










Identifying and Resolving Conflicts Using Local Wisdom: A Qualitative Study

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Article History:

Received: 16-01-2023

Accepted: 29-05-2023

Publication: 10-12-2023

Cite this article as:

Garing, J., Firdaus, W., Herianah, H., Ridwan, M., Erniati, E., Budiono, S., Pariela, T., D.

(2023). Identifying and Resolving Conflicts Using Local Wisdom: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 23(4), 69-81.

doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v23i4.156

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Abstract: For a long time, Maluku civilization has been heterogeneous. It can be seen in differences in ethnicity, beliefs, language, and culture, creating conflicts. This research intends to identify and resolve conflicts utilizing local wisdom, particularly regional language and cultural viewpoints. It is a descriptive qualitative study that adopts an ethnolinguistic perspective to analyze data. Data was collected through participatory observation using an interview guide containing open-ended questions. Thirty participants comprised ten women and twenty men, aged 38 to 82 years; they were kings, traditional leaders, religious leaders, police, and conflict victims. Findings show that socio-cultural aspects, i.e., territorial disputes, different perspectives on culture, and youth delinquency, dominate conflicts in Maluku, Indonesia. However, using language in advice, proverbs, *pela*, *gandong*, *molo*, or *nyelam* as local wisdom can build peace. It indicates a new model for handling conflict in the regional language and culture to maintain security, continuity, and stability.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Ethnolinguistics, Language, Local Wisdom, Socio-Cultural

1. Introduction

The Maluku people have had the characteristic of plurality since ancient times. This plurality seems in various tribes, religions, languages, and customs that live together to form a harmonious whole. However, with this plurality, also conflicts occur. Conflict arose due to the Maluku people being divided into social units. The segmentation of social units, each bound by primordial ties, easily creates conflicts at the ideological and political levels. At the ideological level, this conflict manifests in conflicts between value systems shared by social units (Yu, 2017). At the political level, conflicts between elements in a pluralistic society occur over the division of power, economic resources, and culture (Magu, 2018).

The Maluku people's reality divides them into groups based on cultural identity, so achieving social cohesion will take much work (Roulston & Cook, 2021). Social integration is a condition that allows each group to establish interaction without having to lose their cultural identity or give up one's native culture (Nshom et al., 2022; Spyros, 2019). As a result of this lack of social cohesion (Ali, 2020), efforts to form a common will as a Maluku people who permanently live in harmony will become a complicated issue and require a relatively long time to achieve. Because each group is in a social circle that tends to be exclusive, thus, cross-cultural interactions are relatively not intensive and effective.

Cross-cultural interactions between groups should occur to avoid and reduce cultural misunderstandings. The reality today is that community groups are more likely to pay attention to the interests of their respective groups and avoid cross-cultural interactions, so what emerges are various forms of different interests (Kurilla, 2020; Ma et al., 2016). Different interests and similarities are an instinctive nature of every individual or group. If these different interests occur in certain groups, such as ethnic groups, religious groups, and certain ideological groups, including the majority group and the minority group, then what arises is conflict. Differences in interests between individuals or groups can often lead to debates and even tensions that end in

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peace or conflict. Therefore, conflict events that often occur in the life of the Maluku people are evidence of the weak or insufficient implementation of cross-cultural interactions between individuals or groups in the cultured Maluku society. The type of conflict in Maluku society must be identified. It needs to be done so that conflicts that occur in Maluku, especially in Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency, can be resolved appropriately by prioritizing common interests, not because of individual interests; thus, peace is accomplished.

Based on the arguments, a new solution is needed to reconcile the conflicts in this region, besides the regulations made by the current government. Therefore, this research is fundamental to be carried out to find the right solution to reconcile the conflict. One of the solutions offered through this research is conflict peacebuilding through a local wisdom approach. Local wisdom is a form of value embedded and attached to society, related to wisdom and good values. Local wisdom in the form of unique values, norms, ethics, beliefs, customs, laws, and customary rules (Haris & Ukkas, 2019; Tahir, 2022; Wayan Wirata, 2018) is very relevant to honesty, responsibility, discipline, creativity, and hard work (Hastuti et al., 2022). These values have become valuable local wisdom and require study, development, and preservation as the antithesis of modernity and current socio-cultural changes. Furthermore, the community has used local wisdom to control daily life in family relationships, relatives, and the wider environment. Local wisdom in Indonesia has proven to play a decisive role in the progress of society, including progress in building peace in conflict-prone areas (Matakena et al., 2020).

In building peace, language and culture as products of local wisdom are essential in fostering intercommunity, inter-ethnic, and intergroup relations to become harmonious without restrictions (Vuorsola, 2019). Language is a means of negotiating group identity (Eichler, 2021; Tovares, 2019; Xiang, 2021) because it not only aids in ethnic categorization but also helps construct and display the meaning of those social categories. Understanding the language and culture used in a community is necessary to comprehend how this identity is negotiated in encounters and better understand the conflicts that arise. How is the language employed and represented in a culture; thus, the underlying meanings are effectively transmitted to the general public, utilizing language as a medium for interpreting a culture (Gu & Wang, 2021). Aspects of language and culture are two aspects that are interrelated and have a positive power in reconciling a conflict (Bennoune, 2020).

Numerous studies have been conducted on conflict solutions through cultural and linguistic aspects, such as Uwa et al. (2017) in their article entitled "The Impact of Language in Conflict Management and Peace Building." This study explores language as an instrument capable of reducing or escalating conflict. Language plays a role in managing conflict. Even language can increase conflict, even though language can cause or reduce conflict because of its positive and negative powers. When people are sensitive about their language, language tends to be a positive tool in life. Otherwise, language becomes a negative tool when people are ignorant of their language. Therefore, language plays an essential role in overcoming conflict and building peace. It relies on the fact that language is an integral part of a culture, and culture is how people communicate, preserve, and develop their knowledge and attitudes toward life (Spiteri & Chang Rundgren, 2020).

A study conducted by Bianco (2017) on the theme "Resolving ethnolinguistic conflict in multiethnic societies" resulted in overcoming conflict, tension, and violence; new ways or methods of handling are needed. The new treatment in question is facilitating dialogue in conflict-prone areas based on local wisdom through language cultures, such as training in narration, structured conversation, dialogue-based reflection, and intense discussion to ease social tensions. In addition, polite language is the best resolution in reconciling conflicts. Another study that Bianco (2016) is still writing, entitled "Conflict, Language Rights, and Education: Building Peace by Solving Language Problems in Southeast Asia", shows that language is vital in reconciling conflicts. In his study, Bianco found peacebuilding concerning language rights for indigenous, ethnic, and minority populations in Southeast Asia. He more broadly pointed out the possibility of activist democratic language planning practices to produce language policies that promote peace in conflict-affected areas.

Another research is "Conflict Resolution through the Local Wisdom Approach of Pela Gandong in Ambon City" (Bakri, 2015). The local wisdom adopted is a bond of two or three more villages that have promised to work together regardless of ethnicity, religion, and race. Pela Gandong then fostered a spirit of reconciliation among the people. The study of local wisdom has been successful in promoting the understanding of the fundamental commonalities between ethnic groups and reducing discrepancies. Local knowledge can increase social resilience and reduce social crises in post-conflict Acehese society (Rahman et al., 2022). Research related to conflict has also been carried out in a study entitled "Using Sasak Tribe and Balinese Tribe Local Wisdom in Lombok As an Effort To Reconcile Conflict" (Indrawan, 2020). In this study, people of different ethnicities, religions, customs, and regionalism always have the opportunity to deal with conflict. This paper examines how the local wisdom of each community, namely Sasak and Bali, is used to reconcile conflicts between the two in Lombok.

Previous studies have discussed conflict resolution based on religious, community, and traditional approaches (Bakri, 2015; Indrawan, 2020; Rahman et al., 2022). However, studies on identifying and resolving conflicts from cultural and linguistic perspectives in Indonesia still need to be expanded. In particular, the language issue as a powerful tool for conflict resolution has never been explored. Therefore, the current study's gap is identifying and resolving conflicts using local wisdom. By investigating this gap, the research focuses on what conflicts occurred in Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency and how these conflicts were resolved. This study aims to identify and resolve conflicts using the local wisdom approach. The study findings are expected to contribute to resolving

conflicts as a new alternative for handling conflicts through regional languages and culture; thus, security, continuity, and stability in Indonesia can be maintained. This study uses an ethnolinguistic viewpoint, which examines how culture and language interact in a community. Culture and language are two things that are interrelated and interconnected in building peace (Bennoune, 2020), particularly in conflict-prone areas in Maluku Province.

2. Literature Review

Ethnolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that comes from the words anthropologist and ethnologist. Anthropology and ethnology are branches of humanities that study culture a lot. It was also advanced that ethnolinguistics refers to a scientific discipline of connection between language and culture (Abubakari & Issah, 2023; Osipova, 2021). This idea focuses, in particular, on how various cultural groups perceive, interpret, and represent reality in the form of words or language. Ethnolinguistics from a social-anthropologist perspective studies the life and culture of social or ethnic groups, including conventions, customs, lifestyles, laws, art, literature, traditions, religion, and language (Davis et al., 2021; Dine, 2021; Haris & Ukkas, 2019).

Additionally, Melnyk et al. (2021) termed ethnolinguistics with the term linguistic anthropology, which means studying language and culture through speech as cultural habits or practices. The similarity concept conveyed by Mitchell & Jordan (2021) and Österman (2021) is that anthropological linguistics is an interpretive field that goes deeper into a language to understand culture. That is, language is a revealer in understanding a culture. Ethnolinguistics focuses on how language functions in larger social and cultural contexts to uphold and advance social norms and cultural practices (Bergamaschi et al., 2022). Functionally, ethnolinguistics describes as a field of linguistics used to investigate the vocabulary and grammatical patterns of particular ethnic communities in order to shed light on those communities' cultures.

Ethnolinguistics is a sound science to analyze the relationship between language and culture because they are connected and complementary (Bartmiński et al., 2021; Tektigul et al., 2023). It will help uncover the phenomenon of specific ethnic cultures. Culture has a language practice (Melnyk et al., 2021). Without culture, language cannot properly develop, and culture cannot exist without language. The reason for this is that language reflects culture. Culture is "something" that impacts every element of our lives (Chukwuka, 2022; Islam, 2019; Semetsky, 2019). The same argument said by DeCook (2018) that language is a medium of meaning the culture or culture means understanding language.

Linguistic phenomena are one of the seven elements of culture that exist. The linguistic element in question is how to use the vocabulary or language structure of a particular ethnic community (heredity, custom, ethnicity, and religion) (Melnyk et al., 2021; Neziri, 2018). The meaning of vocabulary relates to the social and cultural context of society. In addition, to understand a particular culture, semantics is vital in seeing meaning through the community's symbols when performing cultural rituals (Higgins, 2019). Azharbekova et al. (2020) and Waters (2020) define cultural semantics as the meaning that a language has according to the culture of its speakers. Sanatifar, S. & Ayob (2022) also suggested that a language's lexicon reflects its cultural environment. In other words, cultural semantics translate the meaning of expressions so that the knowledge system is known and reflected in the mindset view of life and worldview of the cultural context in society (Dine, 2021).

The cultural context is an expression of local wisdom, a manifestation of language life activities through proverbs, rhymes, songs, and advice (Bochina et al., 2021) ingrained in speakers of a particular ethnicity. This concept of culture is conceptual and translated as text through language (Bloch, 2018). Anthropologists agree that understanding and finding meaning is the primary key to analyzing culture (Żemła & Siwek, 2020).

Cultural meaning is created through symbols, objects, or events that refer to something. The symbol itself includes anything that we can feel or experience. The symbol referred to in this study is the meaning of a series of traditions or customs of an ethnic group or community building through language. Tradition has expressions or proverbs used to express the tradition's purpose so that the meaning and values contained in the tradition are conveyed to the ethnic group (Bochina et al., 2021). Tradition is a way of life that a group of people, typically from the same nation, culture, era, or religion, has practiced for an extended period. Information passed down orally and in writing from one generation to the next is crucial to tradition because, without it, it will disappear. In another sense, tradition is customs (Bartels, 1977; Brier & Lia Dwi Jayanti, 2020) or habits passed down from generation to generation, which are still carried out in people's lives. Tradition is a human creation; tradition does not conflict with the core of religious teachings and is the spirit of a culture; without cultural traditions, it will not continue and last. With the existence of tradition, culture, and individuals can be harmonious and intense. Therefore, it is essential to identify the cultural system in society to be maintained and preserved. Culture is one of the media in building harmony so that conflicts can be resolved through local wisdom, particularly language and culture. Language has a significant impact in reconciling conflicts because language is a medium that can express the facts of life in building a social and cultural structure in society. In addition, language is a mirror of politeness in communicating; thus, language is a medium for building peace (Mavengano et al., 2022; Saada & Gross, 2019).

3. Methodology

This research is a qualitative descriptive study because it prioritizes data analysis techniques that have the power of in-depth description (Moser & Korstjens, 2018) to identify conflict as an initial step in reconciling conflicts in Maluku through language and cultural perspectives. In addition, this research is a cultural and language study because it is described based on cultural data and interpreted through linguistic elements such as diction, phrases, and sentences. The language used to express the meaning of these cultural activities.

3.1 Sample and Participants

In qualitative research, the method of purposive sampling was employed. It suggests that persons or locations are chosen for research (Aidoune et al., 2022; Nanuru & Utama, 2020) because they can answer open-ended questions that researchers pose during interviews. Themes like conflict kinds, culture, and language can be discovered during the interviews; as a result, conflicts can be settled based on these conflict types and with the help of local knowledge.

Thirty participants, ten women and twenty men, aged between 38 and 82 years, are sampled in this study. Participants include government elements, language/cultural actors, and user communities. Government elements include the king, village heads, police, and soldiers. Meanwhile, actors of language/culture are community leaders (priests or *ustad*), native speakers, and observers of language, literature, and regional traditions (or the like). Meanwhile, elements of the user community are people who live in and or around the conflict area and who use language, literature, and traditions (or people who care about language, literature, and traditions). The selection of participants is based on expertise and mastery of language, literature, and traditions, having insight and knowledge about the target area's language, literature, and traditions, knowing the conflicts that occur, and speaking the local language actively. They live in Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency, particularly in Negeri Batu Merah, Negeri Hitu Lama, Negeri Hitu Mesing, Negeri Mamala, Negeri Morela, Negeri Seith, Negeri Asilulu, and Negeri Pelau.

3.2 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was an interview guide containing open-ended questions as trigger questions to dig up more detailed data related to information about language, culture, and conflicts. The open-ended questions allow people to communicate and express their viewpoints freely using their words and expressions (Nshom et al., 2022). This instrument helps researchers collect data in the field. The instrument also includes an interview guide containing participants' biodata, i.e., name, address, age, gender, education, and occupation. Moreover, the instrument has general instructions for the interviewer and interview questions developed.

3.3 Data Collection

Researchers used participatory observation methods when collecting data in the field. The researcher was directly involved and interviewed the participants (Kodir et al., 2020) by asking open-ended questions among 30 participants. The researchers then developed open-ended questions based on the information gained from the participants in order to get more detailed data. The developed questions contain some questions concerning their opinions about conflicts, the type of conflict, the causes of conflict, culture, customs, language, and how to solve the conflicts from a local wisdom perspective. Thirty participants are asked questions about the importance of local wisdom, conflicts that occur, conditions of conflict, involvement of the government or stakeholders, and public opinion. Each participant gave various and different information regarding their perspectives on conflicts, culture, and language used in identifying or resolving conflicts. However, most gave detailed information about conflict types, their causes, and how to resolve them. In addition, the information gained by the participants is particularly beneficial in identifying and resolving conflicts. This method also intends to explore the vocabulary or diction, phrases, and sentences used when a conflict occurs, and what languages are used to resolve or reconcile conflicts. This data collection method is tremendously useful for researchers in identifying conflicts that occur and what causes them. The method is much more effective than collecting data through questionnaires because participants can only provide their data when asked.

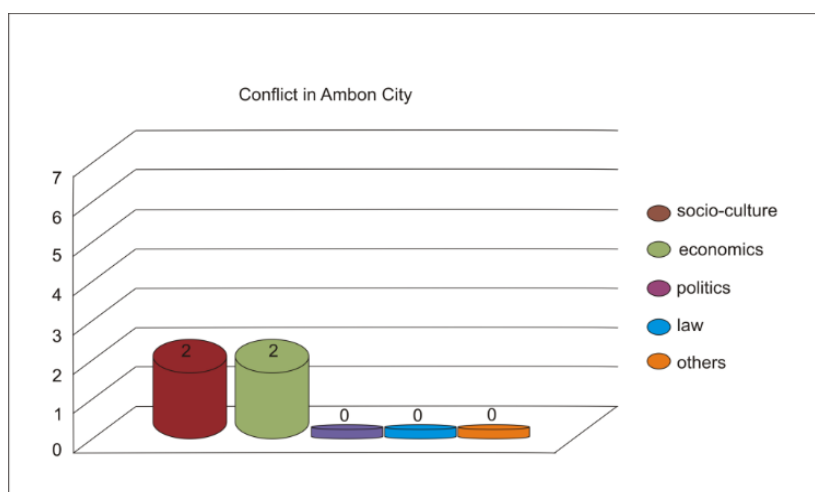
3.4 Data Analysis

In total, 30 participants were interviewed, and the interview results were processed in some ways: data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Nanuru & Utama, 2020). Data reduction is conducted to select, classify, and identify data findings by research needs, i.e., conflict identification and reconciliation through language and cultural data. Data that do not adhere to the requirements are discarded. Otherwise, the data that have been selected, classified, and identified are analyzed utilizing the relevant theory, which is the ethnolinguistic theory focusing on culture and language (Bartmiński et al., 2021; Bochina et al., 2021; Melnyk et al., 2021; Saada & Gross, 2019). It is a way of how data. Then, the conclusion serves as a means of formulating analytical findings to learn more about identifying and resolving conflicts in Maluku by applying local knowledge.

4. Results

4.1 Identification Conflicts in Ambon City

The data found numerous elements that contributed to the dispute in Ambon City. Pluralism is one among them, especially among the Ambonese. This diversity gives rise to conflicts of many different kinds. The graph that follows shows Ambon City's conflicts.



Graph 1: The Conflicts in Ambon City.

The graph above shows that the socio-cultural aspect dominates the conflict in Ambon City. It is due to the immigrant communities with various cultural characteristics. These various cultural characteristics become differentiators between communities, causing a shift in cultural values that can impact conflict. Internal factors influence the conflict type. In Negeri Batu Merah Dalam, for instance, an internal conflict occurred between two groups of youths supporting the football team during a world soccer match. The youth at Batu Merah are supporters of the Dutch national team. At the same time, some of the youth at Batu Merah Depan (motorcycle taxis) support the Brazilian football team. As a result of a misunderstanding between the two youth groups, a conflict arose. The fanatical attitude of each youth group became the leading cause of the conflict. This fanaticism showed through the convoy actions of the youth group supporting the Dutch football team, which were conducted on the main road and considered by the youth group supporting the Brazilian football team to disturb the peace; thus, they came into conflict. Many homes near the incident were damaged due to the conflict. In addition to conflicts caused by youth, there are also conflicts caused by different perspectives between citizens. The conflict is that there are differences in views between indigenous people groups and church people groups regarding damaged houses of worship, which lead to internal and incidental conflicts.

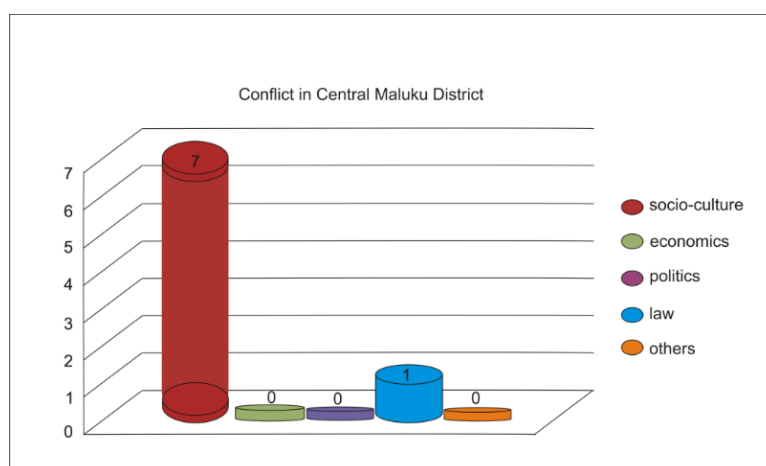
Likewise, the economic aspect also became an essential part of the conflict in Ambon City. Conflicts related to economic aspects due to the presence of immigrant communities, apart from the increasing number of urban residents, have also caused a high level of competition to make ends meet. The high level of living needs in Ambon City and the limited employment opportunities have encouraged people to compete to fulfill these living needs. Such conditions often lead to misunderstandings between community members or groups, ending in conflict. That is, the presence of immigrant communities certainly brings various cultural characteristics that belong to and blend with the culture of Ambon City. Differences in cultural characteristics that are owned are not seen as cultural values that should be preserved and implemented in everyday life but rather as a source of problems that can give rise to conflict at any time. In addition, there is a strong sense of primordialism among immigrant ethnic groups, which causes the cultural differences to become clearer and adds more to its pluralistic society. Whenever there is a misunderstanding, it will end in conflict. It means that the economic and cultural factor contributes greatly to the conflict in a pluralistic society. as Magu (2018) said, conflicts between elements in a pluralistic society occur over the division of power, economic resources, and culture.

4.2 Identification Conflicts in Central Maluku Regency

Central Maluku Regency, one of the regencies in Maluku Province with the most fabulous territory, is a region that frequently sees fighting. The ensuing graph displays the conflicts.

Graph 2 shows that the most prominent aspect of the conflict is the socio-cultural aspect. The conflicts in Central Maluku Regency cause disputes over land boundaries and territorial rights (ulayat) between the neighboring villages. Because the villages in Central Maluku Regency are generally customary, it cannot deny that conflicts occur related to society's social and cultural aspects. Besides the territorial rights conflict, different perspectives and understandings of religious rituals, for instance, Hizab adherents and juvenile delinquency, also impact socio-cultural conflicts in this area. Those conflicts occur because there is a feeling of disappointment, offense, jealousy, and social inequality. In addition to socio-cultural aspects, law aspects often arise in conflicts in Central Maluku Regency. The emergence of this law aspect is inseparable from various disputes over the

boundaries of petulant land, resolved through law means or the existence of various law violations that appeared when conflicts occurred in the community (Tahir, 2022). Meanwhile, economic, political, and other aspects rarely appeared in the conflict.



Graph 2: The Conflicts in Central Maluku Regency.

Other types of conflict in this area recognized the claim to ownership of the “Pukul Sapu Lidi” tradition, which gave rise to the conflict. The Pukul Sapu Lidi tradition has been practiced for many years. However, lately, the Pukul Sapu Lidi custom has become a significant problem because each of them claims it has the right to carry out the Pukul Sapu Lidi custom. Pukul Sapu Lidi is a tribute to the Kapitan who, in the past, came from various villages in Maluku and even North Maluku. These Kapitans had helped attack the Dutch colonialists who were in Kapahaha Fort. During the attack, if any Kapitans were injured, they would be treated with castor sap (the sap from the castor tree). However, people in another village said it is not castor sap used but oil that could heal wounds and even attach them to other objects, such as wood. This claim puts the two villages in conflict.

In addition, another type of conflict is juvenile delinquency. There is a misunderstanding between the two villages, which leads to a conflict. After the Eid al-Fitr prayer, the Hadrat custom is conducted where the youth go for a walk or call Baronda using motorbikes. On their way back to their village, the young men confronted a group of drunks and were beaten to a pulp. People heard this incident and how their children beat some to the point of coma. The conflict has just begun.

Meanwhile, the determination of traditional dances also triggers socio-cultural conflicts. According to traditional elders, each house must prepare a dance without being asked. They are obliged to present the dance at the inauguration of the king. However, conflicts arise when vested interests exist, so there is a misunderstanding. The misunderstanding of who has the right to dance becomes a debate between them.

4.3 Resolving Conflicts Using Local Wisdom

Based on the results of identifying conflicts in Ambon City and Central Maluku District, conflict resolution can be adjusted based on the type of conflict in each village. The conflicts in Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency were caused by socio-cultural factors that could be resolved through local wisdom. In this case, local wisdom is the use of regional languages and culture in society. Language is a medium for interpreting a culture, or language is an integral part of a culture (Gu & Wang, 2021; Uwa et al., 2017). Thus, language and culture are connected and complementary (Bartmiński et al., 2021; Bennoune, 2020; Tektigul et al., 2023).

The regional language used in reconciling conflicts is in the form of diction, phrases, and sentences. It also utilizes proverbs that contain advice. These features seem below.

Katong diundang datang pi sini par moliat masalah gereja yang atapnya su bocor. Dua-dua minggir. Mau orang GPM kah, orang adat kah mundur dolo. Kehadiran katong untu memperbaiki rumah ibadah untu kepentingan kemaslahatan umat di Negeri Paso ini.

‘We are invited to come here because there is a problem with the church, which has a leaky roof. Both of you step aside. Either GPM (church people) or traditional people just back off. We are here to repair the church for the interest of the Past community.’

The sentence above contains advice gave touched the hearts of those in conflict. The phrase "kehadiran katong" or "our presence" emphasizes that we are here to fix the issue causing the conflict, so it does not happen anymore. When those in conflict hear the language, they realize their actions were wrong and must make peace. The mediation organized by traditional leaders using regional language and a custom approach implies that the existence of regional culture and language is very effective in reconciling conflicts (Bennoune, 2020; Gu & Wang, 2021; Uwa et al., 2017). The traditional culture and the use of local languages are two things that mutually support

one another (Bartmiński et al., 2021). It is a cultural practice through language as a means of interpretation, as Melnyk et al. (2021) stated.

Another speech that is also used in reconciling conflicts is the following.

Katong pung kehidupan sudah susah, apakah katong mau tinggal deng, keadaan seperti ini, sebaiknya mari katong hilangkan pikiran pikiran kita tentang konflik. Konflik ini muncul karna ada hubungan, kepentingan politik, akhirnya katong yang dirugikan.

'Our life is already arduous. Do we want to live in this situation? Let us get rid of our thoughts about conflict. This conflict arises because there is a relationship between political interests. Finally, we are the ones who are harmed.'

After the traditional elders conveyed this advice, the hearts and souls of those in conflict became calmer. Diction "katong" means we symbolize everyone present at the meeting. Then it reminds them to put away negative thoughts so everyone feels not isolated but rather sad about the conflict. Using the language contains advice (Bochina et al., 2021); they become aware and eventually forgive each other. They were to be aware that what they did was a mistake, and the impact was not good. The collective memory of the conflict loses after listening to the advice, so they become reconciled. As Saada & Gross (2019) and Mavengano et al. (2022) argued, language is essential in reconciling conflict.

Furthermore, another local language used to reconcile conflict is itele basudara, 'We are brothers.' This expression uses to deal with conflicts between citizens. While the language used to deal with village conflicts is its usikalaeng basudara which means 'We are all brothers.' The dictions ite and itele signify respect for those in conflict as siblings even though they are not in the same genealogy; those words or vocabularies unite them in fraternal relations (Higgins, 2019; Melnyk et al., 2021; Neziri 2018; Saada & Gross, 2019). This expression has a high meaning because it touches the hearts of those in conflict. So, language effectively builds peace (Bochina et al., 2021; Saada & Gross, 2019). King used these phrases to communicate with the conflicting parties through dialogue and discussion (Bianco, 2017). The king prefers to use the regional language rather than Indonesian because using the regional language is far more touching than other languages such as Indonesian. It is an effective way to solve the conflict.

Apart from expressions of advice used in reconciling conflicts, proverbs also have an influential function in creating peace (Bochina et al., 2021). The proverb is untung puna hatai, kalah punae lauhalai, which means 'No one benefits from this conflict.' This proverb indicates that in a conflict, win or lose, both suffer, and no one gains. Therefore, the conflict should end with mutual acceptance and forgiveness for mistakes. Another proverb is manesa po-manesanyia, pasalah po-pasalahnyia, which means 'Right is still right, wrong is still wrong.' This proverb is full of high cultural values (Bartmiński et al., 2021) because the proverb invites people to be honest and not forget to remind each other of the good and wrong things. Thus, life becomes harmonious and peaceful (Vuorsola, 2019). The use of these proverbs in reconciling conflicts awakens those who are in conflict to make peace because the message contained in these proverbs is a moral message that reflects the identity of those who have the same cultural roots. Thus, the finding is relevant to what is said by Bochina et al. (2021) that proverbs are rooted in a society's culture.

Meanwhile, another language used in reconciling the conflict is la oi iite kalupu lumai kolo sama-sama eluak selesaiaik parsoalam lena 'Let us sit together to solve existing problems.' The word la oi iite kalupu, 'let us sit together,' means an invitation to sit down together to seek the solution; thus, the reconciler speaks the language in front of those in conflict. After hearing the suggestion, they jointly find a solution and agree, creating peace. Therefore, it is essential that in addition to using the mediation language of advice (Bochina et al., 2021), it is also necessary to pay attention to the people who will reconcile the conflict because their character, track record, and role in society also determine peace. The background of peacemakers in society as a cultural attribute shows that the argumentation of Bartmiński et al. (2021) properly works.

Another local language used to reconcile the conflict is the proverb, manesa pasasala manesamaa, pasala mananesa manesamaa. 'Right, wrong, we justify it wrong, but there is a little point; we still justify it. It means that right or wrong actions are justified. Mutual acceptance and understanding of mistakes made are essential for peace. The other proverb used in reconciling conflicts is maipo ittei una iya-iya, mai iite alae' mannaya. 'Let us make peace; let us remember our ancestors. Interestingly, the diction of the ancestral positively impacts those in conflict. When the peacemakers mentioned the diction, they immediately remembered their ancestors. The memory of their ancestors has a positive impact on achieving peace. The way they make peace is a distinguishing feature of the culture of peace in this region (Bartmiński et al., 2021). Another piece of advice is kalu iimi pasala opo menesa mapi 'If it is true, it is true; if it is wrong, it is still correct or justified.' The implication is that to avoid causing conflict, we must be sincere with ourselves.

Furthermore, using the following regional language that implies advice or stimulus for peace is one method to resolve regional conflicts.

Ite usika sama-sama menderita, iebe bae ite usika, enak una penyelsaian sama-sama, mustina ite wusika saleng kompage supaya ite ciptakan keamanan, jadi ite usika musti harus paham bahwa kedamaian adalah bagian iman sesuai kula ite agama.

'We are all suffering, so let us work together to find a peaceful solution; thus, safety can be established because peace is a main element of our religious teachings.'

Both parties will make peace and forgive each other using these expressions as advice because the expression functions as a heart conditioner. If those in conflict hear those expressions, their hearts will melt, and they will realize their mistakes; thus, they agree to make peace. It means that language expression can be one of the solutions to building conflict, as Bochina et al. (2021) mention.

The other proverb utilized to reconcile conflicts is *sei hali hatu, hatu hali*, 'Anyone who commits a crime will likewise be impacted.' It means that if people do not want trouble, they do not do things that make them suffer. The same thing is also in the following proverb, *siapa balai batu, batu bale dia* 'Breaking the rules would result in difficulties.' It implies that people who do terrible things will gain consequences. Then, the proverb *lima take lima, mese-mese* 'Holding hands in kindness' emphasizes letting us join hands to create harmony and peace, thus making our villages peaceful. The proverb *potong di kuku rasa di daging* 'Cut in the nails, or "a feeling in the flesh," is another piece of conflict-resolution advice (Bochina et al., 2021). It says that because we are brothers when we do more for others, we will feel it, too. Thus, let us keep the brotherhood by refraining from doing wrong things. These are recommendations for resolving disputes by the king or traditional or religious leaders.

The regional language aspect has been described above as a form of conflict resolution. On the other hand, the local cultural wisdom used in reconciling conflicts applies to the culture and customary laws, i.e., *pela, gandong*, and *mole or nyelam*.

Pela gandong is a custom that uses to reconcile the conflict. *Pela gandong* is a bonding relationship formed based on making previous promises and accompanied by certain conditions and rules that both parties cannot violate. Bartels D (1977) and Bakri (2015) further mentioned that *Pela gandong*, also commonly referred to as *pela* from the womb, is a bond formed based on genealogical ties (blood relations) between allied village clans. This brotherly relationship allows the two villages to cultivate a brotherhood that incidentally has different beliefs, i.e., Muslims and Christians. This relationship makes the two villages harmonious without religious restrictions. In addition, *pela gandong* functions as a unifier for differences in views between those in conflict. For example, a conflict occurred between residents in one village over who had the right to repair a damaged church roof. Is it the church people or traditional leaders who will fix it? Because of this difference in views, the *pela gandong* of this village came to reconcile them, and they became at peace. The conflict shows that the role of culture (Bennoune, 2020) through local community traditions or customs is very influential in dealing with conflict. This cultural context reflects social and cultural practices in society. It follows Bergamaschi et al. (2022) view that the cultural context is the practice of social and cultural norms.

In addition, conflicts over territorial rights also use customary law to resolve conflicts. It is done when mediation deadlocks; the last resort they took was customary law. This customary law is called *molo* or *nyelam* 'diving.' This customary law has rules that both parties to the conflict must be diving. Who floats quickly means he is wrong. Conversely, who is still drowning means he is right. This traditional principle is necessary for those in conflict to resolve conflicts between them. That is, customary law positively impacts reconciling conflicts of territorial rights. This finding aligns with Tahir (2022) that land conflict resolution can be made through a traditional approach.

5. Discussion

The current study shows that identifying and resolving conflicts using the paradigm of ethnolinguistics is incredibly useful in resolving conflicts that occur in Maluku. According to the participants, local wisdom in culture and language is more effectively used in reconciling conflicts than using existing methods created by the government through legislation. It means the local wisdom perspective positively impacts solving conflicts in the Maluku region.

This research's findings align with prior research that addressed the value of local knowledge, mainly local languages, and culture, as a strategy for resolving conflicts in the Maluku area. This study highlights how local knowledge can resolve local language and culture disputes (Indrawan, 2020). The ethnolinguistic theory is used to clarify how culture and language are intertwined in resolving problems (Bartmiński et al., 2021; Bochina et al., 2021; Neziri, 2018; Saada & Gross, 2019; Tektigul et al., 2023). Although the earlier study has mostly focused on using local knowledge for conflict resolution, relatively little research has examined the role of language, customs, and traditions in handling conflict. This study reveals discoveries that local knowledge of language and culture promotes peacebuilding in conflict-prone areas, particularly in Maluku. The most significant finding from this study is that local languages and culture have an essential role in building peace in conflict-prone areas in Indonesia, especially in Maluku Province. Negotiation and dialogue through local language and culture (Bianco, 2017) can resolve the conflicts that exist in society so that both communities and certain groups can coexist

peacefully and harmoniously even though they have different ethnicities, religions, customs and cultures (Indrawan, 2020).

Based on the research results, conflicts were identified in two regions as conflict identification areas: Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency. Since ancient times, Ambon has been recognized as a city of immigrants. The existence of this community causes an increase in population and colors the life of a multicultural society. The plurality of society creates various problems, including conflicts. Socio-cultural factors dominate the conflict in Ambon City. This finding is relevant to the research by Magu (2018) that socio-cultural traditions dominate conflict in Kenya. However, in Kenya, socio-cultural conflicts are caused by power and political factors. In Ambon City, conflicts are due to socio-culture and economic factors. Socio-culture aspects show juvenile delinquency and differences in community views (Indrawan, 2020). In comparison, the economic factor is the addition of immigrant communities and limited employment opportunities. As a result of these conflicts, community groups are at odds.

Central Maluku Regency, the oldest district in Maluku Province, has an incredibly high conflict intensity. Conflicts in Central Maluku Regency are generally also related to socio-cultural aspects such as the problem of land boundaries and differences in customs views. In addition to socio-cultural factors, the law factor is also causing conflict in this area. The problem of land disputes that lead to government law and the application of customary law over who is guilty, and fitting is also the cause of the customary law used in this area (Tahir, 2022). The findings are further supported by Haris and Ukkas (2019) that the boundaries between nature and culture are still being negotiated and result in peace. Conflicts in this area are generally manifest due to physical contact and mutual attacks between community members. The conflict has been going on for a long time and always appears at certain times.

Various peace efforts have been made through mutual agreements regarding Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency conflicts. However, it has yet to run optimally. Therefore, conflict resolution should use local wisdom alternatives, prioritizing culture and language as media in building communication (Bianco, 2016, 2017; Gu & Wang, 2021). Local wisdom through language and cultural approaches effectively builds peace (Bakri, 2015; Indrawan, 2020; Matakana et al., 2020). Using language, such as diction, phrases and sentences (Bloch, 2018; Bochina et al., 2021) that contains advice can be a conflict solution. In addition, *pela gandong*, as a customary aspect, also binds their brotherly relations through oaths and promises that have been made and mutually agreed upon so that the presence of *pela gandong* (Bakri, 2015; Bartels, 1977) is one way to foster peace. Thus, language and culture are two things that affect conflict reconciliation; as stated by Bartmiński et al. (2021), language and culture are interrelated. Likewise, Tektigul et al. (2023) believe that language and culture are forms of communication to build peace.

Conflict identification has contributed to and provided clues for the right solution to creating peace. The identification shows that socio-cultural conflicts, i.e., cultural disparities (land boundaries), differences in custom views (Indrawan, 2020; Tahir, 2022), and juvenile delinquency, are still the primary sources of conflict in Ambon City and Central Maluku Regency. Therefore, conflict resolution must be handled appropriately and under the type of conflict. The results highlight that conflicts in this region have conflict management characteristics. Uwa et al. (2017) stated that managing conflict is a fantastic way to resolve conflict. It must be handled based on a local wisdom approach through regional languages and culture, including the customs and traditions owned by each village (Indrawan, 2020). It is proven that conflict management based on local wisdom provides an effective solution to creating peace (Matakana et al., 2020). The society in this region came up to agree with peace. The language aspect in the form of advice and proverbs (Bochina et al., 2021) is the ultimate solution in reconciling conflicts. When the language feature uses to resolve issues, terrific results will generate. Language becomes a medium of dialogue in agreeing on a peace agreement (Bianco, 2017; Uwa et al., 2017). It means language is used to resolve conflicts through negotiating (Bianco, 2017; Eichler, 2021; Tovares, 2019; Xiang, 2021). In addition, language also has a positive power in building the awareness of those in conflict. The positive power uses proverbs or expressions (Bochina et al., 2021), which imply moral messages and kind invitations to make peace. Through this positive power, it touches their minds to resolve conflicts appropriately.

Likewise, aspects of custom or tradition, such as *pela gandong* (Bakri, 2015; Bartels, 1977) and *molo or nyelam* 'diving' as a customary law (Tahir, 2022), positively impact dealing with existing conflicts in this area. The *Pela gandong* custom now governs conflict resolution in community groupings. *Pela gandong*, as local wisdom, can escalate social resilience and reduce social conflict, particularly in the Mollucan community; these findings are extremely relevant to Rahman et al. (2022) finding that local wisdom can increase social resilience and reduce conflict in Achenese society. The Moluccans used this tradition to uphold harmony and peace because the *pela gandong* tie did not sway during the fight. This custom also functions as a medium to foster and build communication through dialogue using language media in the conflict-prone area (Bianco, 2017). In addition, local courts use customary law principles such as *molo or nyelam* as an oral tradition passed down from generation to generation, combining the values of peace, justice, harmony, and balance with the environment in which they live. This customary law has long been part of the positive law governing indigenous peoples. The community believes this customary law is most justly used to resolve conflicts (Tahir, 2022) over land disputes between indigenous peoples. This customary law has survived to this day and is understood as a type of local wisdom in Muslim areas in the Maluku region.

6. Conclusion

In summary, conflicts in Maluku generally occur due to socio-cultural factors. This socio-culture resulted in internal and external conflicts. The internal factor arises due to fights between young people between countries which are triggered by misunderstandings in communication and excessive actions due to bigotry towards football clubs. While the massive increase influences external factors or economic aspects in the number of outsiders, indigenous people feel competitive and discriminated against, especially in fulfilling their necessities of life and employment opportunities that non-natives dominate. Besides that, an increase in residents from outside who incidentally have different cultural backgrounds also contributed to the conflict. Other socio-cultural aspects triggering conflicts in this region are disputes over customary land or boundaries between countries and mutual claims to ownership of culture or traditions. In addition to these socio-cultural aspects, conflicts are also caused by the law, especially customary law. However, the escalation of the conflict was manageable.

Various efforts were made to obtain peace based on the identification of conflicts. One of the resolutions made is through the use of local wisdom, i.e., the use of regional languages in the form of proverbs or expressions that contain heartwarming advice in reconciling conflicts in Maluku are incredibly interesting because peace agreements can be reached through existing local languages owned by each region with a different culture. Furthermore, local cultural aspects also function effectively in reconciling conflicts. The regional culture is a binder of brotherly relations; even though they have different beliefs and kinship, they are still one within the traditional *pela gandong*. Peace is achieved through deliberations to reach a consensus by using language features in diction, phrases, and sentences, and communication approaches through cultural customs and customary law. Thus, the peace generated through the local wisdom approach resolves adequately and appropriately. In addition, the study results recommend local wisdom based on culture and language, as an implementation in conflict resolution can be used to create sustainable stability and security.

This research can be developed more broadly by identifying conflicts in other regions in Indonesia so that conflict resolution can be handled holistically while maintaining national harmony and togetherness. Therefore, research on conflict identification and resolution in other areas based on local wisdom is urgently needed. Moreover, research on preserving and maintaining regional languages and cultures in Indonesia is also crucial. Losing language means losing culture, which can lead to the disappearance of ethnic and national identity.

Acknowledgment Statement: The authors are very grateful to the National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia, for the opportunity and trust given to us to conduct this research. We also thank the government and traditional community leaders in Maluku who permitted us to gather the data for this research.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this study.

Author contribution statements: Jasmianti Garing contributed to conceptualizing, compiling methodologies, drafting manuscripts, analyzing data, and reviewing and editing manuscripts. Jasmianti also acts as a correspondence author. Winci Firdaus contributed to conceptualizing, designing methods, analyzing language data, and editing the manuscript. Herianah contributed to analyzing the language data and editing the manuscript. M. Ridwan contributed to analyzing cultural data and presenting the data in the form of data curation. Erniati contributed to validating language data and writing-reviewing and editing manuscripts. Satwiko Budiman also contributed to conceptualizing, drafting articles, analyzing cultural data, and writing the script. Tonny Donald Pariela contributed to guiding and collecting conflict data sources.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors

Data Availability Statement: Available on demand.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and contributor(s), and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of JICCs or editors. All liabilities for harm done to individuals or property as a result of any ideas, methods, instructions, or products mentioned in the content are expressly disclaimed.

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