



Constellation Terms in Gorontalo Oral Tradition: An Ethnographic Study

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-19 Revised: 2026-06-26 Accepted: 2026-06-27 Keywords: constellations; cultural discourse; ethnography of communication; Gorontalo oral tradition; local knowledge DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10699 Corresponding Author: Olin Harun Olinharun2014@gmail.com Master Program in English Language Education, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia	<i>This study investigates constellation terms in the oral tradition of the Gorontalo community and examines their socio-cultural functions through Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study analyzed documented oral-tradition data consisting of a traditional star-calendar transcript and explanatory narratives related to constellation terminology. The analysis employed Hymes's SPEAKING model to interpret the communicative context, symbolic meanings, and cultural functions of constellation discourse. The findings reveal that terms such as Ewela, Maluo, Otoluwa, Tadala, Pahi, and Totokia function not merely as names of star groupings, but also as ecological markers guiding agricultural activities, seasonal prediction, maritime practices, and other social actions. These constellation terms additionally operate as cultural symbols representing collective memory, ecological experience, caution, hope, and local environmental knowledge. The study further demonstrates that constellation discourse remains important in preserving indigenous ecological literacy and sustaining cultural identity within contemporary Gorontalo society amid modernization and generational change. The findings contribute to ethnolinguistics, cultural preservation, and indigenous ecological knowledge studies by showing that language in oral tradition functions not only to communicate information, but also to organize, interpret, and transmit local knowledge across generations.</i>

1. Introduction

Oral tradition constitutes one of the principal means through which local knowledge is transmitted, preserved, and socially reproduced within a community. Through oral expression, societies do not merely communicate information, but also transfer values, collective memory, ecological experience, and cultural norms related to their environment and ways of life. In the framework of intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO emphasizes that oral traditions and oral expressions function as important cultural media for maintaining intergenerational knowledge and identity. Therefore, oral tradition should be understood not only as verbal communication, but also as a cultural system through which communities organize, interpret, and preserve knowledge concerning life and nature.

One important form of orally transmitted local knowledge in the Gorontalo community is constellation knowledge. Traditional interpretations of star patterns are closely associated with seasonal changes, agricultural activities, maritime practices, and environmental adaptation. Terms such as *Ewela*, *Maluo*, *Otoluwa*, *Tadala*, *Pahi*, and *Totokia* are understood not merely as names of celestial formations, but also as practical indicators that guide planting periods, fishing activities, weather prediction, and other social practices.

The appearance and movement of these constellations are interpreted as environmental signs connected to ecological cycles and collective community experience. In this context, constellations are not merely observed, but also read, interpreted, and socially meaningful within the cultural life of the Gorontalo community. This demonstrates that celestial observation in oral tradition functions as a form of indigenous ecological literacy embedded in language and collective knowledge.

From the perspective of ethnolinguistics, language reflects culturally specific systems of knowledge and environmental understanding. Local lexical expressions related to nature often represent how communities categorize, interpret, and adapt to their ecological surroundings. Similarly, ecological linguistics views language not only as a communicative system, but also as a repository of ecological relationships and environmental experience developed through social interaction.

Therefore, constellation terminology in the Gorontalo oral tradition may be understood as part of indigenous ecological knowledge transmitted intergenerationally through oral communication. In this regard, language becomes an important medium through which environmental knowledge is preserved, organized, and socially reproduced.

The symbolic dimension of constellation discourse may further be understood through interpretive and representational theories of culture. Clifford Geertz (1973) argues that culture consists of historically transmitted patterns of meaning embodied in symbols through which people communicate, preserve, and develop knowledge about life. In this framework, constellation terms in the Gorontalo oral tradition may be interpreted as cultural symbols because they

contain not only referential meanings, but also ecological knowledge, collective experience, practical orientation, hope, and caution regarding nature. Similarly, Stuart Hall (1997) explains that representation connects language, meaning, and culture, in which language becomes the medium through which reality is interpreted and socially constructed.

Therefore, constellation discourse in the Gorontalo community does not merely describe celestial phenomena, but also represents how society interprets seasons, agriculture, maritime life, and environmental uncertainty. In this sense, constellation terms function as cultural signs through which ecological meanings and social values are communicated collectively.

Previous studies have demonstrated that traditional astronomical knowledge is frequently embedded within cultural systems and oral traditions. Studies on Indonesian ethnoastronomy indicate that star observation functions as guidance for agriculture, navigation, seasonal interpretation, and environmental adaptation. Y. M. Supriatin (2023), for example, demonstrates that traditional star observation in the Sinar Resmi community functions as ecological guidance related to seasonal change and agricultural activity.

Other studies also show that constellation knowledge among Indonesian ethnic communities is closely associated with navigation systems, maritime orientation, and cultural cosmology. These studies confirm that traditional astronomical knowledge in indigenous societies generally functions not merely scientifically, but also socially and culturally.

However, previous studies have largely focused on the practical functions of traditional astronomy, while limited attention has been given to constellation discourse as a form of cultural representation and communicative practice, particularly within the Gorontalo context. Research specifically examining the interpretation of constellation terms in Gorontalo oral tradition from the perspective of discourse analysis and ethnography of communication remains limited. Therefore, this study seeks not only to document constellation terminology, but also to explain how constellation discourse functions symbolically, socially, and communicatively within the cultural life of the Gorontalo community.

Despite its cultural significance, oral tradition concerning constellation knowledge currently faces important challenges due to modernization, technological dependence, generational language shift, and declining traditional ecological literacy. Younger generations increasingly rely on digital forecasting systems and formal scientific knowledge rather than orally transmitted environmental indicators.

As a consequence, indigenous constellation knowledge risks becoming marginalized or symbolically preserved without active transmission in everyday social practice. This condition highlights the urgency of documenting and analyzing constellation discourse not only as linguistic heritage, but also as an endangered system of indigenous ecological knowledge that requires cultural preservation and academic attention.

To analyze the relationship between language, culture, and communicative practice, this study employs Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication. Dell Hymes (1974) emphasizes that language should be understood not only as a grammatical system, but also as a social practice shaped by participants, context, communicative purposes, norms, and cultural meanings.

Through the SPEAKING model—Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre—Hymes explains how communicative events operate within particular cultural contexts. This framework is relevant because constellation discourse in the Gorontalo community functions not merely as astronomical information, but as a cultural communication event that organizes ecological knowledge, social action, and collective interpretation of nature.

Based on the background above, this study addresses two main research questions: (1) How are constellation terms in the oral tradition of the Gorontalo community interpreted as forms of local knowledge related to seasons, agriculture, maritime activity, and other social practices? and (2) How do these constellation terms function as cultural symbols and communicative resources within the socio-cultural context of the Gorontalo community?

Accordingly, this study aims to describe the interpretation of constellation terms in the oral tradition of the Gorontalo community and to explain their socio-cultural functions through the perspective of ethnography of communication. This study is expected to contribute to ethnolinguistics, indigenous knowledge studies, ecological discourse analysis, and cultural preservation research by demonstrating that language in oral tradition functions not only to communicate information, but also to interpret, organize, and transmit local ecological knowledge across generations.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the interpretation of constellation terms in the oral tradition of the Gorontalo community and to examine their socio-cultural functions. A qualitative approach was selected because the data consisted of oral expressions, constellation terminology, and cultural meanings that required contextual and interpretive analysis rather than statistical measurement. The study focused on understanding how language, symbols, ecological knowledge, and communicative practices are socially constructed within the cultural context of the Gorontalo community.

This study was grounded in Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication, which views language not merely as a formal linguistic system, but as a communicative practice closely related to participants, context, purposes, norms, and cultural meanings. To analyze the discourse, the study applied Hymes's SPEAKING model, consisting of Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre. This framework enabled the researcher

to interpret constellation discourse not merely as astronomical information, but as a cultural communication event embedded in social practice and indigenous ecological knowledge.

The primary data source consisted of a documented transcript of the traditional Gorontalo star calendar and explanatory narratives concerning constellation terminology used within the Gorontalo oral tradition. The documented data originated from oral explanations preserved by senior community speakers in Luluo Village, Biluhu District, Gorontalo.

The documentation process was facilitated by local cultural informants who assisted in recording, rewriting, and translating the oral narratives into written form. The constellation terms identified in the dataset included *Ewela*, *Maluo*, *Otoluwa*, *Tadala*, *Pahi*, and *Totokia*, each of which reflects specific socio-cultural meanings related to seasonal prediction, agriculture, maritime activities, environmental interpretation, and house-building practices.

To ensure data authenticity, the documented oral narratives were repeatedly cross-checked with explanatory notes, local interpretations, and contextual descriptions provided by cultural informants. The researcher also compared recurring constellation meanings across different sections of the transcript to identify consistency in cultural interpretation. This process was intended to maintain the credibility of the documented oral tradition as a representation of indigenous ecological knowledge within the Gorontalo community.

Data were collected through documentation techniques. The researcher repeatedly read the star-calendar transcript and related explanatory narratives to identify relevant linguistic units, constellation terminology, contextual meanings, and socio-cultural functions. The identified constellation terms were then coded and categorized according to recurring thematic patterns. The coding process focused on three major analytical categories: (1) practical ecological functions, such as agricultural guidance, fishing activities, and seasonal prediction; (2) symbolic meanings, including caution, hope, collective memory, and environmental interpretation; and (3) communicative and cultural functions within oral discourse.

Thematic categories emerged inductively through repeated reading, contextual comparison, and interpretive analysis of the discourse. The researcher identified recurring patterns concerning ecological orientation, environmental adaptation, symbolic representation, and social action associated with constellation terminology. Symbolic interpretation was validated by examining how constellation meanings consistently appeared within broader cultural explanations and community practices described in the oral narratives.

Data analysis followed the qualitative procedures proposed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. First, the researcher selected data directly related to constellation terminology and its socio-cultural meanings. Second, the data were classified according to thematic categories, symbolic functions, ecological interpretation, and communicative purposes. Third, the categorized data were

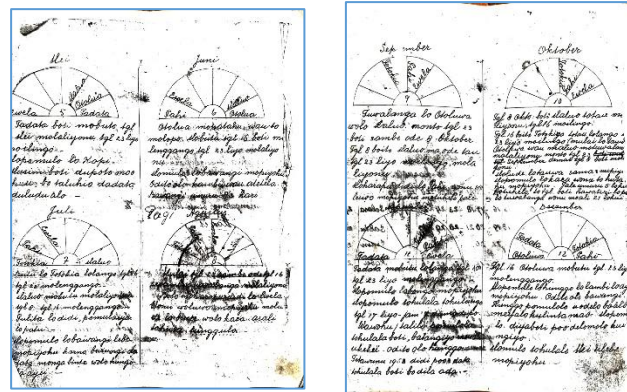
analyzed interpretively to identify relationships between language, culture, ecological knowledge, and social practice. Finally, conclusions were drawn through the perspective of ethnography of communication and cultural discourse analysis.

In applying the SPEAKING model, Setting and Scene were used to examine the socio-cultural context of the Gorontalo community, whose daily life is closely connected to agriculture, maritime activity, and seasonal change. Participants referred to senior speakers, cultural informants, and community members involved in transmitting constellation knowledge. Ends examined the communicative purposes of the discourse, particularly guidance related to planting periods, fishing activities, and environmental interpretation.

Act Sequence analyzed the discourse structure through the naming of constellations, explanations of their appearance, and their practical implications. Key identified the tone of the discourse, whether informative, symbolic, cautionary, or advisory. Instrumentalities highlighted oral tradition as the primary medium of communication, while Norms referred to cultural conventions governing the interpretation and transmission of constellation knowledge. Genre positioned the discourse as traditional ecological knowledge embedded within oral cultural practice.

To strengthen interpretive credibility, the study employed contextual triangulation by comparing constellation meanings across multiple sections of the oral-tradition transcript and relevant ethnographic literature. Peer validation was also conducted through discussion with academic supervisors and local cultural informants to ensure consistency in symbolic interpretation. In addition, reflexive interpretation was applied throughout the analysis process in order to minimize researcher subjectivity and maintain awareness of the researcher's interpretive position during discourse analysis.

Ethical considerations were also taken into account in conducting this study. The researcher recognizes that constellation discourse constitutes part of the indigenous cultural knowledge of the Gorontalo community. Therefore, the documented oral narratives were analyzed with respect for cultural ownership, local knowledge preservation, and community representation. The use of the data was intended solely for academic research, cultural documentation, and educational preservation purposes.



Picture 1. Star position shifts in the Gorontalo oral tradition

Picture 1, illustrating star-position shifts in the Gorontalo oral tradition, was analyzed not merely as visual documentation but as supporting evidence of how celestial observation is culturally interpreted by the community. The image demonstrates the relationship between constellation movement, seasonal transition, ecological interpretation, and practical social activities within the traditional knowledge system of the Gorontalo community.

3. Result

Functional Meanings of Constellation Terms

To present the primary findings of this study, Table 1 summarizes the constellation terms identified in the Gorontalo oral tradition together with their meanings and socio-cultural functions.

Table 1. Constellation Terms in the Gorontalo Oral Tradition and Their Meanings

No	Term	Meaning	Explanation
1	Ewela	A five-star constellation	Indicates the coming of the east season and signals unfavorable conditions for fishermen to go to sea.
2	Maluo	A chicken-shaped constellation	Used to determine the proper time for planting crops.
3	Otoluwa	A four-sided constellation	Used to determine the proper time for planting and selecting wood for house construction.
4	Tadala	A seven-star constellation	Used to identify the proper time for planting corn.
5	Pahi	A stingray-shaped constellation	Indicates a favorable time for maritime activities and fishing.
6	Totokia	A three-aligned-star constellation	Indicates a favorable time for planting various crops, although it is also associated with fear of crop failure.

The findings demonstrate that constellation terms in the Gorontalo oral tradition function not merely as names of celestial formations, but as practical systems of local ecological knowledge. Each constellation term is directly associated with specific environmental conditions, agricultural activities, maritime practices, and social decision-making processes within the community.

Ewela functions as an ecological warning sign because its appearance marks the eastern seasonal transition and dangerous sea conditions for fishermen. Maluo and Tadala are associated with agricultural timing, particularly planting activities, while Otoluwa functions both agriculturally and socially through its association with planting periods and house construction. Pahi is interpreted as a favorable indicator for maritime activities, whereas Totokia is connected to planting activities but simultaneously evokes uncertainty concerning agricultural outcomes.

These findings indicate that the Gorontalo community interprets celestial phenomena as meaningful ecological signs rather than neutral astronomical objects. Constellations are culturally interpreted as indicators guiding social action, environmental adaptation, and livelihood strategies. In this context, constellation knowledge operates as functional local knowledge because it is directly integrated into everyday community practices.

Ecological Knowledge Transmission Through Oral Tradition

The findings further reveal that constellation discourse functions as a medium for transmitting ecological knowledge across generations. The monthly constellation data from May to December consistently connect celestial observation with practical activities such as coffee cultivation, onion farming, cassava planting, rice cultivation, corn planting, fishing activities, and seasonal interpretation.

The appearance of Tadala is associated with seasonal agricultural preparation, while Otoluwa, Totokia, and Maluo are connected with planting cycles and environmental indicators. Similarly, Ewela and Pahi are interpreted through maritime and environmental contexts related to weather conditions and fishing activities.

These findings demonstrate that ecological knowledge within the Gorontalo community is transmitted orally through constellation discourse rather than through formal scientific documentation. Oral expressions concerning stars function as practical environmental guidance embedded within collective memory and cultural communication.

The findings also indicate that oral tradition serves as a living cultural archive through which ecological experience, seasonal interpretation, and environmental adaptation are socially preserved and reproduced across generations. The oral transmission of constellation knowledge enables the community to maintain continuity between language, environmental observation, and practical social action.

However, the findings additionally suggest that this traditional ecological system currently faces important challenges due to modernization and technological dependence. Younger generations increasingly rely on digital weather forecasting systems and formal scientific information rather than orally transmitted environmental indicators. Consequently, constellation discourse risks becoming symbolically preserved while gradually losing its practical ecological function in everyday community life.

Symbolic Interpretation of Constellation Terms

Beyond their practical ecological functions, the constellation terms also contain important symbolic and emotional meanings. The findings demonstrate that constellation discourse reflects collective experiences, cultural values, environmental uncertainty, hope, and caution within the Gorontalo community.

Pahi symbolizes favorable maritime conditions and safety at sea, while Otoluwa represents regularity, preparation, and stability in agricultural and domestic activities. Totokia demonstrates a more complex symbolic meaning because it simultaneously signifies hope for successful planting and fear regarding crop failure.

This symbolic duality indicates that constellation discourse operates not only at the denotative level, but also at emotional and cultural levels. The fear associated with Totokia appears to emerge from repeated collective experiences of agricultural uncertainty. Over generations, environmental unpredictability became culturally encoded into constellation discourse, transforming celestial signs into emotional markers of hope, caution, and anxiety.

The findings therefore show that constellation symbols function as cultural mechanisms through which the community interprets environmental risks and ecological uncertainty. Emotional symbolism embedded within constellation discourse reflects how ecological experience becomes socially remembered and transmitted through language.

Cultural Representation in Constellation Discourse

From the perspective of cultural discourse analysis, the findings show that constellation discourse represents a local system of ecological knowledge embedded within language and social practice. The discourse does not merely describe natural phenomena, but also shapes how the community interprets reality and organizes environmental experience.

When Ewela is interpreted as a sign of dangerous maritime conditions or when Maluo indicates planting periods, language functions as a cultural framework through which environmental phenomena are socially understood and transformed into practical guidance. In this sense, constellation discourse becomes a representational system linking celestial observation with social action.

The findings also demonstrate similarities between Gorontalo constellation discourse and other Indonesian ethnoastronomical traditions. Studies concerning Mandar maritime navigation, Sundanese seasonal astronomy, and Austronesian ecological systems similarly show that traditional star observation functions as ecological orientation and environmental adaptation.

However, the Gorontalo oral tradition appears to place stronger emphasis on symbolic agricultural caution and emotional interpretation, particularly concerning uncertainty, fear of crop failure, and environmental unpredictability. This characteristic distinguishes Gorontalo constellation discourse from several other Indonesian ethnoastronomical traditions that focus primarily on navigation or seasonal orientation.

SPEAKING-Model Analysis of Constellation Discourse

Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication framework demonstrates that constellation discourse constitutes a complete cultural communication event within the Gorontalo community.

Table 2. Analysis of Constellation Discourse

Speaking Element	Findings
Setting and Scene	Agrarian and maritime context closely connected to seasonal change and environmental adaptation
Participants	Senior speakers, cultural informants, farmers, fishermen, and younger community members
Ends	Guidance concerning planting periods, fishing activities, seasonal interpretation, and environmental adaptation
Act Sequence	Naming the constellation, explaining its appearance, and describing its practical implications
Key	Informative, symbolic, advisory, and cautionary
Instrumentalities	Oral communication and traditional discourse
Norms	Collective acceptance of constellation knowledge as inherited ecological guidance
Genre	Traditional ecological discourse embedded within oral tradition

The findings demonstrate that constellation meanings cannot be separated from their communicative and cultural contexts. The constellation terms gain meaning because they are socially transmitted, culturally interpreted, and collectively practiced within the speech community.

Through Hymes's framework, constellation discourse appears not merely as lexical information about stars, but as a living communicative practice organizing ecological knowledge, cultural values, and social behavior.

4. Discussion

Constellation Discourse as Indigenous Ecological Knowledge

The findings demonstrate that constellation discourse in the Gorontalo oral tradition represents an important form of indigenous ecological knowledge. The constellation terms do not merely function as astronomical references, but also operate as practical systems for interpreting environmental conditions, agricultural timing, maritime orientation, and seasonal transition.

This finding reflects indigenous epistemology because ecological knowledge within the community is constructed through long-term collective observation, cultural continuity, and social experience rather than through formal scientific institutionalization. Knowledge concerning planting periods, environmental uncertainty, and seasonal adaptation is validated through repeated communal practice and intergenerational transmission.

The findings support previous studies on Indonesian ethnoastronomy showing that traditional astronomical systems frequently function as ecological orientation and environmental adaptation mechanisms within indigenous societies. However, the Gorontalo constellation discourse demonstrates a particularly strong integration between ecological interpretation, emotional symbolism, and social communication.

Semiotics and Symbolic Meaning in Constellation Discourse

From a semiotic perspective, constellation terms function as cultural signs connecting observable celestial phenomena with socially constructed meanings. The stars themselves function as signifiers, while ecological interpretations, emotional associations, and social actions become culturally shared signified meanings.

The symbolic interpretation of Totokia particularly demonstrates how ecological uncertainty becomes culturally encoded within language. The constellation not only marks planting periods, but also symbolizes collective anxiety concerning crop failure and environmental unpredictability. Repeated ecological experiences over generations transform celestial observation into emotional and symbolic cultural knowledge.

This finding is consistent with Geertz's perspective that cultural symbols function as vehicles of collective meaning and social experience. Similarly, Hall's representation theory explains that language constructs and distributes meaning socially through cultural discourse. In this context, constellation discourse does not simply describe the sky, but actively produces ecological understanding and cultural interpretation.

The findings also align with ecological semiotics, which emphasizes that environmental signs acquire meaning through cultural interpretation. Celestial phenomena become socially meaningful because the Gorontalo community continuously associates them with ecological cycles, agricultural practice, and environmental adaptation.

Oral Tradition as a Living Cultural Archive

The study demonstrates that oral tradition functions as a living cultural archive preserving ecological literacy, collective memory, and environmental knowledge. Through oral communication, constellation knowledge continues to organize the relationship between language, nature, and social practice within the Gorontalo community.

This finding confirms UNESCO's conception of oral tradition as part of intangible cultural heritage functioning as a medium for preserving and transmitting knowledge across generations. The oral tradition concerning constellations therefore operates not only as verbal heritage, but also as an indigenous knowledge system embedded within social communication.

Importantly, the findings reveal that language is used not only to name the world, but also to interpret the world. Through constellation discourse, the community constructs ways of understanding seasons, environmental risks, agricultural timing, and maritime conditions. Language therefore functions simultaneously as communication, ecological orientation, and cultural interpretation.

This perspective is closely related to linguistic anthropology, which emphasizes that language cannot be separated from cultural practice and social life. The Gorontalo constellation discourse demonstrates how language functions as a cultural mechanism through which environmental knowledge becomes socially organized and collectively meaningful.

Vulnerability of Oral Tradition in Contemporary Society

Despite its cultural importance, constellation discourse currently faces significant challenges due to modernization, globalization, and digital transformation. Younger generations increasingly rely on digital forecasting systems, technological information, and formal scientific knowledge rather than orally transmitted ecological indicators.

As a consequence, traditional constellation knowledge risks becoming symbolically preserved while gradually losing its practical ecological function within everyday community life. This condition reflects broader issues of language endangerment and weakening indigenous knowledge transmission affecting many traditional societies globally.

The vulnerability of oral tradition also emerges from changing social interaction patterns and declining participation of younger generations in traditional agricultural and maritime activities. If intergenerational transmission weakens continuously, ecological knowledge embedded within local language may eventually disappear together with the communicative practices sustaining it.

Therefore, constellation discourse should not merely be documented as cultural heritage, but also actively preserved as a living ecological knowledge system.

Comparative Perspectives on Indigenous Astronomical Traditions

The findings demonstrate similarities between Gorontalo constellation discourse and indigenous astronomical traditions in other parts of the world. Studies on Aboriginal Australian astronomy, Polynesian navigation systems, Native American star knowledge, and Southeast Asian ethnoastronomy similarly show that celestial observation frequently functions as ecological orientation, navigation guidance, and cultural interpretation.

Similar to these traditions, Gorontalo constellation discourse integrates environmental knowledge, collective memory, and social practice within oral communication systems. However, the Gorontalo tradition appears particularly distinctive in its strong symbolic emphasis on agricultural caution, emotional uncertainty, and ecological anxiety.

This comparative perspective confirms that indigenous astronomical systems globally share common functions as cultural mechanisms for interpreting nature, organizing ecological knowledge, and sustaining community identity through language and oral tradition.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for cultural preservation and education. First, constellation discourse should be documented and preserved as part of Gorontalo intangible cultural heritage. Preservation efforts are necessary because oral transmission currently faces increasing pressure from modernization and technological dependence.

Second, constellation knowledge may be integrated into local-content education and cultural curriculum development in order to strengthen ecological literacy and cultural identity among younger generations. Educational integration may also increase awareness concerning indigenous environmental knowledge systems.

Third, digital archiving initiatives may help preserve oral narratives, constellation terminology, and ecological knowledge threatened by generational shifts and declining oral transmission. Audio recordings, digital storytelling, and community-based documentation programs may support long-term cultural preservation.

Finally, the findings contribute to the development of ethnoastronomy education by demonstrating that indigenous astronomical knowledge contains important ecological, cultural, and communicative values relevant to contemporary environmental and cultural studies.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that constellation terms in the Gorontalo oral tradition function not merely as names of celestial formations, but as forms of indigenous ecological knowledge closely connected to agriculture, maritime activities, seasonal interpretation, and social practice. Terms such as *Ewela*, *Maluo*,

Otoluwa, Tadala, Pahi, and *Totokia* reflect how the Gorontalo community interprets celestial phenomena as meaningful environmental signs that guide everyday life and collective decision-making.

The findings further reveal that constellation discourse operates simultaneously on practical, symbolic, and communicative levels. Constellation terms function as ecological guidance, cultural symbols, and representations of collective memory, hope, caution, and environmental uncertainty. Through oral tradition, ecological experience and local knowledge are continuously transmitted across generations, demonstrating that language is used not only to name the world, but also to interpret, organize, and culturally experience the world itself.

Through Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication framework, this study also confirms that constellation discourse constitutes a living cultural communication practice shaped by context, participants, social purposes, norms, and collective beliefs. In this regard, oral tradition serves as a living cultural archive preserving the relationship between language, ecology, and indigenous knowledge within the Gorontalo community.

However, the study also highlights the vulnerability of oral tradition in contemporary society due to modernization, digital transformation, and declining intergenerational transmission. Therefore, efforts toward documentation, educational integration, digital archiving, and cultural preservation are necessary to sustain constellation knowledge as part of Gorontalo intangible cultural heritage and indigenous ecological literacy.

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