), is entitled "Cultural Values of the Sumbawa Community on Lombok Island (A Review of Ama Samawa)", employing an ethnolinguistic method. The third study, conducted by Prima Nucifera (2018), is titled "Cognitive Semantic Analysis on the Lyrics of the Acehese Folk Song Bungong Jeumpa," which utilises the concept of metaphors in cognitive semantics.

Although regional songs play a significant role in Indonesia's cultural and musical richness, there is still a lack of attention to understanding the meanings and cultural values embedded in these lyrics (Pohan et al., 2023). Based on the literature reviews used as a foundation, the researcher is interested in exploring the semiotic meanings and cultural values in Sumbawa-language songs, specifically the song "Poto Tano," as a new contribution to this study. Research related to Sumbawa's language and culture remains scarce to this day. The song "Poto Tano" was chosen because it is considered a folk song with a rich history and narrative, full of meaning (Alfiani & Hidayat, 2023). In analysing the song's lyrics, semiotic and interpretive anthropological approaches can be applied. This study will focus on identifying the semiotic codes present in the lyrics of "Poto Tano" by Ace Let Luar and understanding the cultural meanings that reflect the life of the Sumbawa community.

Theoretical Framework

Semiotic theory according to Ferdinand de Saussure

Etymologically, the term semiotics is derived from the Greek word "semeion," which means a sign (Wahjuwibowo, 2019). Therefore, semiotics can be understood as the study of signs (signs) and how these signs are used to generate meaning (Handayani & Nuzuli, 2021). A sign itself is defined as something that can represent something else based on an established social convention (Wahjuwibowo, 2019). According to Ferdinand de Saussure, signs in a language possess at least two primary characteristics: linearity and arbitrariness (Budiman, 1999, in Hidayat, 2014). Keriyono (2024) adds that the semiotic approach encompasses key theories on how signs can represent objects, ideas, states, and emotions.

Saussure argues that every linguistic sign has two inseparable components, which are a sound-image and a concept, and the link between these elements represents what is generally understood as the expression of the sign (Durst-Andersen, 2008). His semiotic theory posits that a sign comprises two main elements: the signifier (the form related to the object) and the signified (the human understanding of the object) (Rahmasari & Adiyanto, 2023). Saussure (in Sartini, 2007) gives the example of the word "tree" in Latin, arbour. The signifier of /arbour/ can be interpreted as the auditory image associated with the concept of a tree, as commonly understood by humans, rather than referring to a specific tree, which is what is called the signifier. In the semiotic perspective, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is neither direct nor natural, making it arbitrary. Nevertheless, this arbitrariness is grounded in shared social conventions, meaning that the connection between a signifier and its signified is fluid and can shift or develop over time (Reda, 2016).

According to Wahjuwibowo (2019), semiotic analysis is a paradigmatic approach, meaning it aims to uncover both explicit and implicit meanings within a text. Batu (2012) explains that the semiotic method employs a scientific meta-language aimed at identifying the layers of meaning that form a unified whole, whether in a painting, a

written or scientific text, an image, an architectural structure, a theatrical performance, or a musical piece. Through this approach, researchers attempt to reveal how meanings are generated and constructed.

Specifically, structural semiotics delves deeper into the system of signs manifested through linguistic structures (Sartini, 2007). Language usage is therefore said to be bidimensional, as meaning is constellated not just around the relationship between linguistic symbols, but also around the actors and the social and situational contexts in which they are embedded. In the context of songs, for example, lyrics employ language to convey hidden meanings, while musical chords serve as accompaniment to the lyrics. The language in song lyrics may include combinations of vocals, stylistic elements, or distortions of written meanings, further reinforced by melodies and musical notations. This helps listeners feel the same meanings intended by the songwriter (Hakim & Rukmanasari, 2023).

Interpretive anthropology theory according to Clifford Geertz

Clifford Geertz, an American cultural anthropologist, is regarded as one of the most significant advocates for interpretive social sciences, following Max Weber (Abolafia et al., 2014). Geertz argues that, for the most part, anthropology should be ethnography, focusing on specific places and societies (Qodim, 2009). He holds the view that the primary subject of anthropological study is “culture,” not “society.” According to Susen (2024), his interpretive theory of culture emphasises the need for “thick description”. Instead of only giving a basic account of what people do, we must also explain the context, meanings, and cultural background behind their actions. This description helps us understand behaviour not just by observing it, but by interpreting it within its social and cultural setting.

Interpretive anthropology, as described by Qodim (2009), is an effort to uncover the systems of meaning and values underlying human life. This approach serves as the foundation for anthropologists to take steps in understanding traditions. Geertz explicitly positions culture and ethnography within a semiotic shift in anthropology and highlights the rise of hermeneutic approaches (interpretation of meaning) across various fields. However, he implicitly distances himself from more limited schools of symbolic anthropology, cognitive anthropology, and structuralism, which view culture solely as a symbolic system (White, 2007). Geertz (1973), as cited in Bošković (2002), states that the purpose of a semiotic approach to culture is to help us understand the conceptual world of the subjects being studied so that we can engage in a broader dialogue with it.

According to Susen (2024), providing a thick description entails engaging deeply in ethnography, where culture is viewed as a complex web of meaningful structures, symbols, and practices. These layers shape how people produce, understand, and interpret actions. This means that almost everything can be viewed as a cultural expression. Culture influences how people think and perceive the world. It also affects how they interact with others and their surroundings. In this sense, culture becomes both a product of shared human experience and the force that drives how people connect and make meaning together.

For Geertz, cultural analysis centres on identifying the carriers of meaning within every social group, where symbols, narratives, and especially language constitute the primary components that shape social life (Abolafia et al., 2014). Geertz (1983) emphasises that the interpretive method involves interpreting the “native’s” interpretation through the reconstruction of the subject’s symbolic system. This involves searching for and analysing symbolic forms – such as images, words, institutions, and

behaviors – that people use to represent themselves to one another (Abolafia et al., 2014). According to Bošković (2002), the culture of a society is akin to a collection of texts that anthropologists attempt to read from behind the shoulders of those inherently part of that society

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method because the data and analysis results are presented in written form. Romlah (2021) explains that qualitative research has evolved across various fields, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, the humanities, and education. Qualitative data provides a rich source of information, in-depth understanding, and explanations of processes (Hidayat, 2014). The goal of descriptive research is to accurately describe the characteristics of individuals, circumstances, or phenomena within specific groups (Koentjaraningrat, 1980, as cited in Mawarni, 2022). Moreover, Afriandayani et al. (2023) state that the use of qualitative descriptive research methods allows researchers to conduct studies naturally. Qualitative research is a type of investigation that uses data in the form of statements or questions and is based on an interpretive or subjective approach (Hakim & Rukmanasari, 2023).

The data in this study are the song lyrics of “*Poto Tano*” by Ace Let Luar, performed by Yuni Shara. These lyrics were sourced from the Smule website, as no official source has published them. Data collection in this research uses observation techniques. Observation is an activity that utilises hearing, sight, and smell to gather information, specifically related to the research problem (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, as cited in Romlah, 2021). The observation data collection technique is used to collect activities, events, objects, and conditions, as well as the feelings of individuals or groups. This enables researchers to gain a more comprehensive and accurate picture of an event or condition being studied. According to Zohriatun et al. (2023), a better understanding of the broader social context surrounding the examined data can be gained through field observation, thereby providing a more holistic view of the data.

The analysis is performed using two theoretical frameworks. First, Ferdinand de Saussure’s semiotic theory is applied to identify the semiotic codes that the lyrics of “*Poto Tano*” contain. This involves examining the relationship between the *signifier* (the linguistic form that appears in the lyrics) and the *signified* (the conceptual meaning that listeners produce). Saussure’s model enables a systematic identification of symbolic expressions embedded in words, phrases, and lyrical imagery.

Second, the analysis draws on Clifford Geertz’s interpretive anthropology, particularly his concept of culture as a system of symbols through which people communicate, preserve, and develop their knowledge about the world. Geertz’s framework is used to interpret how the semiotic elements identified in the song reflect and construct the cultural values of the Sumbawa community.

In this study, Geertz’s perspective enables the researcher to understand how symbols in the lyrics serve as cultural guides, helping the community make sense of life’s uncertainties. By integrating semiotic analysis with Geertz’s interpretive approach, this study examines not only what the symbols mean but also how those meanings express the worldview, moral expectations, and emotional resilience characteristics of Sumbawa culture.

Discussion

In the context of the song "*Poto Tano*," identifying signifiers and signifieds in the semiotic perspective helps reveal how meaning is constructed through its lyrics. Complementing this, Geertz views culture as a system that must be read and interpreted collectively rather than individually. Thus, analysing the lyrics of "*Poto Tano*" provides insight into the cultural values embodied by the Sumbawa community. The following are the cultural values of the Sumbawa people represented in the song's lyrics.

Local Patriotism

The lyrics of "*Poto Tano*," which praise the beauty of nature, including mountains, the sea, and cultural uniqueness, reflect a profound love for one's homeland. The splendour of Poto Tano as the gateway to Sumbawa symbolises pride in its natural and cultural wealth. This meaning is reflected in the lyric "*Poto Tano lawang desa*", where *lawang* (gateway) represents an entry point for those arriving in or leaving Sumbawa. Another lyric, "*Palabu Tana Samawa*" (Harbour of Tanah Sumbawa), reinforces this imagery by describing Poto Tano Harbour, which lies on the edge of Sumbawa Island and connects it to Lombok Island. The geographical position of Poto Tano makes it a significant emotional site, where tears of joy and sorrow are shed as loved ones depart or return. The harbour thus stands as a silent witness to the journeys of the Sumbawa people, whether they leave in search of fortune or come home to their roots.

Thus, Poto Tano Harbour is significant to the Sumbawa population. It expresses the cultural aspects of love for one's motherland and a strong sense of local identity, as the Sumbawa people remain intensely loyal to their birthplace. The words reflect love and pride for the motherland, acting as a reminder to value and honour one's roots. In the cultural context, Poto Tano represents the concept of "returning home," or reconnecting with one's cultural roots, customs, and personal identity. This need is heightened by vivid depictions of Sumbawa's natural beauty, particularly the sea and shoreline, which are central to the community's way of life. The sea is more than a backdrop in the song; it is a treasured symbol of life. This devotion is evident in Poto Tano, a celebration of nature's beauty and bounty. The song's poetic lyrics inspire listeners to consider the necessity of maintaining and honouring the environment as an integral element of Sumbawa's cultural heritage.

The lyrics "*Poto Tano lawang desa*" (Village gate Poto Tano) and "*Palabu Tana Samawa*" (Harbour of Tanah Sumbawa) function as signifiers that express the Sumbawa people's pride and deep attachment to their homeland. In Saussurean terms, these words signify more than physical landmarks. They embody symbols of belonging, memory, and identity. Culturally, this reflects the Sumbawa people's strong sense of local patriotism, their enduring affection for their homeland, and their recognition of its natural beauty. The lyric "*No sendi ya ta kulupa*" (Not a single thing will be forgotten) reinforces this emotion, expressing a heartfelt promise never to forget one's origin.

As Geertz states, culture is a system of symbols that conveys meaning through shared understanding. In this context, Poto Tano becomes a living metaphor for the collective memory of the Sumbawa people. Moreover, the continued use of the Sumbawa language in these lyrics strengthens cultural identity and supports linguistic preservation. By singing in their mother tongue, the community sustains local pride and ensures that the emotional depth of these expressions remains intact despite ongoing modernisation.

Maritime Life Values in Sumbawa Society

The song "*Poto Tano*" paints a vivid picture of Sumbawa Island's natural splendour, which can be seen as you approach through Poto Tano Harbour. The song describes in

detail the natural splendour surrounding Poto Tano Harbour, including little islands and gorgeous peaks. Its gorgeous beaches and clear surf add to the harbour's appeal. This depiction of natural beauty is more than just aesthetically pleasing; it also serves as a symbol of local pride, attracting people from outside Sumbawa.

Furthermore, Poto Tano Harbour serves as both a transportation hub and a centre for the coastal community's livelihood, which is strongly dependent on the sea. The majority of Sumbawa's residents, particularly in Poto Tano Village, are fishermen. As a result, the sea plays a crucial role in their livelihood and identity. The song emphasises the importance of the sea as a source of nutrition and a cultural connection between the people of Sumbawa and their surroundings. Sumbawa's enormous beaches are passionately valued and preserved by the people, who see them not just as economic advantages but also as cultural treasures that must be conserved.

The song "*Poto Tano*" also draws attention to the mobility and connections between Sumbawa and other regions of Indonesia, particularly Lombok, which is linked through established maritime routes. This continuous movement of people across the sea reflects not only the community's economic activities but also the migration patterns that have become a fundamental part of Sumbawa's social fabric. The people frequently travel between Sumbawa and Lombok for trade, business, or family matters, illustrating the sea's role as a pathway for both opportunity and relational ties.

This mobility also represents the intense engagement between the people of Sumbawa and visitors, which fosters cultural and knowledge exchanges. In this perspective, Poto Tano Harbour is more than just a transportation hub; it also represents the Sumbawa community's openness to the outside world. The song depicts how the locals use maritime routes to connect with other regions while preserving their identity and cultural values.

The lyrics "*Gili ode mara intan, kasear nonda baropa*" (Small islands like diamonds, scattered and unchanging) and "*Belo tampar somo umak, senap angin batarepa*" (The long beach absorbs the waves, a cool breeze blows) function as signifiers that portray the intimate relationship between the Sumbawa people and their maritime surroundings. These lines convey both the aesthetic and economic significance of the sea in everyday life. The lyric "*Tulang jangi tu balayar*" (Looking at our fate that sails) encapsulates the uncertainty and hope tied to a livelihood dependent on the sea. This symbolises both possibility and challenge. From the semiotic perspective, the sea serves as the signified element representing movement, survival, and identity.

Culturally, this reflects the maritime life values that shape Sumbawa society, where fishing, sailing, and seafaring go beyond occupations. They become expressions of identity, spirituality, and resilience. As emphasised by Geertz, the cultural meaning emerges from everyday practices. In Sumbawa, these practices are anchored in the rhythms of the sea. The persistent use of Sumbawa vocabularies preserves the community's maritime lexicon. This linguistic choice protects ecological knowledge and traditional expressions, allowing local identity to flourish even as modernisation reshapes coastal life.

Spiritual and Religious Life

Religious values are an essential component of Sumbawa's cultural identity. Although the lyrics of "*Poto Tano*" do not explicitly mention religious elements, these values can be interpreted through the philosophy of life practised by the predominantly Muslim Sumbawa community. The representation of natural beauty in the song is seen as an

expression of gratitude to God, expressing the community's spiritual connection with the Creator.

The lyrics describing the natural beauty of Poto Tano, such as its mountains, seas, and surrounding landscapes, can be seen as an acknowledgement of God's glory. Nature, according to Islamic tradition, is a symbol of Allah's majesty. Thus, the song's depiction of Poto Tano's natural beauty becomes an expression of appreciation for God's blessings in the form of fertile and attractive surroundings that provide life.

The people of Sumbawa have long upheld a tradition of expressing gratitude through cultural practices, including regional songs. "*Poto Tano*" can therefore be interpreted as a symbolic gesture of thankfulness for the harbour's role as the gateway to their homeland. Its beautiful natural setting is regarded as a divine blessing that must be protected, reflecting the Islamic principle of *Amanah* (the responsibility) to take care of what God has entrusted to humanity. The song implicitly emphasises the importance of living harmoniously with nature, positioning such stewardship as an act of devotion to Allah.

Traditional songs, such as "*Poto Tano*," serve as both entertainment and educational tools for imparting cultural and moral values. This song encourages younger generations to appreciate the beauty of God's creation, understand the importance of maintaining a spiritual connection with the Creator, and recognise local culture as a means of practising religious principles. In essence, the religious principles incorporated in "*Poto Tano*" are not limited to praise for nature, but also reflect the Sumbawa people's life philosophy, which places God at the centre of existence. The song embodies the harmony between humanity, nature, and God, serving as a cornerstone of Sumbawa's religious culture.

Spirituality in "*Poto Tano*" is subtly conveyed through natural imagery rather than explicit religious references. Lyrics such as "*Gili ode mara intan*" (Small islands like diamonds) and "*Belo tampar somo umak, senap angin batarepa*" (The long beach absorbs the waves, a cool breeze blows) function as signifiers of divine creation and human gratitude. In Saussurean terms, these expressions signify admiration for nature's perfection, while in Geertz's interpretive framework, they embody the religious and spiritual worldviews of the Sumbawa people.

The lyrics also reflect belief in divine providence and resilience gained through faith, such as "*Mares pakarap kulete*" (I hope I always have hope), "*Salam doa ku ko bulan*" (My greetings and prayers for the moon), "*Lamen yanan si bagian, mana pamalat let rea*" (If indeed you were half of me, even though the vast sea limits it), and "*Sadi janggi goyang kita*" (Let fate bring us together). The portrayal of harmony between humans and their environment symbolises the community's understanding of life as a sacred trust, aligning with Islamic values deeply rooted in Sumbawa. Through the continued use of the Sumbawa language, spirituality becomes inextricably linked to cultural expression. Prayer, hope, and gratitude are articulated in words favoured with ancestral meaning. Singing "*Poto Tano*" in its native language, therefore, acts as both a devotional and preservation practice, reaffirming faith and linguistic heritage as integral pillars of identity.

Expression of Art and Traditional Music

The song "*Poto Tano*" illustrates the character of traditional Sumbawa music through its distinctive melody and instruments, serving as one of the expressions of Sumbawa's traditional art and music. The harmony used in the song reflects the coastal atmosphere and portrays the lives of people whose existence is closely tied to the sea. Additionally,

listeners of the song can feel the sadness experienced when parting with loved ones who are about to leave their hometown and travel far away.

The lyrics of "*Poto Tano*" are beautifully composed in the Sumbawa language, rich in symbolic meaning. The use of the regional language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a means of preserving the oral tradition and the region's literary heritage. The lyrics of this song are written in an archaic style with poetic nuances, representing the Sumbawa people's ability in poetry and storytelling. Each word in the lyrics holds a deep meaning and can be interpreted in multiple ways, depending on the context. Listening to this song enables the audience to experience and understand the life of the Sumbawa community, including their connection to nature and maritime culture.

Moreover, in this era of globalisation, the use of regional languages in the musical arts has become increasingly important for preserving cultural identity. Through this song, the listeners can learn about the Sumbawa community's culture, both on the island of Sumbawa and in other parts of Indonesia, including those who have travelled far away. The use of the Sumbawa language not only preserves it, but also strengthens a sense of local identity in the face of modernisation.

The song "*Poto Tano*" itself functions as a semiotic system in which sound, language, and imagery intertwine to express Sumbawa's traditional art. The lyrics, written entirely in the Sumbawa language, are dense with metaphors and poetic diction. This can be seen in the lyrics "*Sajan ngasi ate notang*" (The more my longing heart aches) and "*Me potanang no ku totang*" (How could I not miss you). These signifiers bring emotional resonance and a rhythmic quality that reflect the musicality of Sumbawa's oral traditions. The song's melodic structure, combined with these expressive lyrics, signifies the harmony between artistic expression and daily life.

According to Geertz, cultural performances, such as music, are texts that require interpretation. In this sense, "*Poto Tano*" communicates aesthetic beauty while preserving cultural memory. Its use of local language is crucial, as it protects not only vocabulary but also traditional poetic conventions. By maintaining these artistic expressions amid contemporary musical influences, "*Poto Tano*" becomes a bridge between generations, ensuring that the Sumbawa language and its artistic sensibilities continue to resonate both within and beyond the island.

Social and Familial Relationships

The Sumbawa community is well-known for its strong sense of social and familial relationships. This value is also reflected in the song "*Poto Tano*," both through its lyrics and the cultural context in which it is commonly sung. The song expresses a sense of nostalgia experienced by migrants who fondly remember their homeland, especially when travelling through Poto Tano Harbour, which serves as a symbolic gateway to and from Sumbawa. Each time they return through this harbour, they not only come back physically but also reconnect emotionally with their family and homeland.

Although the lyrics of "*Poto Tano*" explicitly describe the beauty of nature, they also implicitly emphasise the significance of community. Poto Tano is Sumbawa's main entryway to neighbouring regions. In this context, Poto Tano can be interpreted as a meeting point that strengthens relationships between the local populations and visitors. This symbolism reflects the open and hospitable nature of the Sumbawa people. The song is frequently performed at traditional ceremonies such as cultural festivals and weddings. It becomes a symbol of togetherness in celebrating significant moments with extended families and the community. Moreover, regional songs are typically sung to

encourage cooperation among the people, a tradition known as *gotong royong* in Sumbawa.

Togetherness in the Sumbawa community entails more than just coexisting, but it also includes mutual support. Poto Tano, as a symbol of unity, represents the philosophy that human interactions should be complementary. This illustrates the Sumbawa community's value of family bonds. The song embodies the practice of visiting and maintaining close ties with relatives, even when they are separated by distance. Additionally, the tradition of helping one another is evident in daily life, and this value is reflected in regional songs that convey messages of unity and solidarity.

Poto Tano serves as a linking gateway, providing a gathering place for various societal elements, both local and external. In this song, togetherness reflects not only the relationships among Sumbawa residents but also their openness to the outside world while maintaining internal harmony. Thus, the principles of togetherness and familial relationships in the song "*Poto Tano*" are not only implicit cultural values but also a concrete reflection of the way of life in Sumbawa, which maintains solidarity, harmony, and brotherhood in all aspects of life.

The emotional weight of lyrics such as "*Ku tari kanatang sia*" (I'm waiting for your arrival) and "*Ku nakong ke ai mata*" (I come with tears) reveals the Sumbawa people's deep appreciation for familial love and social connections. These lyrics function as signifiers of longing and sincerity, while their signified meanings relate to kinship and unity. The harbour setting symbolises both separation and reunion, mirroring the cycles of migration that shape Sumbawa's social life. Likewise, "*Sendi sate tu sangaro*" (I feel like asking) and "*Bentan gama we tanenang*" (Bring it, oh bird) metaphorically express sending prayers through nature. It is an emotional form of communication rooted in tradition.

Hope and Optimism

According to Geertz, culture serves as a guide for humans to understand and navigate life. The sense of hope and optimism is powerfully depicted in the lyrics of the song "*Poto Tano*," particularly when faced with farewell and life's obstacles. The song emphasises that with effort and prayer, good things can happen.

In the life of the Sumbawa community, hope and optimism are important, especially when faced with obstacles such as separation due to migration for employment or study. This song inspires people to keep believing that their efforts and hard work are worthwhile. This song also portrays a culture of love founded on trust and hope, illustrating that genuine relationships can withstand various challenges.

The values of hope and optimism in the song "*Poto Tano*" teach us that, while life is full of challenges and goodbyes, maintaining faith in a better future is essential. This message is not only relevant to love relationships, but also to the daily reality of the Sumbawa people, who often face difficulties. The optimism depicted in this song represents the collective spirit of the community to endure and progress despite several challenges.

The lyrics such as "*Ku tari katanang sia*" (I'm waiting for your arrival), "*Sabar gama we andi e*" (Be patient, my dear), "*Na gier iman leng ate*" (Do not shake the faith in your heart), "*Mares bakarap kulete*" (I hope I always have hope), and "*Sadi jagi goyang kita*" (Let fate bring us together) serve as key signifiers of the Sumbawa worldview. Semiotic analysis reveals that these lines signify moral resilience and trust in destiny. The dialogue between lovers separated by the sea becomes a symbolic narrative of perseverance amid distance and hardship. Culturally, this reflects the Sumbawa belief that patience (*sabar*)

and faith (*iman*) are essential for sustaining relationships and navigating life's uncertainties.

As Geertz argues, cultural symbols enable people to make meaning in challenging circumstances. In this context, "*Poto Tano*" embodies the endurance of hope through shared language and belief. The use of the Sumbawa language amplifies the emotional and moral impact of these teachings, and each recitation of these verses in performance reinforces communal optimism. Ultimately, this song illustrates how the preservation of local language and expression becomes an act of cultural survival.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous section, it can be concluded that the song lyrics of "*Poto Tano*" convey different semiotic aspects and emphasise six cultural values of the Sumbawa community. First, the song emphasises the significance of place and identity, with Poto Tano Harbour depicted not just as a physical gateway but also as a metaphorical place of departure and return for migrants. Second, in terms of maritime life values, the song highlights the profound connection between the Sumbawa community and the sea, which serves as a vital source of livelihood. It emphasises the importance of maintaining harmony with nature while also representing the mobility of the Sumbawa people, who frequently travel by sea for trade or work, especially to neighbouring islands like Lombok.

Third, the song lyrics are influenced by spiritual and religious values. Every journey, particularly those involving the sea, is accompanied by prayers and hopes for protection from God. Longing for loved ones left behind is frequently expressed through prayer, which acts as a spiritual bridge that connects them despite the distance. Fourth, "*Poto Tano*" is also a rich manifestation of traditional art and music, with songs and instruments that reflect the unique features of Sumbawa music. The use of the local language in a poetry form highlights the local community's oral culture and literary diversity.

Fifth, social and familial relationships are central themes of the song, emphasising the desire for home and family. It highlights the importance of family values and communal solidarity within the Sumbawa community. When someone leaves their hometown, they miss not only the place but also the emotional connection to their family and community. Lastly, the values of hope and optimism are important to the Sumbawa culture, where people frequently travel to other islands yet maintain the belief that their efforts are not in vain. They believe that good things will happen in the future, even if it means living far away from their family and loved ones.

The song "*Poto Tano*" by Ace Let Luar, popularised by Yuni Shara, is not just a piece of music, but also an important medium for transmitting the cultural meanings and way of life of the Sumbawa people. The song's lovely and deep lyrics effectively convey important messages about identity, social life, and communal cultural values.

Overall, "*Poto Tano*" is not just a form of entertainment but also a rich cultural mirror that reflects various aspects of the Sumbawa people's lives. Through semiotic analysis and an interpretive anthropological approach, it can be concluded that this song plays an important role in preserving and disseminating Sumbawa's cultural values, both to the local population and to the younger generation living away from home. Thus, "*Poto Tano*" stands as a work of art that not only touches the hearts of its listeners but

also promotes awareness of the importance of preserving and safeguarding local cultural heritage in the face of the ever-changing dynamics of modernity.

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A Semiotic Analysis and Cultural Values in the Lyrics of the Sumbawa Song ...

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