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Investigating Proverbs as Cultural Mirrors: Exploring Pragmatic and Sociolinguistic Dimensions of Gender, Identity, and Values in Toba and Karo Cultures of North Sumatera

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ABSTRACT
This study explores the pragmatic and sociolinguistic dimensions of proverbs in the Toba and Karo cultures of North Sumatra, Indonesia, emphasizing their role as cultural mirrors reflecting values, identity, and societal norms. Adopting a qualitative comparative research design, the study examines 25 proverbs from each culture through a multi-framework methodology. It integrates Speech Act Theory, Politeness Theory, Frame Semantics, and Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory to uncover the cultural, pragmatic, and linguistic significance of these proverbs. The Speech Act analysis highlights a predominant use of Directive Acts, reflecting an emphasis on moral guidance and social cohesion. Politeness strategies, particularly positive politeness and off-record communication, underscore the value placed on indirectness and fostering relationships. Frame Semantics reveals shared themes such as Practical Wisdom, Integrity, and Social Relationships, while Ethnolinguistic Vitality illustrates how these proverbs sustain cultural identity and linguistic heritage amidst globalization. The findings reveal shared values alongside distinct priorities, with Toba proverbs emphasizing resilience, dignity, and spirituality, and Karo proverbs highlighting unity, adaptability, and responsibility. This study concludes that proverbs serve as vital tools for cultural preservation and ethical instruction, providing insights into the dynamic

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interplay of language, culture, and identity. The research offers a foundation for further cross-cultural studies and reinforces the relevance of proverbs in contemporary discourse.
Keywords*: Toba culture, Karo culture, Proverbs, Sociolinguistics, Cultural Identity.*

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are the dynamic and rich aspects of language that capture the values, beliefs, and nuances within a culture. This would include works by (Felsenheimer & Rapp, 2024; Muhammad & Rashid, 2014; Rezaei, 2012; Syzdykov, 2014). In North Sumatra, Indonesia, among the Toba and Karo people, proverbs serve as more than just linguistic expressions but rather as cultural mirrors to the dynamic interaction of gender, identity, and societal values. This includes works by (Bonardo, 2023; Brakel-Papenhuyzen, 2010). These sayings, often with their roots in the local environment and experiences, reflect the collective wisdom and social norms that guide the lives of the Toba and Karo people. The pragmatic and sociolinguistic dimensions of such proverbs need to be understood to properly comprehend how they function within these cultures and contribute to the construction of identity. As explained by the work of (Benedicta Adokarley Lomotey, 2021) proverbs reveal instances of cultural sharing in some contexts and at the same time reflect diversity in world views.

Despite the importance of proverbs in cultural discourse, there is a significant gap in the literature with respect to their function in shaping gender perceptions and identity among the Toba and Karo. Studies related to cross-cultural proverb comparison emphasize how different cultures employ proverbs to reflect their respective value systems, traditions, and natural environments. For instance (Muhammad & Rashid, 2014) studies comparing English and Japanese proverbs demonstrate how the same themes, like caution or wisdom, are expressed by means of culturally specific metaphors. Similarly, (Persekitaran et al., 2024) Analyses of Arabic and Malay proverbs provide insight into how environmental factors and historical contexts shape their creation and usage. Comparisons between English and Uzbek proverbs show how linguistic structures and cultural priorities influence the expression of universal ideas. (Djumambetova, 2023).

This paper bridges these gaps by focusing on Toba and Karo proverbs as tools of cultural preservation and language vitality. Based on Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory, the research discusses how proverbs maintain cultural identity and heritage. Pragmatic theories, such as Speech Act and Politeness Theory, will also reveal how proverbs guide communication and shape interpersonal dynamics. Theories on Gender and Language will reveal the representation of gender roles, whereas Frame Semantics and Intercultural Pragmatics will shed light on deeper meanings and cross-cultural relevance. In addressing these dimensions, this study will offer a complex understanding of proverbs

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both as cultural artifacts and tools of communication that enrich research into pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and ethnolinguistic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Heritage and Language

Language is inextricably linked with identity, history, and socio-cultural practices, acting as a means to preserve tradition, link communities, and adjust to modern challenges. The language and cultural heritage are essential in sustaining community identity and its continuity from external pressures (Azizul et al., 2022; Pintossi et al., 2023; Zhou & Liu, 2024). Cultural heritage is inclusive of both the tangible and intangible attributes of human history and identity, respectively, with language being a core component of the latter. (Popescu & Pudelko, 2024; Teo et al., 2014; Wardekker et al., 2023). Language, as a means of communication, carries the essence of the beliefs, values, and traditions of a culture from generation to generation. (Ahtif & Gandhi, 2022; Parajuli, 2021). It is in language that oral traditions, folklore, and proverbs-key elements of intangible cultural heritage-are transmitted and preserved.

Language is the tool not only for the practical purposes of communication but even for the accumulation of a collective memory. Proverbs, for example, constitute linguistic artifacts through which the wisdom of the people, their moral ethos, and social norms of behavior are expressed (Apriyanto, 2022; Ehondor, 2017; Güven & Halat, 2015; Syzdykov, 2014). These compact expressions carry within them the insight into the worldview of a culture, reflecting its values, priorities, and lived experiences. Besides, (Ehondor, 2017; Rezaei, 2012; Yurtbasi, 2012) The study of proverbs thus provides one peculiar window into the points where cultural heritage and language do touch upon one another-a site to which language reflects cultural identity, yet a shaper of it also.

In the context of the preservation of cultural heritage, language plays a dual role. While it preserves historical and cultural identity for the continuity of unique traditions of a community, it also changes with social and generational change to include evolving cultural dynamics (Lin, 2024; Obed Livingstone Banda et al., 2024; Yurtbasi, 2012). This duality is especially pointed in multilingual societies, where the relation between dominant and minority languages influences the manner of retaining or changing cultural heritage.

The importance of cultural heritage and language is that they can be adapted to challenges like globalization, migration, and the development of technology (Obed Livingstone Banda et al., 2024; Popescu & Pudelko, 2024). These factors can either dilute or reinforce the transmission of traditional knowledge. In the case of proverbs, their

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survival depends on their relevance and utility in contemporary discourse. Thus, the study of the interplay between cultural heritage and language provides critical insight into the mechanisms by which cultural identity is preserved and negotiated in changing social contexts

Pragmatics and Sociolinguistic Functions

Language is more than a tool for communication; it is a dynamic medium through which social norms, relationships, and identities are constructed and negotiated. Pragmatic functions of language focus on how it is used in context to achieve specific communicative goals (Oswald, 2023; Triyuono & Dirham, 2023; Widodo & Sari, 2023), while sociolinguistic functions explore how language reflects and reinforces social structures, identities, and group dynamics (Jean, 2023; Kalra & Danis, 2024). Together, these dimensions reveal the intricate ways language operates as a social practice.

One of the basic theories in pragmatics is the Speech Act Theory, formulated by J.L. Austin and then developed by John Searle (Carretero et al., 2015; Hiani, 2015; John et al., 2019; Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020). This theory highlights that language is used not only to inform but also to perform certain actions. Speech acts are divided into three categories: the locutionary act, which is the production of meaningful utterances; illocutionary acts, which reflect the intention of the speaker, such as requesting, commanding, or advising; and per-locutionary acts, referring to the effect of the utterance upon the listener. For instance, "The road is slippery" may inform, warn, and call for caution in one breath. Proverbs are especially illocutionary acts of speech because they give advice or deliver a moral lesson in a short way that is culturally resonant (Al-Khaza'leh, 2023; Al Khanaifsawy, 2023; Dipta et al., 2024). Because of their indirect nature, they are powerful ways to express meaning in culturally appropriate communication.

Closely related to the above is Politeness Theory, developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. This theory investigates how individuals use language in navigating social relationships while saving "face" - one's self-image in social interactions (Hobjilă, 2012; Morady Moghaddam, 2022; Qasem & Zumor, 2019; van Dorst et al., 2024). Politeness strategies debase face-threatening acts (FTAs), which might harm either the speaker's or the listener's self-esteem (Dowlatabadi et al., 2014; Hobjilă, 2012; Ryabova, 2015; Stranovská et al., 2013; van Dorst et al., 2024). These include a direct approach-bald on record, camaraderie or respect-positive or negative politeness, and indirect hints-off record. Proverbs are often imbued with politeness strategies in particular the off-record strategy (Gogoi, 2017; Studies, 2016). For example, the proverb "A stitch in time saves nine" provides advice on acting promptly but without imposing on the listener; thus, the speaker is saving face and avoiding possible conflict.

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From a sociolinguistic perspective, language reflects the complexities of social identities and power dynamics. Sociolinguistics explores how linguistic variation corresponds to factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, and social class, functioning as markers of identity and mechanisms for maintaining or challenging societal norms (Hall-Lew & Yaeger-Dror, 2014; Noels, 2014). Certain linguistic styles and varieties can serve as indicators of group solidarity or authority within the power structures. In all these aspects, proverbs-as one of the small, easily memorable forms-finding place in everyday usage-play a major role in encoding and proliferating social norms (Kadhim, 2021; Rezaei, 2012). Often, they mirror what is socially expected-like certain behavior or roles of people-or tell about power relationships, like those that are hierarchical or gendered.

It was Speech Act Theory, Politeness Theory, and sociolinguistics integrated that provided a broad framework for the pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions of language. Speech Act Theory therefore emphasizes the performative nature of language, proving how certain utterances can execute certain actions, while Politeness Theory explores how linguistic choices maintain social harmony. Sociolinguistics adds depth to these interactions by placing them within broader cultural and societal contexts. Taken together, these theories shed light on how language serves both as a mirror of social realities and as a means of negotiating interpersonal and cultural environments. An understanding of these functions offers important insights into the ways in which language reflects and shapes human interaction in various social settings.

Meaning and Interpretation

Meaning and interpretation are the basic units of language, highlighting how people decipher messages in certain social and cultural contexts (Münster & Knoeferle, 2018; Włodarczyk, 2013). Linguistic elements like syntax, semantics, and pragmatics shape the structure of meaning (Oller, 1972; Włodarczyk, 2013), while (Chemmel & Phillipe, 2018) In essence, non-linguistic aspects such as speaker intent and culture influence how messages will be comprehended. Together, these contribute to an interactive process in what is being uttered and what it can only imply.

Frame Semantics underlines a word's evoking some mental structure or "frames" according to cultural and cognitive experiences (Chemmel & Phillipe, 2018; Fisher et al., 1991; Zainudin et al., 2014). These are guiding interpretation in linking the linguistic expressions to shared cultural knowledge. The proverb represents such complexity, since a metaphorical and concise nature may require understanding the cultural and social norms they reflect (Aliakbari & Khosravian, 2013; Felsenheimer & Rapp, 2024; Muhammad & Rashid, 2014; Zainudin et al., 2014). One can have different meanings from a single proverb depending on the listener's cultural outlook and context

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Interpretation becomes even more complex in cross-cultural communication, where different linguistic and cultural frameworks might lead to different understandings (Hossain, 2024; Sri et al., 2024). Intercultural Pragmatics looks at how speakers navigate these differences in negotiating meaning (Smith, 2024; Usmani & ALMASHHAM, 2024). Exploring the processes of meaning and interpretation provides valuable insights into how language serves as both a reflection of and a vehicle for transmitting cultural values and societal norms.

Comparative and Sociolinguistic Perspectives

Comparative and sociolinguistic perspectives provide a valuable framework for examining how language reflects and shapes the social and cultural fabric of societies. By comparing linguistic practices across cultures, researchers can identify universal patterns of communication while also highlighting the unique ways different communities encode their cultural values and social structures. These perspectives underscore the role of language as both a product of cultural context and an active participant in the construction of societal norms and identities.

The comparative approach to language emphasizes the diversity of linguistic expressions and the cultural meanings they convey. Language serves as a repository of shared knowledge and a medium for transmitting values, with forms like proverbs encapsulating a community's worldview. By comparing proverbs across cultures, researchers can uncover how similar concepts, such as justice, morality, or social harmony, are expressed through culturally specific metaphors and symbols. This comparative lens reveals the shared human experience while respecting the distinctiveness of individual cultures.

Sociolinguistics complements this approach by focusing on the relationship between language and social structures. Factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, and class influence not only how language is used but also how it is perceived within a community. Proverbs, as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, often encode these social dynamics by reflecting societal expectations, power relations, and group identities. They can reinforce traditional norms or challenge existing hierarchies, making them powerful tools for both maintaining and reshaping societal values. Integrating comparative and sociolinguistic perspectives allows for a deeper understanding of how language functions as a mirror of culture and a medium for social interaction.

RESEARCH METHODS

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This research explores the complex interconnection between language, culture, and society through the lens of proverbs as cultural products. It focuses on 25 proverbs each from the Toba and Karo cultures, collected by interviews and existing literature. A comparative approach is employed to look at both shared and distinct cultural dimensions with the use of four major theoretical frameworks for a comprehensive look.

The first framework, Speech Act Theory, developed by J.L. Austin and John Searle, explores the performative and communicative functions of proverbs. The analysis will focus solely on the illocutionary acts within Speech Act Theory, which reflect the speaker's intention behind the utterance, such as advising, warning, and persuading. Proverbs will be analyzed for their illocutionary force, indicating how they serve as instruments in advising, warning, or teaching moral lessons to particular cultural contexts. The second framework used is the Politeness Theory, as proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, applied to the study of how proverbs signal the management of social relations and face. The analysis explores various politeness strategies, such as positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies, to reveal how proverbs mitigate social tensions and promote harmony.

Another approach in frame semantics is developed from Charles Fillmore and further discussed by Chemmel & Phillipe 2018, studying the cultural and cognitive frames activated by the proverbs. The current approach sets out to examine how this kind of linguistic expression summons certain fragments of shared cultural knowledge or may show more profound strata of sociocultural values. Finally, based on the foundational work of Giles et al. (1977), Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory examines the role of proverbs in maintaining cultural identity and linguistic vitality for both Toba and Karo communities. The integration of these four frameworks is expected to lead to the discovery of the pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and cultural dimensions of proverbs. Such an approach provides a far deeper understanding of how proverbs function-not only as a means of communication but also as a means for cultural preservation and identity construction-within the Toba and Karo societies.

RESULTS

Analyzing of Toba Proverbs

The analysis of Toba proverbs applies the four theoretical frameworks in order to investigate their cultural and communicative functions. Guided by Speech Act Theory, the study focuses on illocutionary acts in order to show how proverbs give advice, warnings, and moral lessons. By applying Politeness Theory, it investigates how these proverbs employ different politeness strategies in maintaining social relationships and harmony. Frame Semantics establishes the culturally and cognitively based frames representing

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shared knowledge and deeper values of society. Lastly, Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory presents the ways in which these proverbs help in sustaining cultural identity and a linguistic heritage. This structured approach shows the pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and cultural importance of the proverbs in Toba, pointing out their value as cultural artifacts and tools for preserving identity.

Table 1. Proverbs in Toba Culture

No.	Bahasa batak	Bahasa Indonesia	English	Meaning
1.	Jolma na tarbereng sonang dijoloni natorop, dang tentu jolma naso adong masalahna, alai ima jolma na tanggis disihabunian.	Orang yang bahagia di depan orang banyak, bukanlah orang yang tidak punya masalah tetapi dialah orang yang menangis dikala orang tidak ada	A happy person in public is not someone without problems but one who cries in private.	Not everything that appears joyful externally reflects true happiness. Many people suppress emotions and express them when unseen.
2.	Tumagon mangolu pogos ale dihormati dari pada mamora alai tarhina	Lebih baik hidup miskin tetapi terhomat dari pada kaya tetapi terhina	Better to live poor and respected than rich and dishonored.	Integrity and respect are valued higher than wealth gained at the cost of self-respect or others.
3.	Jolma na burju marroha ima jolma na maila pambahenan dang songon nadidokna	Orang yang baik hatinya adalah orang yang malu jika perbuatannya tidak sesuai dengan perkataanya.	A good-hearted person is ashamed when their deeds do not match their words.	Stresses the importance of harmony between words and actions as a hallmark of moral character.

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4.	Unang hosom roham tujolma nahasea, ala dang taboto aha na dikorbanhon lao mencapai hasonangon i.	Jangan engkau iri dengan orang yang berhasil karena kita tidak tau apa yang telah dikorbankannya untuk mencapai kebahagiaan itu.	Do not envy successful people, as you don't know what they sacrificed to achieve it.	Encourages gratitude and self-reflection rather than jealousy, fostering internal peace and respect for others' efforts.
5.	Jolo nidilat bibir asa nidok hata, asa unang haccit rohani donganmu	Kalau mau ngomong dipikirkan dulu supaya tidak sakit hati kawanmu.	Think before you speak to avoid hurting others.	Highlights the need for thoughtful communication to maintain good relationships.
6.	Unang bandingkon jolma namakkaholongi ho dohot jolma na maninggalhonho, ala dang diboto ho usaha na dibahenna mambahen las rohamu.	Jangan bandingkan orang yang menyayangimu dengan orang yang meninggalkanmu karena kau tidak tau usahanya untuk membuat kau bahagia.	Do not compare someone who loves you to someone who left you; you do not know their efforts.	Teaches gratitude and acceptance in relationships, avoiding unhelpful comparisons.
7.	Dang boe mambahen jolma sonang, unang susahi rohana.	Tidak bisa membuat orang bahagia, paling tidak jangan sakiti hatinya.	If you cannot make someone happy, at least do not hurt them.	Emphasizes the importance of avoiding harm even when one cannot bring joy.
8.	Sasittongna , molo dipahabisho jatah gagalmu, olo dang olo ho ikkon hasea.	Sesungguhnya jika engkau menghabiskan jatah gagalmu, mau tidak	Failure is a necessary step to eventual success.	Encourages persistence and the acceptance of failure as part of growth.

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		mau kau akan berhasil.		
9.	Bahenma dirimu songon laut naluas, manang songon dia pe masalah naroh tungolumu, jalo ma dohot roha naserep dohot iman na gogo.	Ketika menghadapi masalah apapun dalam kehidupan ini maka terimalah dengan hati yang sabar dan iman yang kuat.	Be like a vast ocean, able to endure great waves with calm and strong faith.	Teaches patience, strength, and faith in the face of life's challenges.
10.	Unang ma bahen dirimu tudoshon tu eme namasak digagat ursa inamasa ima ni ula. Lao jolma marsikkola dohot iba marsikola.	Jangan membuat dirimu seperti padi yang siap dipanen dimakan rusa yang apa yang dikerjakan orang pada saat itu dikerjakan. Orang pergi sekolah ikut diri untuk sekolah.	Do not be like ripe rice eaten by deer; take responsibility for your life.	Encourages self-reliance and having a clear purpose in life.
11.	Martahuak manuk ditoruni bara ruma, napantun marnatoras ido halak namartua.	Ayam berkokok di kolong rumah, yang sopan kepada orangtua adalah orang yang berbahagiah.	A rooster crowing under the house signifies respect for elders.	Respect for elders leads to a happy and harmonious life.
12.	Boasa ma arga sinamot ni boru Batak? Alana mansai maol do pature-turehon parmabuk.	Mengapa sinamot boru Batak mahal? Karena mengurus pemabuk itu susah.	Why is the dowry for a Batak daughter high? Because handling the in-laws is challenging.	Marriage requires understanding and acceptance of familial responsibilities.

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13.	Jolo nidilat bibir, asa nidok hata.	Jilat bibir lebih dulu, sebelum berbicara.	Lick your lips before speaking.	Be thoughtful and deliberate before speaking.
14.	Pantun do hangouan, tois hamagoan.	Sikap santun membawa kehidupan, sombong mendatangkan malapetaka.	Courtesy brings life, arrogance brings disaster.	Emphasizes humility and kindness as keys to a harmonious life.
15.	Dang adong naso tarpatupa ni Debata.	Tidak ada yang mustahil bagi Tuhan.	Nothing is impossible with God.	Encourages faith and hope in overcoming challenges.
16.	Bisuk songon ulok, marroha songon darapati.	Cerdik seperti ular, bijak seperti merpati	Be wise like a snake, gentle like a dove.	Balance shrewdness with gentleness in life..
17.	Ai dang simanuk-manuk sibontar andora, ai dang sitodo turpuk siahut lomo ni roha	Kita tidak dapat menentukan takdir kita sendiri.	We cannot control fate.	Accept life's uncertainties with grace.
18.	Halak na burju marnatua-tua dapotan pasu-pasu sian Debat.	Orang yang baik kepada orang tua, diberkati Tuhan	A person who respects elders receives blessings from God.	Respect for elders leads to divine blessings.
19.	Arta na sinari doi, rupa pe satongkin doi.	Harta dapat dicari, rupa juga hanya sementara.	Wealth can be earned, beauty is temporary.	Focus on lasting values rather than material or superficial attributes.
20.	Anakhonhi do hamoraon di au	Anakku adalah kekayaan bagiku.	My child is my treasure.	Children are the greatest

				wealth and legacy.
21.	Unang patudoshon dirimu to eme nalupangon, nadiparmudu mudu alai alai hona bolongkon.	Jangan jadikan dirimu seperti padi yang kosong, yang dipelihara dan akhirnya akan terbuang.	Do not make yourself like empty rice that is cared for but eventually discarded.	Encourages purposeful living and making positive contributions.
22.	Sabarmaho disasude gulmit ni ngolumu , alai na paling petting ima bersabar dohot emosi na adong didirim.	Bersabarlah dalam kesakitan dalam hidup, tetapi yang paling penting bersabar dengan emosi diri sendiri.	Be patient in life's pain, but most importantly be patient with your emotions.	Patience is not only enduring pain but also managing emotions and reactions.
23.	Risi risi hata ni jolma , lamot lamot hata nibegu, dibahen i unang maho makkaporseai hata ni jolma na tabo dibege ni pinggol.	Ucapan manusia kasar tetapi ucapan setan begitu lembut, maka dari itu jangan kita percaya dengan omongon yang hanya enak didengar telinga	Human words may be harsh, but devil's words may be sweet—don't trust words that are pleasant to the ear.	Teaches skepticism of flattery and caution in trusting appearances.
24.	Hagagalon dibahen dua hal, ima jolma namarpikkir ale dang mangulahon dohot jolma namngulahon alai dang jolo marpikkir.	Kegagalan disebabkan dua hal, yakni orang yang berpikir tetapi tidak berbuat dan orang yang berbuat tetapi tidak berfikir	Failure arises from two things: those who think but don't act, and those who act but don't think.	Stresses the importance of combining thoughtful planning with decisive actions.
25.	Hatahon ma dohot roha nadenggan , dohot pambahenon	Berbicaralah menggunakan hati disertai perbuatan	Speak with a good heart and	What you say reflects who you are.

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na denggan, ala aha nadidokmu ima kacca ni dirim.	yang baik karena apa yang kamu katakan adalah cerminan dirimu.	accompany your words with good deeds.

Speech Act Analysis of Toba Proverbs

The distribution of illocutionary acts in the 25 Toba proverbs highlights the cultural and communicative priorities embedded in these expressions. The preponderance of Directive acts indicates that, essentially, proverbs serve as guiding tools to give moral advice, provoke meaningful actions, and establish interpersonal harmony. It reflects the Toba culture's emphasis on teaching ethical living, maintaining respect, and providing practical solutions to everyday challenges. For example, proverbs like those advising thoughtful speech or encouraging resilience fall under this category, demonstrating the cultural value of communal harmony and individual responsibility.

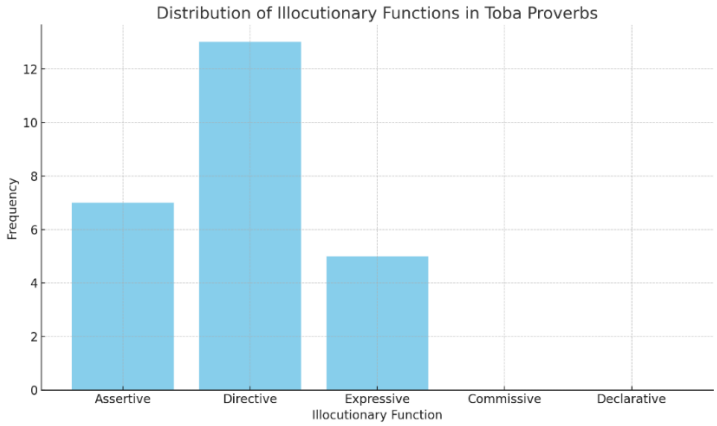

Figure 1. Distribution of Illocutionary Functions in Toba Proverbs

The analysis of Toba proverbs across illocutionary categories presents some important cultural priorities. The bar chart shows the distribution of proverbs across five categories: Assertive, Directive, Expressive, Commissive, and Declarative. The most dominant are the Directive Acts, with 12 occurrences, which underlines that Toba society places a strong emphasis on moral guidance, advice, and instructions in order to keep people living right and maintain social cohesion. This category underlines the importance of proverbs in shaping individual behavior and maintaining social harmony. Assertive Acts, with 6 proverbs, reflect Toba culture's tendency toward universal truths and philosophical reflections on life. These acts put a premium on articulating observations and shared realities within the community. Expressive Acts, which convey emotions and values like

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gratitude and respect, are moderately represented with 4 proverbs. This points to the reflective yet subsidiary role of emotive expressions in Toba's linguistic practices. Commissive Acts, or those with commitments or promises, feature fewer, at 2 proverbs. This would represent a relatively smaller emphasis on obligation or future-oriented commitments compared to other categories within Toba proverbs. Finally, Declarative Acts, which institute changes or ratify social norms, are the least common with 3 proverbs.

Although few in number, the representative acts confirm the realization of cultural values and rites; this is important for their use in formal situations and ceremonies. The proverbs of Toba impose more importance on directives in order to direct and rectify behavior and morals; assertive and declarative acts are peripheral means for stating truths and reaffirming social conventions. By focusing on these patterns, we can get a clearer understanding of how Toba proverbs function as instruments of cultural wisdom and ethical instruction, uniquely shaping their society's linguistic and social practices.

Politeness Analysis of Toba Proverbs

The analysis of the 25 Toba proverbs focuses on understanding their underlying messages using Politeness Theory by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. Each proverb is assessed based on its politeness strategy and cultural significance. This approach highlights how Toba proverbs use language to manage interpersonal relationships and reflect shared cultural values

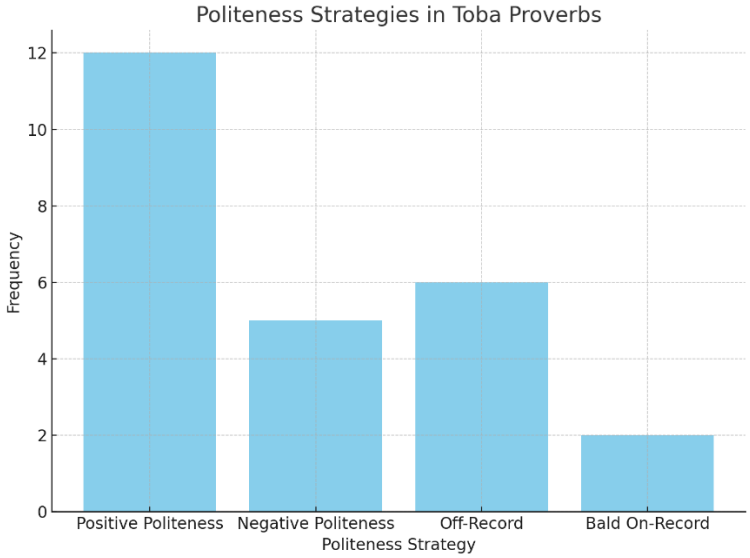

Figure 2. Politeness Strategies in Toba Proverbs

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The chart above provides a detailed analysis of 25 proverbs from the Toba culture using the framework of Politeness Theory by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. The distribution of politeness strategies in the Toba proverbs emphasizes the cultural emphasis on fostering social harmony and respect. The most frequent strategy used is Positive Politeness, occurring in 12 of the proverbs, which points out the emphasis of the Toba culture on developing rapport, cooperation, and mutual consideration. For example, those proverbs that advise prudence in speaking or in maintaining harmony of relations express this strategy. Negative Politeness occurs in 5 proverbs, showing that tact and a lack of imposition in dealings are valued, as, for example, in proverbs advising prudent and respectful speech. Off-Record strategies are found in 6 proverbs, indicating that the Toba people favor indirectness, which allows listeners to reflect on the implied meaning, as in proverbs that teach moral lessons without direct instruction. Finally, Bald On-Record strategies occur only 2 times, suggesting that directness is used sparingly and primarily in contexts requiring urgency or clarity, such as warnings or direct advice. This distribution reflects the cultural values found in the 25 proverbs of Toba, where politeness plays a significant role in interpersonal harmony and strengthens ethical teachings.

Frame Semantics Analysis of Toba Proverbs

The bar chart below shows the frequency of different cultural frames identified during the analysis of Toba proverbs. It highlights the major themes and values emphasized by these proverbs, which can be used to make an educated guess about the priorities of the culture. In fact, the most dominant is Practical Wisdom, which occurs with the highest frequency. This would mean that the Toba culture considers foresight, decision-making, and realistic thinking some of the major principles in conducting life. Proverbs associated with this frame often teach a lesson on the importance of planning, balancing actions, and maintaining a pragmatic outlook. Frames of Resilience and Dignity, Integrity and Honor, and Social Relationships and Family stand side by side in their importance and point to a well-balanced emphasis on personal strength, ethical values, and harmony within a family or social circle. Such frames reflect the cultural ideal of dignity, integrity, and valuation of relationships as the center of societal well-being.

Finally, the frame of Emotional Resilience appears less often but is no less important. It shows the cultural significance of emotional control, patience, and spiritual strength, qualities that enable a person to carry through life's adversities with dignity. The chart illustrates the richness and multi-dimensional nature of Toba proverbs as vehicles of wisdom transmission, reinforcement of social values, and guidance of personal behavior in the community. These cultural frames not only reflect the community's heritage but also carry timeless lessons in living.

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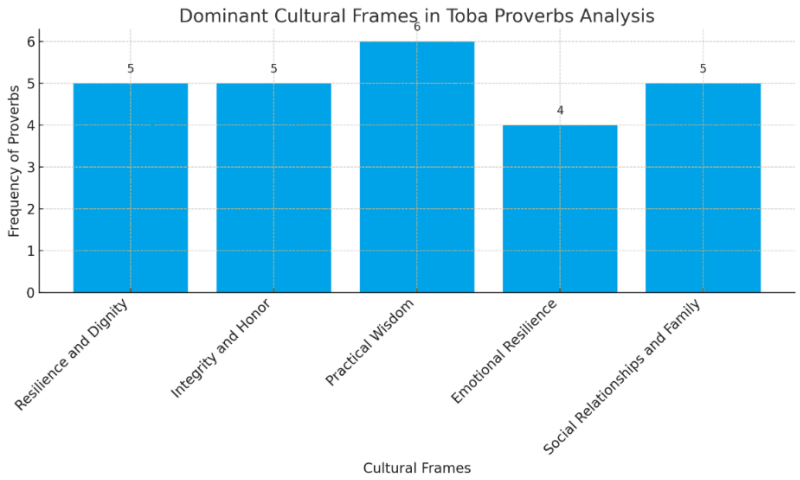

Figure 3. Dominant Cultural Frames in Toba Proverbs Analysis

Ethnolinguistic Vitality Analysis of Toba Proverbs

Toba proverbs show the dynamism of the Toba language: how this language can contain complicated ideas in simple sentence structure. The expressions are connected with cultural rituals and practices, thus enabling us to map them onto roles and traditions within society. This linkage shows not only their validity throughout history but also the present day. These proverbs act as a bridge between traditional values and contemporary societal challenges in an ever-increasingly globalizing world, offering timeless lessons for ethical and harmonious living.

This structured exploration analyzes the themes, cultural practices, and contextual relevance of Toba proverbs; it also brings to the fore their importance in retaining a resilient and cohesive cultural identity that sustains its role in shaping the values of future generations.

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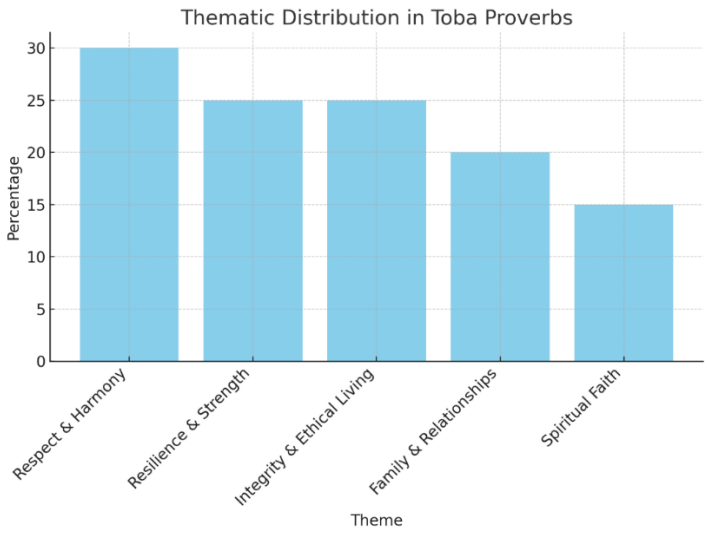

Figure 4. Thematic Distribution in Toba Proverbs

As deduced from the chart diagram above, thematic distribution into a pie chart of Toba proverbs reveals some cultural priorities and values embedded in these expressions. The highest theme, which is Respect & Harmony, constitutes 30% of the proverbs, showing the emphasis on dignified and harmonious relationships in the Toba community. In this category, proverbs are often those that encourage one to think before talking, respect one another, and avoid any kind of fight, emphasizing social cohesion.

The themes of Resilience & Strength and Integrity & Ethical Living each take 25% of the proverbs. This shows a cultural emphasis on emotional strength and ethical behavior as cornerstones of Toba identity. Proverbs promoting perseverance in adversity and adherence to moral principles underline the community's collective wisdom in navigating life's challenges.

Family & Relationships, which are 20% of the proverbs, underscore how central familial bonds and interpersonal connections are in Toba culture. Proverbs in this category reflect the value that this community places on loyalty, love, and responsibility within the family structure. Lastly, Spiritual Faith, making up 15% of the proverbs, shows reliance upon divine guidance and faith for strength and hope in hard times.

Analyzing of Karo Proverbs

The four theoretical frameworks employed in the analysis of Karo proverbs will reveal their cultural, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic dimensions. The Speech Act Theory, focusing on illocutionary acts, has been used to analyze how these proverbs convey

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intentions such as advising, warning, and encouraging through their performative and communicative functions. Politeness Theory is applied in the identification of the politeness strategies embedded in the proverbs, either positive politeness to foster social bonds or off-record strategies to encourage reflection. Through Frame Semantics, the cultural and cognitive frames activated by Karo proverbs are discussed in light of shared knowledge and deeper values of society. Finally, Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory assesses the contribution of these proverbs to maintaining Karo cultural identity and linguistic vitality, reflecting the priorities of the community such as unity, diligence, and adaptability. This multi-faceted approach gives a comprehensive understanding of how Karo proverbs function as tools for communication and cultural preservation.

Table 2. Proverbs in Karo Culture

No.	Proverb in Bahasa Karo	Bahasa Indonesia	Translation	Meaning
1.	Nggeluh bagi bindoran	Hidup seperti bunglon	Life is like a chameleon	Adjust to where we are to be loved and accepted by society.
2.	Bagi kerbau gunduk natap lau meciho, terinem lau megembur	Seperti kerbau yang tanduknya melengkung ke bawah memandang air jernih, meminum air yang yang bercampur tanah	Like a buffalo looking at clear water, drinking muddy water	People who always lose in business or are unlucky despite opportunities.
3.	Bagai penarune buntu	Seperti pemain serunai buntu	Like a flute player with a broken flute	A person unwilling to compromise, insisting on their way.

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4.	Bagi kerbau penampen, lupa nggagat tarum natap	Seperti kerbau penampen, keasyikan memandang lupa makan	Like a buffalo distracted by looking, forgetting to eat	Advice for young women not to be "tested" before marriage, emphasizing chastity.
5.	Angkar beltek pangan labo ate keleng	Jaga perut bukan saying akan makanan	Care about food, not for love	Hosting parties as a sign of closeness and goodwill among families.
6.	Mbuah page nisuan, merih manuk niasuh	Berlimpah hasil padi yang ditanam, berkembang biak ayam yang dipelihara	Abundant rice harvest and breeding chickens	Advice for couples preparing for marriage, symbolizing prosperity and unity.
7.	Adi ngalo la rido, maka ngagalar ka la rutang	Kalau menerima tidak ada piutang, maka membayar pula tidak ada utang.	If you receive without owing, pay without debt	Teaches honesty and avoiding improper gains to prevent bad consequences.
8.	Mangkuk lawes, mangkuk reh	Mangkok pergi, mangkok datang	A bowl goes, a bowl comes	A life principle of giving before receiving.
9.	Bagi ngarapken mbuah sere	Seperti mengharapkan buah sere	Like expecting fruit from lemongrass	Expecting something uncertain.
10.	siagengen radu mbiring,sikuningen radu megersing	Saling mencoreng sama-sama	Smear each other and both	If there is jealousy and mutual slander,

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		jorok, saling menguningi sama-sama kuning	become dirty	both sides will suffer.
11.	keri arang besi la tembe	Kerisik arang besi tidak bisa ditembus	Iron charcoal cannot be pierced	All efforts have been made, but the desired result has not been achieved.
12.	menang bas babah, talu bas perukuren.	Menang diperdebatan, kalah di perbuaten	Winning by words, losing by actions	Winning debates but failing in deeds.
13.	adi kidaram salu babah, ndigan pe la dat	Kalau mencari menggunakan mulut, sampai kapanpun tidak adakan dapat	Searching only by mouth leads to nothing	If you only talk without acting, you will achieve nothing.
14.	bagi kerbo sada nioga	Dua kerbau yang selalu bersama	Like two buffaloes together	Couples or married people should stay united in all circumstances.
15.	Anak dilaki tuah kalimbubu, anak diberu tuah anak beru	Anak laki-laki rejeki kalimbubu, anak perempuan rejeki anak beru	A son is the blessing of the in-laws, a daughter is the blessing of her family	Sons and daughters bring blessings to different parts of the family.
16.	Bagi manuk Adi la cikais la man	Seperti ayam tidak mengais tidak makan	Like a chicken that does not scratch does not eat	Stresses the importance of effort and self-reliance.

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17.	Bagi ngkali kurung sehseh tuk	Seperti menggali lubang jangkrik sampai ke batas	Like digging a cricket hole too deep	Avoid extremes in actions and consider consequences.
18.	Ampar batang gadung jadi tunas, ampar besi tama teritipen	Terletak ditanah batang ubi jadi tunas, terletak di tanah besi jadi karat	A yam sprout grows, iron rusts	A good environment fosters growth, while a bad one hinders potential.
19.	Bagi lau bas kaca, kuga idarat bage ibas	Seperti air didalam kaca, sama didalam dan di luar kaca	Like water in glass, clear inside and out	Encourages consistency and sincerity in behavior and attitudes.
20.	Bagi si ndekdek buk bas tepung, buk la retap tepung pe la ceda	Seperti menarik rambut dari tepung rambut tidak putus tepung tidak rusak	Like pulling hair from flour without breaking the hair or disturbing the flour	Teaches careful and considerate actions.
21.	Bagi si natang lau tare bulung sukat	Seperti membawa air didaun keladi	Like carrying water on a taro leaf	Avoid engaging in actions that yield no tangible benefits.
22.	Masu-masu ertuah bayak	Memberkati membawa rahmat dan sejahtera	Blessings bring peace and prosperity	Giving sincerely leads to blessings and well-being.
23.	Sepuluhsada ersada tendi irumah, gelah	Sebelas bersatu roh di rumah, semoga	Eleven united souls in the house	Stresses the importance of unity and

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	mejuahjuah kita kerina	sehat-sehat kita semua	for mutual well-being	harmony in family relationships.
24.	Ergulat bagi rimo, erpangsa bagi durin	Berputar seperti rotan, berani seperti durian	Rotate like rattan, be brave like durian	Adapt wisely to changes and face challenges with courage.
25.	Toto Biang Ku Pindawanen, Mate Kalak Nate, Gelah ia Besur	Seperti doa anjing ke kuburan, biar orang mati kesana yang penting dia kenyang sendiri	Like a dog praying at a grave, uncaring about others' plight	Describes selfish individuals who only care about their own benefits.

Speech Act Analysis of Karo Proverbs

The distribution of the proverbs across the five illocutionary categories reveals a very high emphasis on Directive Acts, with 10 proverbs falling under this category. This reflects the cultural importance placed on moral guidance, advice, and instructions in order to maintain ethical and harmonious relationships within Karo society. Both Assertive and Expressive Acts have featured 5 proverbs, as a way of balancing between the stating of truths or observations with the expression of emotional values such as gratitude, respect, and ethical principles. Commissive Acts, referring to statements that express commitment to subsequent actions or responsibilities, are shown by 3 proverbs, indicating communal values and shared civil responsibilities. Finally, Declarative Acts, though the least frequent with 2 proverbs, illustrate the use of proverbs in affirming social norms and enacting changes, especially in formal or ritual contexts. This distribution would suggest that Karo proverbs are multifaceted, addressing a variety of social and moral dimensions in order to guide and reinforce cultural values.

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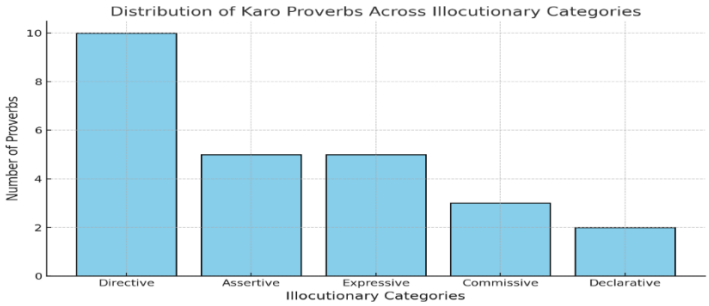

Figure 5. The Distribution of Karo proverbs

Karo proverbs reflect their culture in several ways, but there is an emphasis on Directive Acts to ensure the correctness of moral and ethical conduct. This is reflected by advice, instructions, and guidance for maintaining harmony within a society and for the good conduct of its people. The balanced presentation of Assertive and Expressive Acts would indicate that Karo culture values conveying truths or observations about life and conversely the expression of emotion or cultural norms such as gratitude and respect. The less frequent Commissive and Declarative Acts indicate a more limited, yet still meaningful, role in expressing commitments and affirming social norms or enacting changes. The distribution of proverbs reveals that the Karo society relies very much on proverbs as tools for moral guidance and wisdom, besides valuing emotional expression, social cohesion, and ethical responsibilities.

Politeness Analysis of Karo Proverbs

This study on Karo proverbs deconstructs, their hidden messages using the Politeness Theory by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. Analyzing the proverbs according to the politeness strategy they use-positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, or bald on-record-it shows how these sayings convey cultural values that manage social interaction and strengthen community bonds. This paper illustrates the way in which Karo proverbs function as instruments of moral teaching, creating harmony and maintaining social relations within a cultural perspective. From the bar chart below, the bar chart showing the distribution of politeness strategies in Karo proverbs. It visually emphasizes the prominence of positive politeness and off-record strategies, reflecting the cultural priorities of maintaining good relations and encouraging reflective communication.

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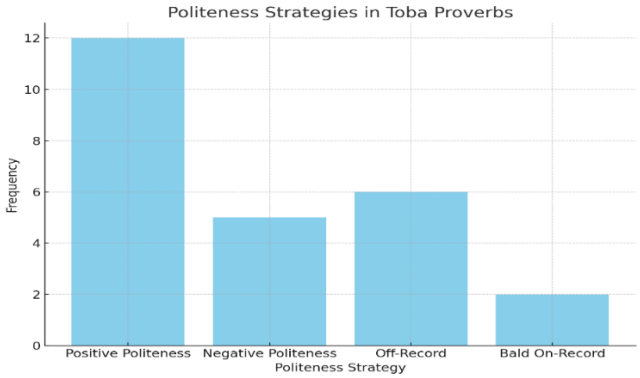

Figure 6. The Distribution of Politeness Strategies in Karo Proverbs

The distribution of politeness strategies in Karo proverbs reflects the cultural emphasis on the building of good relations and indirectness. The most frequent is positive politeness, with 10 proverbs, which signals goodwill to improve communal bonds. It points to the value ascribed to mutual respect and collaboration in Karo society. Off-record strategies are represented by 8 proverbs, a notable number, indicating that indirectness and subtlety are preferred. These proverbs call for reflection on the part of the listeners and personal interpretation, fitting with cultural values that favor indirectness. Negative politeness is shown in 4 proverbs that indicate tact in navigating interpersonal relationships and avoiding imposition. Finally, bald on-record strategies have the least use at 3, to suggest that only in situations which need clarity or urgency is the use of direct communication merited. The above distribution shows that, through the proverb, Karo gives priority to maintaining social harmony and moral teaching directly or indirectly by balancing communal values with respectful interaction.

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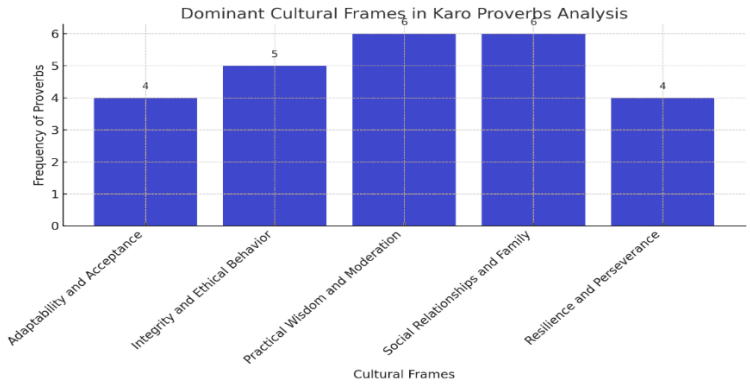

Figure 7. Dominant Cultural Frames in Karo Proverbs Analysis

The above bar chart illustrates the frequency of various cultural frames identified in the analysis of Karo proverbs. It highlights the themes that are most emphasized in these proverbs, offering a glimpse into the cultural values and priorities of the Karo community. The most dominant frames seem to be Practical Wisdom and Moderation, and Social Relationships and Family, with the highest frequency. This would show that there is a strong cultural emphasis on thoughtful decision-making, balanced actions, and harmony in family and society. These themes point toward the cohesive building of relationships and living life with prudence and care. Other important frames include Integrity and Ethical Behavior, which mirror the commitment of the community toward honesty, accountability, and moral conduct. These values are very important in sustaining confidence and social cohesion. Adaptability and Acceptance and Resilience and Perseverance are also emphasized equally to highlight the appreciation of the community for flexibility, emotional strength, and the grace with which life's challenges can be endured. This chart shows that Karo proverbs are multifaceted in showing cultural wisdom. It is not only ethical teachings that they provide, but also instructions on how to maintain relationships, make good decisions, and live one's life both personally and communally.

Ethnolinguistic Vitality Analysis of Karo Proverbs

This analysis aims to explore the cultural and linguistic significance of Karo proverbs, uncovering the values, norms, and practices embedded within these traditional expressions. As a vital part of oral tradition, Karo proverbs encapsulate the community's worldview and moral framework, serving as a guiding tool for ethical behavior and social

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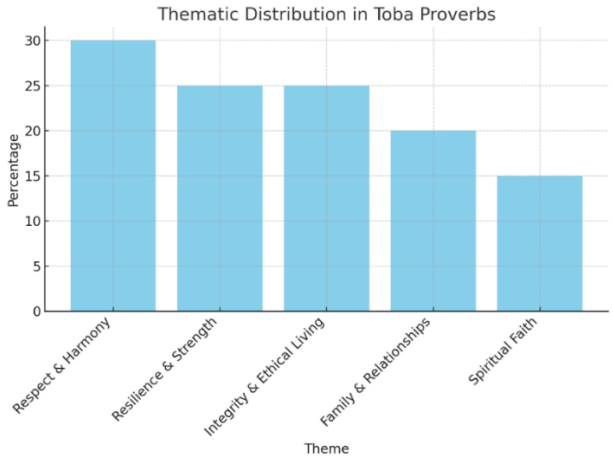
harmony. By examining these proverbs, we can understand their role in preserving the cultural identity of the Karo people.



Picture 8. Ethnolinguistic Vitality Themes in Karo Proverbs

From the bar chart above, the distribution of ethnolinguistic vitality themes in Karo proverbs reflects the cultural priorities and values that the community has held dear. That Unity & Collaboration is the most emphasized theme, standing at 24%, expresses the significance of collective strength and cooperation as the keynote for fostering a cohesive society. Diligence & Responsibility, at 20%, reflects the appreciation of hard work and responsibility as core elements in maintaining social and personal well-being. Adaptability & Harmony and Generosity & Social Bonding, each at 16%, underpin the cultural emphasis on adaptability during challenging situations and the importance of developing strong social bonds through the support of and generosity towards one another. Lastly, Practical Wisdom, with 12%, reflects the appreciation by the Karo people of thoughtful acts and practical knowledge as tools for negotiating life's problems. This distribution of themes demonstrates how balancing individual and collective responsibilities, maintaining harmony, and building resilience through shared values are core concerns within the Karo community.

DISCUSSION

Proverbs are a vital part of cultural heritage, embodying the values, beliefs, and social norms of a community. In the case of the Toba and Karo societies, proverbs serve as a linguistic medium for transmitting ethical teachings, fostering social cohesion, and reflecting the communities' worldview. This analysis delves into the comparative

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dimensions of Toba and Karo proverbs across various linguistic and cultural frameworks, including **Speech Act Analysis, Politeness Strategies, Frame Semantics,** and **Ethnolinguistic Vitality.**

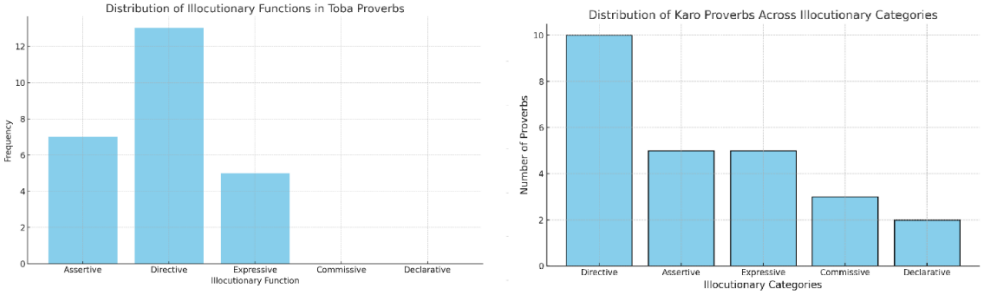

Figure 9. Comparison of Karo and Toba Proverbs

The bar chart shows how the proverbs of the Karo and Toba people are distributed across the five illocutionary categories: Assertive, Directive, Expressive, Commissive, and Declarative. Outstanding among the distribution is that both cultural speeches have dominant occurrences in the category of Directive Acts, having each 10 proverbs falling under this category, which emphasizes shared cultural significance of moral guidance, advice, and instructions in maintaining ethics and harmonious living. This, in turn, depicts the important role of proverbs in shaping individual behaviors and social norms within those societies. Both cultures also use Assertive Acts to convey truths or observations about life, though Toba proverbs have a slightly higher count (6) compared to Karo proverbs (5). This difference, while small, suggests that Toba culture might place a slightly greater emphasis on philosophical reflections and articulating universal truths. Expressive Acts are also prominent in both traditions, with 5 Karo proverbs and 4 Toba proverbs. This is understandable because both cultures are emotionally and value-oriented, so they express gratitude, respect, and ethical principles in the form of proverbs.

The Commissive Acts category is less frequent but still notable, with Karo proverbs including 3 and Toba proverbs including 2. These acts, which involve commitments to future actions or responsibilities, may reflect communal values and shared obligations, particularly in familial or societal contexts. Meanwhile, Declarative Acts, which bring about changes or affirm social norms, are slightly more prominent in Toba proverbs, 3 as compared to Karo proverbs, 2. This may be attributed to cultural practices in Toba society, where such pronouncements as blessings or affirmations are significant in their rituals and social bonding.

In spite of such subtle differences, some striking similarities between the two traditions are seen. Both the cultures rely a great deal on Directive Acts and utilize Assertive and Expressive Acts to express wisdom and values. Still, Karo proverbs are distributed

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somewhat more balanced in all categories, which may refer to the broader application of speech acts in the social life of Karo people. While that may be the case, proverbs from Toba indicate a greater tendency toward acts of commitment and formal pronouncements, reflecting their own cultural practices of affirming faith, values, and social bonds. In short, the chart above shows that the Karo and Toba cultures, though having a strong focus on advice and moral teachings, have slightly different emphases on the illocutionary functions. The differences give further insight into their unique cultural and linguistic expressions, while the similarities point to shared values in the guidance of ethical behavior and the preservation of social harmony.

Comparison of Politeness Strategies in Toba and Karo

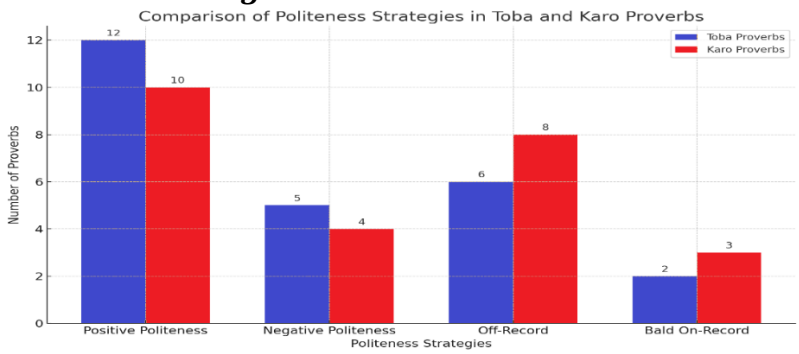

Figure 10. Comparison of Politeness Strategies in Toba and Karo Proverbs

The chart above illustrates the strategies of positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, and bald on-record existing in the proverbs of Toba and Karo cultures. In this context, the data reveals some similarities and differences between how these two cultures use language to make their values known and keep harmony among people. Positive politeness has the highest number of frequency in both Toba and Karo, in which the Toba proverbs are more than the Karo one with a total of 12 and 10, respectively. This indicates that both cultures have a strong orientation toward establishing good relations and reinforcing solidarity through utterances that reflect cooperation and mutual consideration. Negative politeness in both cultures is lower compared to the positive ones, with again Toba proverbs leading slightly over Karo ones (5 vs. 4). The strategy in negative politeness points out tact and shows the speaker's consideration not to impose on others. Off-record strategies, relying on indirectness of communication, come out more in Karo proverbs, 8 versus 6. This would indicate a cultural preference for subtlety and implicit teaching, allowing the listener to ponder over their own interpretation. Finally, bald on-record strategies are the least used in both, though Karo proverbs have a slightly higher

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usage at 3 versus 2. This reflects a tendency for directness in certain contexts where urgent or clear communication is necessary. The chart demonstrates that while both Toba and Karo cultures share a common reliance on politeness strategies to convey ethical teachings and maintain social cohesion, there are nuanced differences in their preferences for indirectness or directness, reflecting their unique cultural and communicative styles.

Comparison of Cultural Frames in Toba and Karo Proverb

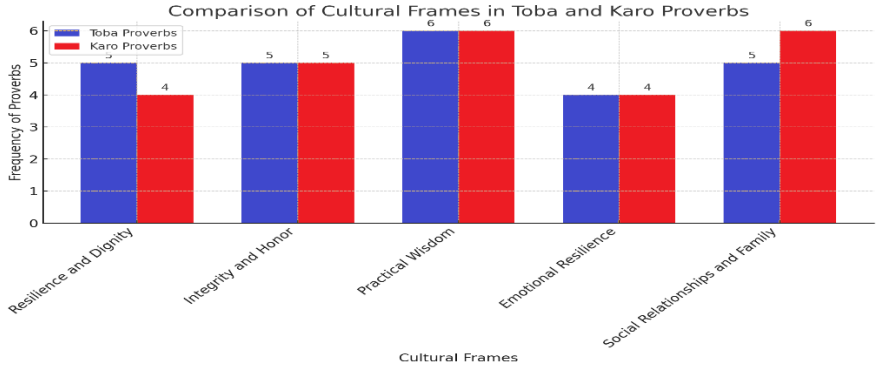

Figure 11. Comparison of Cultural Frames in Toba and Karo Proverbs

It reveals the use of cultural frames between these two cultures as similar, yet different at some point. The chart has compared key frames, that is: Resilience and Dignity, Integrity and Honor, Practical Wisdom, Emotional Resilience, Social Relationships and Family, providing a holistic stand to show how these cultural themes play a key function within their proverbs. The chart shows that Toba and Karo proverbs strongly emphasize Practical Wisdom, having six occurrences in both cultures; this shows the great relevance, in both cultures, to thoughtful decision-making and the foresight necessary in applying moderation to all aspects of life. Also, Integrity and Honor has almost an equal standing in the set of proverbs under consideration here, which reflects a mutual preoccupation with ethical living and moral accountability. Speaking of Social Relationships and Family, Karo proverbs are a little higher than those of Toba, underlining a strong emphasis on family unity and community ties. On the other hand, Toba proverbs slightly more highlight Resilience and Dignity, demonstrating a cultural tendency toward keeping strength and dignity in unfavorable conditions. Both are equally important in the context of Emotional Resilience, highlighting the value of emotional strength and control within their stories. This comparison underlines the shared values of wisdom, ethics, and relationships in both cultures while highlighting nuanced differences in their emphasis on resilience and familial cohesion. Together, these findings reveal the depth and diversity of cultural insights embedded in the proverbs of Toba and Karo societies..

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Comparison of Thematic Frequencies in Toba and Karo Proverb

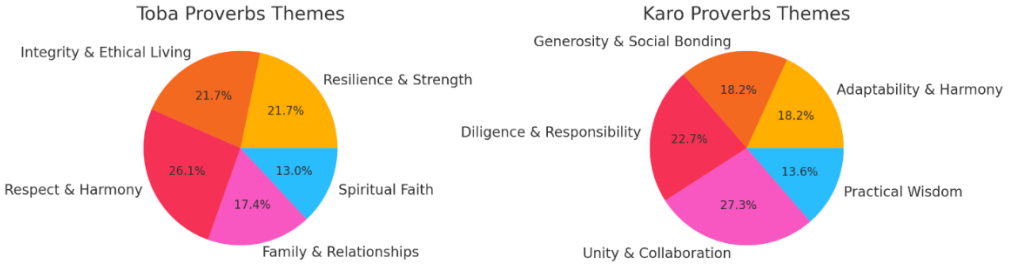

Figure 12. The Thematic Distribution in Toba and Karo proverbs

This bar chart compares the thematic frequencies in Toba and Karo proverbs and-shared cultural values with unique distinctions. Themes such as "Respect & Harmony" and "Resilience & Strength" are emphasized in the Toba proverbs to indicate how the community prioritizes dignity, emotional fortitude, and ethical living. Similarly, Karo proverbs emphasize such themes as "Unity & Collaboration" and "Diligence & Responsibility," showing the culture of cooperation, hard work, and responsibility. Shared values, like ethical living and resilience, are common, while the differences, such as the spiritual focus of Toba and adaptability in Karo, reflect their uniqueness in cultural expression. The pie chart for the Toba proverbs will show a thematic focus on "Respect & Harmony" as the biggest chunk at 30%, with "Resilience & Strength" and "Integrity & Ethical Living" following at each 25%. Other thematic representations, such as "Family & Relationships" and "Spiritual Faith," constitute 20% and 15%, respectively. This distribution highlights how Toba culture places much value on fostering harmonious relations, maintaining moral integrity, and relying on inner strength and faith. In contrast, the pie for Karo proverbs is dominated by "Unity & Collaboration" at 24%, followed by "Diligence & Responsibility" at 20%, and "Adaptability & Harmony" at 16%. "Generosity & Social Bonding" and "Practical Wisdom" represent 16% and 12%, respectively. These percentages underline the emphasis of the Karo community on collective strength, adaptability, and maintaining the balance in social interactions through shared responsibilities and thoughtful actions.

CONCLUSION

Proverbs represent the important part of cultural heritage, which contains values, beliefs, and norms of the community. This study discusses the linguistic and cultural dimensions of proverbs in Toba and Karo societies using Speech Act Analysis, Politeness Strategies, Frame Semantics, and Ethnolinguistic Vitality. The results obtained from these frameworks have

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underlined not only some shared cultural values but also distinctive characteristics of each community's worldview to provide a comprehensive understanding of their linguistic expressions.

Speech Act Analysis

The distribution of illocutionary categories in proverbs reveals that both Toba and Karo cultures prioritize Directive Acts (10 proverbs each), emphasizing moral guidance and advice. Assertive Acts are slightly more common in Toba proverbs (6) compared to Karo proverbs (5), reflecting Toba culture's inclination toward philosophical truths. On the other hand, Karo proverbs are relatively more evenly distributed across the categories, with significant representations in Expressive (5), Commissive (3), and Declarative Acts (2), indicating their wide use in social life.

Politeness Strategies

Politeness analysis indicates that positive politeness is the major strategy in both cultures; Toba proverbs are just slightly ahead of Karo proverbs, with 12 to 10. This indicates a shared orientation toward the building of good relationships and cooperation. However, Karo proverbs show a stronger inclination toward off-record strategies-8 versus 6-demonstrating that subtlety in teaching and in communication is culturally emphasized. Both cultures use negative politeness sparingly: Karo, 4; Toba, 5; and bald on-record strategies are the least used, but Karo proverbs show a slight edge, 3 to 2, which indicates that in both cultures, there is a need to be direct in some instances.

Frame Semantics Analysis

Both cultures emphasize Practical Wisdom, with equal representation (6 occurrences each), highlighting the value placed on thoughtful decision-making. Karo proverbs show a stronger focus on Social Relationships and Family, emphasizing unity and collaboration, while Toba proverbs prioritize Resilience and Dignity, reflecting strength and composure in adversity. Shared values, such as Integrity and Honor and Emotional Resilience, illustrate the importance of ethical living and emotional fortitude in both cultures.

Ethnolinguistic Vitality

The thematic distribution reveals the differences in emphasis between the two cultures. Karo proverbs focus on Unity & Collaboration (24%), Diligence & Responsibility (20%), and Adaptability & Harmony (16%), reflecting the culture's emphasis on collective strength, accountability, and flexibility. Toba proverbs, by contrast, highlight Respect & Harmony (30%), Resilience & Strength (25%), and Spiritual Faith (15%), underlining their emphasis on dignity, moral integrity, and spirituality.

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