Education As a Medium for Language Preservation: An Ethnographic Study on The Limola Language in Sassa Village

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Purpose – This study examines the role of education as a medium for preserving language and identity, with a focus on the Limola language in Sassa Village, South Sulawesi. **Methodology –** To investigate this, the research employed a qualitative ethnographic approach. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving teachers, students, parents, local leaders, and the community. **Findings –** The findings reveal that Limola use in formal education remains limited. It is currently included only in the subject of Regional History and Culture, lacking curricular support, textbooks, or official guidelines. Nevertheless, students show a positive attitude and strong enthusiasm toward learning Limola vocabulary, suggesting potential for revitalization through education. Meanwhile, parents tend to use Indonesian at home to support academic achievement. Local leaders, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of maintaining Limola as a marker of cultural identity. **Contribution –** The study concludes that education offers an opportunity to revitalize the Limola language with a culture-based approach and innovative technologies. However, to succeed, this effort needs inclusive policy support, teacher training, new teaching materials, and collaboration between schools, the government, and local communities.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not just a tool of communication but a core part of a community's cultural and social identity. It conveys knowledge, values, structures, and worldviews through oral traditions, thereby bridging the past and the present. UNESCO (2021) notes that language fundamentally shapes social life and our understanding

of the world. However, the report also states that over half the world's languages are endangered due to weakened intergenerational transmission.

This trend is evident in Indonesia, which, despite having more than 700 local languages, is witnessing a steady decline in linguistic diversity. The dominance of Indonesian and global languages, coupled with limited intergenerational transmission, is endangering local languages, including Limola in North Luwu Regency. Efforts at language revitalization are undermined by both educational policies that privilege Indonesian and social pressures to adopt more prestigious foreign languages. The situation of Limola illustrates how language policies and social dynamics interact to accelerate the marginalization of regional languages, reflecting broader global patterns.

Data from the Language Development and Fostering Agency indicate that 718 regional languages—which are languages traditionally spoken within specific local communities or regions—constitute a vital cultural asset of the nation. Unfortunately, the majority—particularly those in eastern regions with smaller speaker populations—are now threatened with extinction. Contributing factors include negative speaker attitudes, migration, interethnic marriage, and the low social prestige of local languages. In response, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, through the Regional Language Revitalization Program (Merdeka Belajar, Episode 17), emphasizes the need for approaches that extend beyond mere conservation. Here, language revitalization refers to planned efforts to increase the use, functionality, and prestige of endangered languages, aiming instead to foster interest, functionality, and pride among young speakers (Sukamto & Qalyubi, 2022).

Intergenerational shift is a major challenge. Pramuniati et al. (2025) and Ansori (2019) argue that the declining use of regional languages by families leads to their extinction, as parents prefer Indonesian for educational and social mobility purposes. This is seen among Limola speakers in Sassa Village, who use Indonesian at home and in the community. This aligns with Idaryani & Fidyati (2022), who found Aceh parents favor Indonesian, valuing it for children's education. The Language Agency Report also notes that globalization and digitalization accelerate language shift, exposing youth to global languages while local languages are marginalized without policy or digital support (Nasrullah, 2024).

The revivalistic perspective posits that language revitalization fosters linguistic continuity and promotes community well-being and identity (Zuckermann, 2024). Success relies on collaboration between communities, academics, and government through participatory, community-driven approaches. One method in Indonesia is Retta in Alor, NTT, which uses local language songs to engage youth and gain government support (Budiono & Noviani, 2023). Wiltshire et al. (2022) note that success is not only evident in new speakers but also in improved identity and well-being.

At the policy level, the Regional Language Revitalization Program emphasizes transmission—meaning the process by which languages are passed from one generation to the next—through schools, communities, and families to foster pride and increase the number of young speakers (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). Yet, O'grady (2017) cautions that revitalization often has limited impact without systematic evaluation, while Kamma (2016) highlights that language represents identity and culture—thus, language extinction equates to the loss of collective identity. Psycholinguistic studies show language acquisition depends on early exposure. Yum et al. (2014) found that second-language vocabulary learning alters brain responses even in early stages, supporting the argument for introducing a local language in childhood. In bilingualism, Declerck (2020) found that proactive language control enables minority languages to remain active in multilingual communication. Community initiatives also support language revitalization. Fauzi et al. (2020) cite the Aing Community in Banten, which revived Sundanese via social media, building youth pride and showing digital technology's potential. Edwards (2016), however, warns that state policies may be symbolic and not strengthen the social conditions needed for language survival.

These findings confirm that early and consistent exposure to regional language is crucial for transmission and revitalization. However, most regions, including Limola, lack a structured, comprehensive, and sustainable revitalization model. Existing efforts have not been integrated into educational standards despite

the proven potential of community initiatives like the Aing Community in Banten. This points to a central argument: successful language revitalization requires both institutional support and grassroots engagement. Symbolic state policies, without robust social and educational frameworks, are insufficient for ensuring the linguistic survival of a language.

Recent developments suggest a paradigm shift. Budiono et al. (2024) note that revitalization now targets all regional languages, aligning with UNESCO's International Decade of Regional Languages (2022–2032). In education, the use of flexible language mixing does not hinder understanding but rather strengthens minority language competence (Antón et al., 2015; Caira et al., 2025). Researchers' evaluation shows Limola revitalization yields a limited impact on youth language use. This is despite local culture-based initiatives, such as using social media and involving youth in traditional activities. A lack of teacher training means educators often lack the skills to teach Limola effectively. Limited teaching materials hinder consistent learning. As a result, efforts remain suboptimal and have yet to create a sustainable Limola-language ecosystem. This situation reflects challenges in regional language revitalization across Indonesia. Many government programs lack full integration at the local level. For Limola, there is no model connecting national policy with elementary school practices in materials, teacher skills, or family involvement. Prior studies typically focus on major languages, leaving Limola understudied in educational contexts. This lack of research connecting policy and practice is a major gap, highlighting the urgency of this study.

In response to these challenges, a viable solution is the development of an innovative, structured, and youth-oriented revitalization model aligned with the learning patterns of younger generations. Specifically, leveraging digital media for local language learning can directly address the main barriers: lack of exposure, absence of contextual experience, and insufficient emotional engagement. Technology-enabled learning provides practical opportunities to create immersive environments for the Limola language, simulate speech contexts, and facilitate learners' acquisition of authentic linguistic and cultural understanding. This approach is central to reversing language decline and building a sustainable ecosystem for Limola and other endangered languages.

Digital learning media also serve as an alternative when teachers are not yet trained or when instructional materials are limited, as digital content can be collaboratively designed by linguists, cultural experts, and the community to ensure both linguistic accuracy and the preservation of cultural values embodied within it. Additionally, learning media can enhance motivation and pride in using local languages through enjoyable, interactive learning experiences that cater to the technological preferences of younger generations. Thus, the integration of learning media, such as Virtual Reality, into Limola language education can strengthen the revitalization ecosystem, bridge national policies with local practices, and provide a sustainable, adaptive, and community-sensitive model for language preservation.

Based on this description, this study focuses on educational practices in Sassa Village to examine how formal and non-formal educational strategies contribute to the preservation or, conversely, accelerate the marginalization of the Limola language. Therefore, this study specifically seeks to answer three questions: (1) how is the Limola language integrated into learning activities in schools amidst the absence of a systematic implementation model; (2) what are the attitudes of teachers, students, and the community towards its use in conditions of limited policy support; and (3) to what extent education can become a strategic space for the revitalization of the Limola language. This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of Limola language use in educational contexts, while also making a theoretical contribution in the form of a formal education-based revitalization model that can be replicated in other regional language communities. In addition, this study provides practical recommendations for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, as well as local governments, to strengthen the preservation of regional languages in an inclusive, contextual, and sustainable manner, thereby maintaining linguistic diversity as a national cultural heritage.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to explore the sociocultural dimensions of language use within the Limola-speaking community. Ethnography was chosen to enable an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, values, and practices of the To Limola people. The study focused particularly on educational institutions and intergenerational language transmission. The research was conducted through intensive fieldwork. This included direct school observations, in-depth interviews, and participatory interactions with community members.

Participants

The research location is Sassa Village, Baebunta District, North Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi Province, which is known as one of the centers of the Limola language-speaking community. The research activities lasted for approximately two months. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed because it requires informants who possess knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the use and transmission of the Limola language. Therefore, informants were not selected randomly, but based on considerations that they have competence, social position, and contribution to the dynamics of the language in Sassa Village. Participants in this study were 7 people, including: 1) Traditional leaders, as guardians of tradition and language in the context of local rituals and culture; 2) Teachers and principals, as educational actors who determine learning strategies and attitudes towards the use of the Limola language in schools; 3) Students, especially the younger generation who are key to language transmission in the future; 4) Parents and native speakers, as the main inheritors of the language in the domestic environment; and 5) Community youth, who are involved in cultural and educational activities based on the local language. These seven informants were considered most capable of providing in-depth data regarding the practices, attitudes, and challenges of preserving the Limola language.

The limited number of participants was due to several methodological considerations. First, this study prioritized data depth over the number of informants, enabling a more in-depth exploration of each participant's experiences and perspectives. Second, the Limola language has a relatively small and dispersed speaker community, resulting in a limited number of individuals with high language competence and involvement in cultural activities. Third, key roles such as traditional leaders, teachers, or community youth are structurally limited, requiring the sample to be tailored to the availability of relevant actors. Therefore, the limited number of participants is still considered representative for capturing the dynamics of Limola language use, transmission, and preservation efforts in Sassa Village.

Instruments

The main research instrument was the researcher, supported by several tools, including: 1) In-depth interview guides to explore the perceptions, attitudes, and language practices of various participant groups, with an interview duration of approximately 20 minutes for each informant; 2) Observation sheets to record language use in formal and non-formal educational situations; 3) Documentation in the form of audio recordings, videos, and field notes regarding language practices in rituals, learning activities, and daily interactions; and 4) Local dictionaries and written materials that support linguistic and contextual analysis. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the interview guide and observation sheets were subjected to expert judgment by a language expert lecturer and were piloted on a limited basis with two informants before the main data collection was conducted. The pilot-test results indicated that some interview questions were still too general and needed clarification to facilitate the exploration of specific Limola language practices. Additionally, several terms were simplified for easier understanding by the informants. In the observation sheets, the pilot test identified the need for additional indicators related to language use in spontaneous interactions. Thus, based on these findings, the instrument was revised by clarifying the questions, adding observation indicators, and structuring the interview flow.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a qualitative analysis approach (Creswell, 2016). The analysis process had five stages. First, the researcher organized and prepared the data. This included transcribing interview recordings, sorting observation notes, and organizing supporting documents. Next, the researcher thoroughly reviewed the data to gain an initial understanding of the patterns and issues emerging from the field. In the third stage, coding was performed by identifying key aspects and categorizing them into meaningful groups. The next stage was interpretation, where findings were connected to theories, concepts, and prior research. This provided a broader understanding of the phenomenon under study. To ensure credibility, source triangulation was employed. This included interviews, observations, and cross-checking data with informants. The analysis was also supported by NVivo software, which assisted in systematic coding and organization, following a recursive process.

FINDINGS

This study found that the preservation of the Limola language through education still faces various challenges, particularly in terms of policy, teaching practices, and community attitudes. Data were collected through classroom observations and interviews with teachers, students, principals, parents, and community leaders.

The Use of the Limola Language in Learning Activities

At SDN 103 Sassa, the use of the Limola language in learning remains limited, mainly due to the absence of a dedicated curriculum and teaching materials. Currently, Limola appears only in certain subjects, such as Regional History and Culture. In an interview, Mr. SJ, the principal of SDN 103 Sassa, explained that the school's local content is based on policies from the provincial education office, following regional regulations. In this context, Limola is not a stand-alone subject. Instead, it is included within local cultural studies.

"With regard to the Limola language in educational institutions, local content is determined based on provincial and regency regulations. In primary schools, local content includes regional languages (such as Bugis and Toraja), Regional History and Culture, and Traditional Games. At SDN 103 Sassa, the Limola language is incorporated into the subject of Regional History and Culture." (Interview, SJ)

The interview data show that Limola language use in learning is only minimally accommodated, rather than being institutionalized. Limola lacks independent subject status and relies on limited curriculum spaces. This demonstrates the absence of structural legitimacy, which prevents the systematic development of learning materials and instructional design.

The principal's comments highlight that local content decisions depend on provincial policy, resulting in schools having little autonomy. Limola is not listed as a local content subject, not just for pedagogical reasons but also due to policy and the absence of a writing system, despite its active use in the community.

Similarly, one of the teachers at the school, Mrs. DA, confirmed that Limola is not taught as a separate subject but is embedded in the teaching of Regional History and Culture, which is allocated two hours per week. The use of Limola mainly takes the form of introducing simple vocabulary, particularly words related to daily life:

"The Limola language is usually included in the Regional History and Culture subject, with two hours of lessons each week. Instruction begins with a vocabulary introduction in Limola. Students can understand it easily since they are native speakers; basic words such as 'eat,' 'sleep,' and 'bathe' are already commonly known." (Interview, DA)

The findings from teacher Ms. DA show that Limola is taught in a limited way. Teaching focuses on basic vocabulary rather than structure, discourse, or communication. The teacher's use of Limola for instruction shows personal awareness and commitment. But this practice is individual and not standardized. It may differ from one teacher to another.

Teachers try to introduce Limola vocabulary, but the lack of teaching materials makes this difficult. Another teacher, Mr. DS, said there are no guidelines or textbooks for Limola. As a result, materials are created as needed and depend on each teacher's initiative.

"There are no specific references or teaching guidelines for the Limola language. The book I use comes from research findings, and I occasionally use it to teach vocabulary to the children." (Interview, DS)

The absence of teaching materials, as noted by Mr. DS, underscores that Limola language instruction is ad hoc and relies heavily on teacher initiative. With no curricular documents or textbooks, instruction is unsustainable, unevaluable, and vulnerable to disruption. This lack of references indicates that Limola is not yet institutionally valued, unlike other regional languages with established support.

These findings highlight a significant gap between student language potential and institutional support. Despite many students being native speakers, Limola is underutilized in schools and not systematically taught. The language exists informally in classrooms but lacks formal curricular integration, underscoring the urgent need for policy and resource intervention.

Classroom observations confirm the interview results. In Local History and Regional Culture lessons, teachers often include Limola as an introduction or to supplement vocabulary, particularly for names of objects, daily activities, or attributes. But Indonesian still dominates the lessons. Some students are unable to understand or answer in Limola because they use Indonesian more frequently at home. Despite teachers' efforts, Limola remains marginal in the curriculum, used informally and inconsistently due to a lack of materials and a lack of structure. This underscores that Limola has not secured a strategic position necessary for its sustainable educational preservation.

Students' Attitudes Toward the Limola Language

Overall, students have a positive attitude toward Limola, both emotionally and cognitively. This is clear in their enthusiasm during Limola vocabulary lessons and in their stories about using the language with their families. Mrs. JA, a fifth-grade teacher, explained in an interview that most students speak Indonesian at home. Still, they show interest when Limola is taught at school. Some students even ask to learn the language, as she explained:

"It's good, Sir. The children often say, 'Please teach us, Ma'am,' because at home they are usually taught Indonesian by their mothers. At home, most of them do use Indonesian." (Interview, JA)

Interview findings show that most students have a positive attitude toward Limola. Still, their use of the language varies. Some use it daily with family, while others only understand it passively due to limited practice. Students' enthusiasm for learning Limola stems from curiosity and cultural awareness, rather than obligation. These positive attitudes help language revitalization. They provide a foundation for keeping the language alive, especially when there is little support from schools. Furthermore, an interview with a fifth-grade student, BR, indicated that some children still grow up in families where Limola remains the primary language. He stated:

"At home, I use Limola, but sometimes I also use Indonesian. I can indeed speak Limola." (Interview, BR)

The statement from student BR indicates the presence of a group of young speakers who still actively use the Limola language at home. This suggests that intergenerational transmission is still occurring, although unevenly. Students like BR represent "nucleus speakers," namely, the core group that maintains the language within the domestic domain. This group has the potential to become key agents in strengthening linguistic identity at school, particularly if Limola language instruction begins to be formalized. The presence of active speakers also indicates that Limola has not yet reached a state of complete "intergenerational break," despite signs of weakening being evident among the majority of students.

However, an interview with a sixth-grade student, DA, revealed a different reality. She admitted that although her parents still use Limola in daily conversations, they tend to speak to her in Indonesian. Nevertheless, she was still able to understand Limola's words:

"My parents use Indonesian at home, but sometimes they also use Limola. With me, however, they mostly speak Indonesian. Even so, I often hear Limola, so I understand its meaning." (Interview, DA)

The interview with student DA reveals a pattern of language transmission characterized by receptive bilingualism, namely the ability to understand the Limola language without actively using it. The fact that parents speak to their children in Indonesian, despite still using Limola themselves, indicates a shift in language preference within parent–child interactions. Such a shift typically occurs when parents perceive Indonesian as more beneficial for formal education or social mobility, causing the local language to lose its position as the primary medium of intergenerational communication. In a sociolinguistic context, this pattern represents an early indicator of language shift, in which younger generations become receptive speakers—they understand the language but do not use it productively.

These interview findings were reinforced by classroom observations when the teacher introduced basic Limola vocabulary, such as eat, sleep, bathe, sit, and walk. All 20 students responded positively when they heard Limola's words, indicating their openness to the use of local language in the classroom.

Table 1. Students' Activities When Taught Limola Vocabulary

Response to Limola vocabulary	Participation in repetition	Vocabulary comprehension	Interest in learning
All 20 students responded positively	13 students repeated clearly 5 students repeated softly 2 students did not repeat	18 students understood the meaning 2 students showed hesitation	All 20 students showed interest

Of the 20 students, 13 repeated the vocabulary distinctly, 5 responded softly, and 2 did not repeat. For comprehension, 18 students demonstrated understanding of the vocabulary, while 2 seemed hesitant to express or interpret the words. Nonetheless, all students demonstrated an interest in learning Limola, as evidenced by their demeanor and willingness to attempt pronunciation.

Students' attitudes toward Limola can be classified as positive, with differences in proficiency and prior experience. Although signs indicate a decline in active use at home, students' curiosity and receptivity to the language persist. Classroom observations indicate that students are equipped to comprehend and speak Limola, given tailored encouragement and rich contextual learning opportunities.

Building on these student observations, it becomes clear that education serves as a strategic space for revitalizing and fostering the use of Limola among younger generations. With interactive and culturally grounded approaches, the revitalization of local languages through educational institutions is not only possible but highly promising.

Parents' and Community Leaders' Perceptions

The findings indicate that while parents' and community leaders' perceptions of Limola's use and preservation differ, they generally view it in a positive light. They recognize Limola as vital to Sassa's cultural identity and note its decline among youth due to Indonesian's increasing influence in daily life and education.

Parents' Perceptions

Interviews with several parents revealed that most of them use Indonesian when communicating with their children at home, even though they themselves still actively use Limola when interacting with adults or in traditional gatherings. One parent explained:

"We usually use Indonesian with our children so that they can more easily understand their lessons at school. However, with neighbors or older relatives, I use Limola."

This statement reveals a pragmatic prioritization, with parents opting for the language they believe will enhance their children's academic achievement. Still, some parents also supported including Limola in schools, provided it does not hinder national curriculum success.

Several parents also acknowledged a sense of loss on realizing their children no longer understand the local language. This has sparked greater awareness of the importance of intergenerational transmission, though it has yet to prompt substantive changes in home language habits.

Community Leaders' Perceptions

Meanwhile, community leaders, including traditional leaders, expressed stronger views on the importance of preserving the Limola language. They emphasized that the language is not merely a means of communication but also a medium for maintaining social norms, customary values, and local knowledge. One traditional leader explained:

"Many children today no longer understand the Limola language, so we must continue using it to make them accustomed to hearing it. I often involve young people in traditional activities, such as harvest festivals, motuno walundaka, or cooking rice in bamboo. Through these activities, they gradually come to understand Limola and can eventually pass it on. If this language disappears, what we lose is not only words but also our customs and our identity as To Limola."

The traditional leader recognized that many young people are increasingly unfamiliar with Limola. As a result, he emphasized preserving the language through immersion—consistently speaking it in daily life and involving youth in traditional rituals and cultural events (for example, harvest festivals and *motuno walundaka*). Through active participation, younger generations not only witness cultural practices but also gradually internalize Limola in authentic contexts. Furthermore, the leader reminded that the loss of Limola would also mean the loss of a vital part of the To Limola community's collective identity. In other words, language functions as a marker of cultural existence; if the language disappears, so too will customs, values, and communal identity.

These findings indicate that, despite a decline in the use of Limola in families, a strong cultural awareness of its importance for community identity persists among parents and community leaders. This support is crucial for language revitalization through education. However, a significant gap exists between language awareness and practical usage. Bridging this gap will require schools and communities to collaborate, such as by involving parents and leaders in cultural classes or storytelling, to make Limola a practical part of students' learning.

Opportunities and Challenges of Revitalization through Education

Education holds great potential as a strategic avenue for revitalizing the Limola language, particularly through the integration of culture-based local content. However, in practice, this effort still faces structural challenges, especially in the areas of curriculum policy and technical standards for local content.

One of the main obstacles is the failure to meet the formal requirements for Limola to be recognized as an independent local language subject. This was explained by the Head of SDN 103 Sassa, who stated that Limola has not met the administrative requirements because it lacks a writing system and comprehensive vocabulary documentation. He explained:

"For a local language to be included as a subject, several requirements must be fulfilled. Limola does not meet the criteria because it has no script. The first requirement is the existence of a script, and the second is a clear vocabulary system. Our main difficulty lies in the absence of a script. We have proposed this several times, but based on curriculum considerations from the Department of Education, Limola is best incorporated into the Local History and Culture subject. Within that subject, we also include customary activities such as weddings and funerals, with the main focus still placed on the Limola language." (Interview, Principal).

The statement indicates that although the school demonstrates a commitment to preserving the Limola language, rigid educational policies and administrative standards pose an initial barrier to implementing structured instruction in the local language. As a result, Limola can only be incorporated into the Local History and Regional Culture subject, rather than being offered as an independent course.

Findings from interviews and field observations, as well as a needs analysis, indicate openness and interest among teachers and students in developing Limola language learning through creative and contextual

approaches. In this context, an opportunity arises with the use of digital technology, such as Virtual Reality (VR), as a learning medium that immerses students in the local cultural context.

One of the challenges in teaching Limola is the lack of an environment that supports natural language practice. Many students understand Limola passively but have few opportunities to actively use it in daily life. VR has the potential to address this challenge by creating virtual environments that reconstruct the life of the Sassa community, such as: simulations of traditional houses, interactions in local markets, cultural events like wedding and funeral ceremonies, and family or play settings where students can learn vocabulary and everyday expressions. This opportunity involves not only technology but also reinforces an ethnopedagogical approach—education rooted in local cultural contexts and students' social experiences. With VR, students do not simply memorize words in Limola; they experience them within meaningful social contexts.

In summary, successful Limola language revitalization in education relies on integrating innovative and culturally relevant approaches, such as using technology, and requires close collaboration among schools, local authorities, linguists, and technology experts. Clear action and partnership are crucial for sustaining the language.

DISCUSSION

The research findings on the marginal position of the Limola language within formal education reveal a misalignment between educational policy and community-level language preservation practices. Within the theoretical framework of language ideology and language policy, this gap can be understood as a form of structural invisibility, where the local language is not adequately accommodated in curricular documents, resulting in instructional practices that depend entirely on teacher initiative. This condition parallels the study by Marupi & Charamba (2023) in Zimbabwe, which found that minority languages are marginalized due to the hegemony of the national language. However, in the To Limola context, this phenomenon reflects not only the dominance of Indonesian but also a mismatch between top–down policy-making and local cultural practices that position the Limola language as a collective identity marker. Thus, the marginalization of Limola is not merely a result of insufficient regulation but also the absence of institutional mechanisms that link schools with community cultural practices.

Furthermore, the dilemma faced by parents—balancing the practical benefits of using Indonesian and the desire to preserve the Limola language—reflects the complexity of family language policy. The findings show that some families still actively use Limola, while others prefer a mixed approach to communication. The pattern of receptive transmission, in which students understand Limola but do not actively use it, indicates that the language is in the early stages of a language shift. However, unlike contexts such as Maluku or other regions, passive transmission in the To Limola community coexists with the presence of cultural spaces, including traditional ceremonies, harvest festivals, and local rituals, which enable the language to continue functioning as a symbol of solidarity. The involvement of cultural leaders in emphasizing the importance of Limola further strengthens the symbolic value of the language and reinforces that preservation cannot be separated from community social structures.

From a pedagogical perspective, naturally emerging translanguaging practices in teacher–student interactions represent a promising strategy for enhancing culturally grounded bilingual education. Consistent with Muhsinin et al. (2025), translanguaging can enhance conceptual understanding and boost student confidence. However, this study contributes new insight by demonstrating that translanguaging in the To Limola context is not merely a linguistic strategy but also a cultural practice reflecting the community's communicative flexibility. When implemented in a structured manner, translanguaging can serve as a bridge between Indonesian, an academic language, and Limola, an identity language, making pedagogy more inclusive and culturally relevant.

Students' enthusiasm for learning Limola vocabulary provides a deeper understanding of the potential for revitalization from a language attitude perspective. The finding that students actively requested to be taught Limola indicates a strong affective capital. Linked to the theory of intergenerational language transmission, the positive attitudes of the younger generation are a prerequisite for language survival, even

though use in the family sphere is starting to decline. This aligns with the findings of Erniati & Wijaya (2023), but this study reveals another dimension: although To Limola children predominantly use Indonesian as their primary language at home and school, they still have an emotional attachment to Limola as a symbol of "cultural closeness." This confirms that revitalization depends not only on the frequency of use but also on the social values attached to the language by the younger generation. Zuckermann (2024) emphasizes that language revival not only serves to maintain linguistic continuity but also improves the psychological well-being, mental health, and collective identity of the community of speakers. This is also supported by the opinion of Wiltshire et al. (2022), who argue that revitalization is not only measured by the birth of new speakers but also by the increasing identity, resilience, and well-being of the speaker community.

Technological integration, including the use of Virtual Reality (VR), also presents new opportunities. Following Gumartifa et al. (2025), VR can offer immersive learning experiences that reconstruct Limola cultural spaces, such as traditional houses or dialogues with community elders. In an ethnopedagogical framework, VR not only presents cultural content but also operationalizes the principle of *learning by experiencing culture*. When combined with translanguaging, VR can create a learning environment in which students can navigate between Indonesian and Limola while directly experiencing cultural contexts—an approach rarely explored in minority language revitalization.

This study presents a novel approach to enhancing minority language revitalization through a tripartite collaboration among schools, families, and indigenous communities. Unlike previous research that typically highlights the role of families or schools separately, this study emphasizes that the desire for Limola language depends on the functional interconnectedness of formal institutions (schools), cultural institutions (traditional leaders), and the domestic context (family). Therefore, when schools in Sassa Village dare to implement translanguaging in the curriculum, Limola language revitalization has the potential to be more inclusive and in line with the global trend toward decolonial pedagogy, which values linguistic diversity (Sefotho, 2025). Therefore, the integration of technology for the preservation of regional languages is an under-researched area, offering a new contribution to the development strategy for Limola language revitalization.

However, from the research results that have been described, there are still several limitations such as: (1) the number of participants is limited to a number of students, teachers, and traditional leaders so that it does not represent the entire community; (2) the scope of the ethnography only focuses on one school, so that the dynamics in other schools have not been depicted; and (3) the absence of adequate quantitative data to measure students' language competence more systematically.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that education has great potential as a strategic space for preserving the Limola language, although its current implementation is still limited to integration in the History and Regional Culture subjects. Student enthusiasm demonstrates that the younger generation is motivated and open to learning, making schools an important medium for reconnecting language with their cultural identity. However, several challenges remain, particularly limited curriculum policies, the lack of teaching materials, and the weakening of language practices within the family environment. Therefore, the results of this study recommend the development of textbooks and the use of digital technologies, such as virtual reality, to support Limola language revitalization efforts, allowing the learning process to take place systematically and sustainably.

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