

The Role of Burdah and Ngelenggang Religious Rituals in Preserving the Loloan Malay Language in West Bali

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Abstract: Loloan Malay is an endangered indigenous language which is also the identity of a minority Muslim community in Jembrana, West Bali. In the midst of the strong Hindu influence in Bali, the Loloan people try to maintain their different linguistic and cultural heritage through oral traditions such as Burdah and Ngelenggang—ritual performances presenting religious verse recitations accompanied by percussion performed during a seven-month pregnancy. This study aimed to explore how Loloan Malay language as their identity is maintained through Burdah and Ngelenggang rituals. Data were collected through interviews and observations, focusing on community leaders, ritual performers, and youths. The findings revealed that conducting the rituals maintains the language through the cultural materials and communication. Furthermore, the research also unpacks the language of having inconsistency in orthography, which affects not only the written communication but also the education. This study implies that sustainable religious practices can be markers of how well languages are maintained.

Keywords: burdah and ngelenggang rituals; language documentation; language maintenance; Loloan Malay

1. Introduction

Bali, often referred to as the Island of a Thousand Temples, is widely recognized as a Hindu-majority province, symbolized by its abundant temples and deep-rooted Hindu traditions. However, Bali has much more to show its diversity. It is proven that there is a diaspora in Bali as there are various ethnic groups that have settled in the province, such as Javanese, Buginese, Sasak, and more (Dhanawaty, Malini, Wiasti, & Yadnya, 2020). A striking

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example of this heterogeneity is the Loloan village located in the western part of Bali in Jembrana and the people are regarded as Buginese descendants. This community is particularly distinctive for its use of Loloan Malay as their primary language of communication. The presence of the Loloan Malay language serves as compelling evidence of the historical cross-cultural interactions that have shaped Bali over time as well as Loloan Malay language. Dhanawaty et al. (2020) further described that migration contributes significantly to the occurrence of language contact and language changes. The Loloan community as a diaspora is always faced with choices whether maintaining the use of mother tongue in interacting, switching to Balinese as the dominant language, or using Indonesian or even English as a result of modernization. This situation then raises an important question: how has the Loloan community, a small linguistic minority, managed to preserve their language in the face of the dominant Balinese culture and language, as well as the pressures of modernization, which often threaten minority languages?

Loloan Malay (hereinafter referred to as LM) is a local language spoken in Loloan village. Loloan is a moslem village which is located in the regency of Jembrana, in the western part of Bali, Indonesia (see Photo 1). Loloan has been established as a moslem village inhabited since 17th century starting from the arrival of Bugis-Makassar people in 1653 and 1660 (Karim, 2016; Reken, 2002; Suwitha, 1985). Loloan is a village for Buginese, Malay, and Balinese muslim people. They are minority group compared to the majority of Balinese Hindus. Being surrounded by larger Balinese villages makes maintaining their Muslim community is particularly challenging. Although the Loloan village is located in the middle of Balinese villages of which people are Hindu, both of these ethnics can live side by side in harmony without looking at the differences in religion, customs and ability. They even adopt the Balinese culture or the other way around, for example the Loloan people adopt the culture of *ngejot* 'give something sincerely', *kelakat* 'a frame of bamboo strips', and *rantasan* 'a pile of textiles as an offering'.

The Loloan community regards their language as a cornerstone of their identity. This is supported by a survey done in determining the language attitude of the Loloan community that showed the people valued highly LM as their identity (Yadnya, Dhanawaty, Wiasti, & Malini, 2020). It is deeply intertwined with their daily lives and cultural practices. Alongside their language, the Loloan people are devout Muslims and their religious activities, such as Burdah and Ngelenggang, play a pivotal role in maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity. Religion and language are not merely aspects of their cultural heritage but are integral to their self-identification. Despite the profound importance of language and religion to the Loloan identity, it is paradoxical and deeply

concerning that the aspects of language such as phonology, lexicon, writing system, and the aspects of cultures namely traditions and customs, social norms, how to use language in communication and cultural identity and heritage remain undocumented.



Photo 1. Map of Bali and the location of Loloan Village (Photo: Google)

According to Ethnologue, around 436 local languages are endangered in Indonesia and among them is LM (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2024). One of the factors that makes this language's vitality is threatened is the absence of written documentation. Loloan Malay is a spoken language; therefore, to keep this language alive mainly relies on oral communication among their people. Such communication commonly occurs during religious activities, like Burdah and Ngelenggang, where Loloan communities help each other to prepare and perform them. The lack of LM documentation presents a significant barrier to language maintenance that may harm their identity vitality. Without written records and proper documentation, the activities and language can undergo shifts soon or later, which will eventually affect their vitality and originality, or even vanish over time (Abu Bakar, Othman, Makmun, & Abdul Razak, 2024). Up until now, there has been little to none effort in overcoming this issue. This situation calls for the necessity for an actual attempt to document the language and the cultural practices that sustain it.

This study aims to explore how Loloan Malay language as their group identity is maintained through Burdah and Ngelenggang rituals. Burdah, which is derived from an Arabic word meaning 'blanket' (Sabara, 2019), is a ritual of praising the Prophet Muhammad SAW with Arabic verses composed by Imam al-Busiri from Egypt (Emawati, Liadi, & Salihah, 2020; Sabara, 2019).

Ngelenggang is a ritual during a seven-month pregnancy of a woman to pray for positive characteristics for the baby. The reason for choosing these two rituals lies in how they integrate both LM languages, which make them excellent to preserve the ethnic's language. The integration is shown on how the Loloan community performs Burdah with LM verses not Arabic. The incorporation of LM words in their extensive religious verses and *pantun* (poems) provide a broad chance for the Loloan people to maintain the language's vitality.

Furthermore, Burdah and Ngelenggang are oral traditions with rich cultural values embedded in their verses. Being oral traditions, they are vulnerable or interrupted, which means they are susceptible to undergo changes in terms of procession or even language use during the rituals. Documentation of LM through Burdah and Ngelenggang rituals includes documentation of the language and the tradition. Tradition documentation is a whole process of compiling, storing, retrieving, and spreading cultural information (Prahatmaja, 2013). Language documentation is a process of recording a language, including its lexicon, grammar, and text to prevent language shift and language loss (Schultze-Berndt, 2015). Based on these concepts, this study collected descriptions of the rituals in LM, LM wordlist, and verses used in the two rituals in LM as LM documentation and maintenance. This study limits the discussion to lexical level of analysis. This study is limited only to the lexicon since the list of lexicons allows the more detailed examination of how vocabulary contributes to LM, by presenting the insights into linguistic retention, borrowing, and adaptation within the speakers.

Language maintenance is much associated with the identity of a speech community because language is the reflection of the speakers' attitudes, beliefs, and values (Crystal, 2002; Kramsch, 2000). Kramsch (2000) further states that there is a natural connection between the language and the group identity which can be shown through their accent, lexicon and their discourse pattern. Language maintenance is aligned with language vitality because a language has great vitality when a language use is maintained over generations (Pauwels, 2016). Therefore, this study has a positive influence towards the LM's identity through language because examining LM maintenance allows the inheritance of Loloan community's cultural and linguistic identity embedded in Burdah and Ngelenggang to next generations. According to the foregoing background, this study is set to document Loloan Malay as a step of language maintenance through the rituals of Burdah and Ngelenggang. This study addresses the problems of (1) how do Burdah and Ngelenggang contribute to the maintenance of LM language? and (2) what attempt is taken to document LM language used in Burdah and Ngelenggang?

2. Literature Review

Indonesia is home to 704 languages. This number, although seems extraordinary, is not that amazing because 506 languages in Indonesia are considered endangered according to Ethnologue (Eberhard et al., 2024). Languages labelled as endangered are subject to language loss. Factors driving this status are mostly low number of speakers, the language is no longer the mother tongue, and the language has no social mechanism in place by which children are learning it (Macri, 2010). Pauwels (2016) mentions that the endangerment of language can be caused by invasion by another linguistic group, being annexed to another polity, and experiencing an exodus of speakers. Pauwels (2016) concludes that these factors are causes of language contact. The more contact one language exposes, the higher possibility it gets to be shifted and eventually endangered, particularly when there is no effort in maintaining the language. One way to maintain the language is to continuously use the language in many domains (Baker, 2011; Benrabah, 2004). Fishman (1990) provides an extensive list of language domains. Holmes & Wilson (2022) add that languages have a bigger chance to be maintained when used in multiple domains.

Related to LM, there are studies examining the maintenance of LM in several domains, such as employment, family, and friendship. Sosiowati et. al. (2019) evaluated LM's fishing lexicon to measure its vitality. Fishing lexicon was chosen to be the topic because the livelihood of LM community is mainly in fishery. Their study found out that the fishing lexicons in LM were extensively lost. The study concluded that LM is severely endangered due to insufficient intergenerational transmission. Dhanawaty et al. (2020) provided information that the maintenance of LM in family and friendship domains is in good condition. The Loloan community uses LM when speaking with their family members from the same ethnic group. However, this good condition can only be found among adults and older communities.

It is surprising that the domain of religion has not been sufficiently researched since Sosiowati et. al. (2017) have investigated LM identity and vitality and stated that Islam and the LM language are the identity markers of the community. Sumarsono (1993) tried to explain that LM was used in the religious domain in terms of conversing with kyai (Islamic cleric) and students in *pesantren*, a traditional Islamic boarding school. This finding, however, is seen to be leaning more towards the friendship and education domains. Therefore, language maintenance in the religious domain is still a gap that needs to be filled.

A claim given by Gogonas (2012) states that religion, as one of cultural elements, when intertwined with language, makes language maintenance more

intense. Wang (2016) conducted a study in which the finding challenged this claim. Wang (2016) showed that religion did not support the maintenance of the Hakka language in the Malaysian Chinese community. It showed that Hakka experienced a decline in the religious domain as churches shifted to Mandarin due to ideology and educational influence.

The study from Wang (2016) has shown that there are factors that influence the condition of a language in a society. Similar to LM, it can have the potential to be shifted in the religious domain since intergenerational transmission and language contact are issues. The more contacts LM experiences, the more influences from other languages it gets. Putra et. al. (2015) in their study identified the Balinese language influence in LM language. Their study showed that LM borrowed Balinese vocabularies through adoption and adaptation processes, which also provided impact towards LM phonological dynamics. Suparwa (2010) also showed that Indonesian has pretty much influence in LM. With current policy of Indonesian language as language of instruction in schools, it can be said that the younger generation of Loloan is exposed more towards Indonesian rather than LM, which if this is sustained, LM in all domains in the future might be shifted to Indonesian. Therefore, this calls for a medium to teach this young generation, so even though they are more comfortable in Indonesian, they still have guidance to conduct activities in LM.

Back to religious domain of LM, religious practices, such as Burdah and Ngelenggang, in Loloan community exhibit the mixture of different languages, such as Arabic, Balinese, Indonesian, and LM; thus, LM in these practices is susceptible of the potential of code-mixing or even shift in the future. Therefore, this study intended to see how much these two practices can give a positive impact in terms of LM maintenance. Abd Halim et. al. (2021) in their bibliometric analysis of oral tradition research showed that relationship between oral tradition, documentation, and language maintenance is not the most established theme; thus, the presence of current research provides a fresh perspective.

Burdah and Ngelenggang have been seen as interesting objects of study by past researchers. Mabruri et. al. (2019) studied the socio-cultural influences of Burdah verses in the LM community. This study showed that the Burdah verses are affected by Arabic, Javanese, and Malay cultures. The influences from these three cultures are reflected in the teaching values the verses possess. Study from Mabruri et. al. (2019) is very different compared to the current study as their study focused on analyzing the elements from other cultures in Burdah verses through content analysis.

The research documenting LM through Burdah and Ngelenggang traditions with the aim of preserving the cultural and linguistic identity of LM

is novel in linguistic and cultural anthropology studies in Indonesia. By looking at these two traditions, current study tries to fill research gaps, such as how LM is maintained in religious domains and how LM can have better chances to be transmitted to younger generations.

3. Method and Theory

3.1 Method

This study adopts a field research design utilizing qualitative data collection methods. The research was conducted in Loloan Timur village, located in the Jembrana Regency of Bali, Indonesia. Data collection spanned from February to June 2024. The field research approach was chosen to facilitate close observation of the Burdah and Ngelenggang rituals and to document the use of LM within these cultural practices. This methodology allowed for an immersive exploration of the rituals, providing rich, detailed insights into their execution and significance within the LM community, thereby ensuring thorough and accurate documentation.

The research employed a combination of interviews and observations to gather data. Interviews were conducted using open-ended questions in Indonesian to elicit detailed information about the history, steps, meanings, and significance of Burdah and Ngelenggang within the LM community. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, including the head of the community, older generation ritual performers, families hosting the rituals, and the youth of Loloan. They were chosen due to their primary involvement in the preparation and performance of the rituals. Local research assistants, mainly Loloan Malay youths led by the community head, were enlisted to facilitate efficient data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The study also included wordlist interviews to document the lexicon used during the rituals and preparations. This wordlist collection was supplemented by translating the Arabic Burdah book into LM with the help of local assistants that resulted in a comprehensive documentation output. Observations of the ritual performances and preparations were conducted concurrently with the interviews to capture the procession details accurately. The collected data comprised recordings and descriptions of Burdah and Ngelenggang, 1163 lexicons, and LM translations of Burdah verses and poems.

The study employed a descriptive-mixed approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative analysis focused on interpreting interview results, wordlists, and Burdah verses to explore how these rituals contribute to language maintenance (LM) as a marker of identity. The quantitative analysis involved categorizing lexicons into semantic domains and assessing the influence of other languages on LM.

The analysis was guided by language maintenance and language documentation theories, which provided a structured framework for examining the linguistic features observed in the rituals. Theory of domains of language use by Pauwels (2016) was used. Sub-theories of congregation and institutionalised worship were specifically applied to help construct the analysis. Institutionalised worship, based on Pauwels (2016), provides a better opportunity for a specific language to be maintained since the established system of religion is closely linked to a particular language. This established system of religion is shown by established rituals, schedules, behaviors, and leadership. This sub-theory was used to see how LM is integrated despite the use of Arabic as the dominant language in original Burdah poems. The sub-theory of congregation was applied to see how preparations for the rituals help in maintaining the use of a language.

3.2 Theory

The theories of language maintenance by Crystal (2002) and Pauwels (2016) provide a framework for understanding the connection between language preservation and identity. Crystal (2002) emphasizes that the active use of a language by a speech community within a linguistically and culturally diverse environment is a critical means of maintaining their identity. Similarly, Pauwels (2016) defines language maintenance as the sustained use of a minority language in one or more domains of daily life. Pauwels further explores this concept in the context of territorial minorities, such as Native American communities in the United States, which closely parallels the situation of the Loloan community in Bali. As a linguistic minority residing in a predominantly Balinese-speaking region, the Loloan community exemplifies language maintenance through their continued use of Loloan Malay (LM).

Pauwels (2016) also discusses the role of religious practices in language maintenance and asserts that when a language is tied to religious traditions, its preservation becomes integral to maintaining religious identity. This aligns with the rituals of Burdah and Ngelenggang, which incorporate LM as part of their practice. The incorporation of LM can be analyzed using institutionalised worship and congregation principles stated by Pauwels (2016). These rituals not only sustain the linguistic elements of LM but also encapsulate cultural knowledge. Additionally, Pauwels highlights the importance of producing media as a strategy for language maintenance. Printed media, in particular, serves as a vital tool for maintaining minority languages.

The current research aligns with this notion by producing a book that documents LM, which further contributes significantly to its preservation. The

research also draws on language documentation theory as outlined by Macri (2010), which underscores the practical benefits of creating comprehensive records of a language and its associated culture. According to Macri, language documentation involves capturing the sounds, structures, and cultural contexts of a language. Guided by this theory, the researcher compiled a wordlist to document the phonology and orthography of LM, while also recording videos and photographs of Burdah and Ngelenggang. These efforts culminated in the creation of LM translation of Burdah poems book, which not only preserves the linguistic and cultural aspects of LM but also provides a valuable resource for future research and community engagement. The book of which title is *Syair-Syair Burdah: Terjemah dalam Bahasa Melayu Loloan – Seni Tradisi di Kampung Loloan Jembrana Bali* (Burdah Verses: Translation in Loloan Malay – Traditional Art in Loloan Village, Jembrana, Bali) contains verses written in Arabic, then translated into LM and Indonesian. It was also completed by humorous, religious and moral teaching verses served as interlude between the Burdah verses. This book is an output of the research funded by Marie-Curie Foundation.

4. Results and Discussion

This section describes the maintenance of LM language through the performance of Burdah and Ngelenggang ritual as well as the documentation output this research produced. Burdah and Ngelenggang are the channels of LM's linguistic and cultural inheritance where intergenerational transmission is fostered and communal identity is reinforced.

4.1 Loloan Malay Maintenance through Burdah and Ngelenggang

Two key pillars of the LM community's identity are their language and religion. According to the Loloan community head named Muztahiddin, these elements are foundational to the LM people's sense of ethnic identity. While Islam is regarded as the spiritual core of the LM people, making them distinct in Bali where Hinduism predominates, the LM language serves as a cultural hallmark that defines their uniqueness. The LM language not only reflects the community's faith, but also the geographical information of the people through lexical borrowing from Balinese, and the way LM community communicate. Therefore, it is very essential for the LM language to be maintained. The most effective step to maintain a language is to use it. Among various media, Burdah and Ngelenggang become suitable platforms for LM people to use their language.



Photo 2. Performance of Burdah during Ngelenggang Ceremony (Photo: Sosiowati)

As seen on Photo 2, the performers of Burdah wear headwear called *songkok*, which is a piece of man clothing associated with Islam in Indonesia (Muslim & Wilis Werdiningsih, 2023). Therefore, the material culture with Islamic identity can also be acknowledged. Sitting together in a circular shape, performers of Burdah play percussive instruments while singing verses from *Al Barzanji* book.

According to Muztahiddin, the community head, currently Burdah is played mostly in Ngelenggang. The number of Burdah performers are 10 to 12 older men, and some players will also sing the verses in turns. The players who are usually elderly, the price of the set music instruments which are expensive make the availability rare, and the limited performances make this religious performance in danger. Therefore, Ngelenggang is one of the important religious activities in which the Burdah is performed. This situation stresses the need to document these cultural activities.



Photo 3. Percussive Instruments of Burdah (Photo: Sosiowati)

The instrument of Burdah, as seen on Photo 3 is like a tambourine with the diameter of 50 cm and more made of wood and leather. The size of these tambourines is varied and the frames are made of coconut trees. Nowadays, it is a little bit hard to make a big tambourine since the sufficient diameter of the coconut trees are rare. Then making the big tambourine will take a long time and be expensive. That expensive price is not only because of the hardness of finding the sufficient diameter of the coconut tree but also because it uses the skin of goats which needs time to dry and be processed to be able to produce the desirable sound to match the religious verses of the Burdah.

Ngelenggang is one of the rituals of life cycle for the Loloans that consists of (1) Ngelenggang – the ritual when the mother is in seven-month pregnancy, (2) *Abda'u* for the newborn baby, (3) *Kepus Pungsed*, when the baby is seven days old when the umbilical cord rupture, (4) *Lepas Kambuahan* – when the baby is 40 days old, (5) *Akekah* – when the baby is 50 days old, (6) *Mauludan* – when the baby is 180 days old, (7) *Khitan* or *Buang Supit* which is the ritual of circumcision, (8) *Menek Teruna* – the ritual to mark that a kid has reached the time of puberty, (9) marriage, and (10) death ritual.

Ngelenggang is performed during the seventh month of pregnancy among the Loloans. While the recitation of Burdah can be conducted on various occasions, its integration into the Ngelenggang ritual facilitates a synthesis of religious and linguistic traditions. On the evening preceding the ritual, Burdah is performed, with the verses recited in LM, a translation from the original Arabic text. During this recitation, participants prepare flower-infused water accompanied by prayers, which will be used the following day for the ritual. The purpose of this practice is to instill specific aspirational qualities in the unborn child: courage and heroism if the child is male, or obedience and kindness if female. These intentions are conveyed through the verses sung during the Burdah performance.

The Ngelenggang ritual itself begins with the expectant mother lying on the floor on a piece of cloth, foregoing the use of a bed or mattress, on the night prior to the main ceremony as seen on the left of Photo 4. The woman who is tasked with massaging the stomachs of pregnant women at Ngelenggang ritual is called by the local community as *Tukang Urut* 'masseur' or in the past called *Dukun Beranak* 'traditional midwife'. The purpose of massaging is so that the baby and mother are healthy and safe until birth and also to correct/improve the baby's poor position or what is usually called *Nyungsang* 'breech birth'.



Photo 4. Procession of Ngelenggang (Photo: Sosiowati)

Both the husband and wife's bodies are covered in herbal cream during this preparatory phase. On the following day, the couple is bathed with the flower-infused water prepared during the Burdah recitation as seen on the right of Photo 5. This bathing, performed by their relatives, is accompanied by tambourine music and the chanting of various verses, including Persian, Pa'antah, Rabbuna, Sultan Pahang (Pa'ang), Sultan Ma'alaf, Cik Pekih, Angin-angin, Sri Goyang, Tarikh Banyuwangi, Cokkean, Masruh Mambang, and Al-Burdah (Burdah Barzanji).



Photo 5. The Married Couple Selling Cendol (Photo: Sosiowati)

Additional practices during the Ngelenggang ceremony include the symbolic selling of cendol by the couple as seen on Photo 6, which is purchased

by attendees, and the scattering of coins as a representation of prosperity. The Loloans hold the belief that the mother's behavior during pregnancy significantly influences the development of the unborn child. This ritual is particularly significant for first-time mothers, who are considered to require physical and emotional preparation for the responsibilities of childbirth and motherhood. This particular practice seems to be associated with Javanese tradition as stated by Setyaningsih (2020) that there is *dawet* or traditional Indonesian sweet beverage with rice flour jelly, which is closely similar to *cendol*.



Photo 6. The Ngelenggang Materials (Photo: Sosiowati)

The preparation of Ngelenggang involves meticulous arrangements and the assembly of various items which are the essential materials for the ritual like what Photo 8 displays. Among these are *setalam*, which consists of carefully arranged piles of clothing, *santun*, which is the offering with banana, egg, and coconut, and *berkat*, offerings in the form of food, such as grilled chicken and vegetables, symbolizing blessings and communal sharing. Another crucial component is *setalam*, a set of seven types of *songket* cloth elegantly presented on a tray.

Burdah and Ngelenggang are able to make sure that the LM language stays sustainable for a prolonged time. Not only the performance, but also the

rest of the cultural elements of the rituals, such as the instruments, the chants, and others, hold important positions that contribute to the maintenance of LM. As a language has the trait of being referential, people and objects in Burdah and Ngelenggang are also given names and these become associated with LM cultural identity.

Table 1. Loloan Malay Lexicons with Semantic Domains of Burdah and Ngelenggang

No.	Lexicon	Phonemic transcription	Meaning
1	<i>Bas</i>	bas	The biggest percussive instrument in Burdah
2	<i>Berzanji</i>	bərzanji	Burdah book
3	<i>Bordal</i>	bordal	Big percussive instrument
4	<i>Hadi</i>	hadi	Burdah vocalist
5	<i>Teplak</i>	təplaʔ	The smallest percussive instrument
6	<i>Santun</i>	santon	Ngelenggang materials
7	<i>Tingkeban</i>	tiŋkəban	Another name of Ngelenggang
8	<i>(Kaen) Setalam</i>	(kam) sətalam	Seven types of songket cloths put on a tray
9	<i>Berkat</i>	bərkət	Souvenir in the form of food
10	<i>Rantasan</i>	rantasan	Piles of clothes as parts of <i>Santun</i>

Source: Collected Loloan Malay Wordlist

Table 1 shows the distinct lexicons associated with Burdah and Ngelenggang. These lexicons not only embody the unique cultural elements of the LM tradition but also serve as a linguistic reservoir that reflects and preserves the community's heritage. The presence of specialized vocabulary in these rituals highlights their integral role in shaping and maintaining the cultural identity of the LM people. Furthermore, these rituals contribute to the evolution and enrichment of the LM language by introducing and sustaining culturally specific terms that might not be found in other contexts.

In the context of religion, the rituals of Burdah and Ngelenggang are deeply imbued with Islamic elements particularly through the use of Islamic terms during chanting and prayers. As shown in Table 2, these rituals demonstrate how Islamic influence is intricately woven into the fabric of the LM linguistic resources. The frequent use of religious terms, often directly borrowed from Arabic or other Islamic linguistic sources, signifies the extent to which Islam has shaped the LM language. These borrowed terms contribute to the building blocks of the LM people.

Table 2. Loloan Malay Lexicons used in Burdah and Ngelenggang

No.	Loloan Malay Lexicon	Phonemic transcription	Arabic Lexicon	Meaning
1	<i>Alim</i>	alim	<i>ilm; alima</i>	Obedient to God
2	<i>Barokah</i>	barokah	<i>barokah</i>	Enjoyment
3	<i>Bisyaroh</i>	bisjaroh	<i>bisjarah</i>	Service fee
4	<i>Gaib</i>	gaib	<i>ghoba</i>	Cannot be seen
5	<i>Hakikat</i>	hakikat	<i>haqqa-yahiqqu</i>	Truth
6	<i>Hakim</i>	hakim	<i>Hakama-yahkumu-hakaman-hakiimun</i>	Judge
7	<i>Istiqomah</i>	istikomah	<i>Istiqooma – Yastaqimu – Istiqoomatan</i>	Consistent
8	<i>Kafir</i>	kafir	<i>kafara-yakfuru-kufran</i>	Somebody without religion
9	<i>Kiamat</i>	kiamat	<i>al-qiyamah</i>	Doom day
10	<i>Qosidah</i>	kosidah	<i>qasidah</i>	Hummed Arabic verses

Source: Collected Loloan Malay Wordlist and Bisri & Munawwir (1999)

Table 2 also shows that LM language is also derived from Arabic mainly for their religious terms. In terms of forms, it can be seen that the LM version has made some adjustments to the spelling. In fact, those words as stated in LM have been included in the Indonesian dictionary. Thus, there is a possibility that those words were adapted into Indonesian and borrowed by the LM.

There are four Burdah verses with each verse containing approximately 30 lines. Also, each verse is accompanied by *pantun* or rhyme poems. The verses and poems are in LM language. The themes of the verses and poems are religious teaching and marriage advice. These themes are brought in hope for a righteous and harmonious husband-wife relationship to always exist after many courses of events, including pregnancy and having children.

Table 3 shows only two lines of each verse in the Burdah book. These lines are in LM language; therefore, singing the Burdah verses means keeping the LM language alive. However, as seen on Photo 2, the performers are elderly; thus, there is a need for regeneration. By documenting and producing a real output, transmission of the verses can be more effective since the verses are oral traditions. These traditions also offer an engaging way to experience and participate in their cultural heritage and motivate them to sustain both the language and the traditions they embody.

Table 3. Excerpts of Burdah Verses from Al Barzanji Book

No.	Lines	Translation	Verse
1	<i>Apa karena ngingati para kekasih di Dzi Salam, Kau campurkan air mata yang mengalir dari bola mata ajak darah? Ataukah karena angin meniup dari arah Kadzhimah? serta kilap ngende di kegelapan Idham ?</i>	Is it because the memory of the beloved ones at Dzi Salam stirs your emotions, blending the tears flowing from your eyes with blood? Or is it due to the wind blowing from the direction of Kadzhimah? And the lightning flashing in the darkness of Idham?	1
2	<i>Karena sesungguhnya keutamaan Rasulullah itu tak ada batasnya, Sehingga orang yang ngucapkan dengan bibir tu gampang ngomongi nabi. Andai an mukjizat Rasulullah dalam keagungan tu sama ajak derajatnya, Maka namanya ketika dipanggil bisa ngidopkan tulang yang ancór.</i>	For indeed, the virtues of Rasulullah (the Prophet Muhammad) are boundless, such that those who merely speak of him with their lips find it easy to describe him. If the miracles of Rasulullah in their magnificence were equal to his true stature, then even his name, when invoked, could bring shattered bones back to life.	2
3	<i>Jangan kau ingkari wahyu dari mimpinya, sebab sesungguhnya dia punya hati yang pas kedua matanya tidur, hatinya dak tidur. Yang git utu ketika sampe' ajak kenabiaannya, maka keadaan orang yang mimpi dak boleh diingkari ajak nabi.</i>	Do not deny the revelation that comes from his dreams, for indeed, he possesses a heart that, even when his eyes are asleep, remains awake. Such is the case when it comes to his prophethood—dreams of a prophet cannot be dismissed or denied.	3
4	<i>Sejuklah mata pembacanya, teros aku ngomong ajak die: sungguan ne kau sudah dapati tali Allah, maka teros an pegangi. Kalo' kau mace dia karena takut panasnya api ladhza, maka sudah kau mati'I panasnya ladhza karena airnya yang dingin</i>	May the eyes of its reader find comfort, and I say to them, "Indeed, you have grasped the rope of Allah, so hold on to it firmly. If you read it out of fear of the blazing heat of the Ladhza fire, then know that you have extinguished its heat with the coolness of its waters."	4

Source: Interview and Documentation of Loloan Community

The recitation of Burdah verses in LM, translated from the original Arabic, underscores the linguistic adaptation and cultural integration unique to the Loloan community. These rituals bring together individuals to engage in practices facilitating the intergenerational transmission of LM because the youths help the senior community during preparation, and they can listen to

the LM language used during the ceremony. This collaborative preparation and performance not only reinforce the communal identity but also ensure the continuity of LM as a living language. Consequently, the existence of these rituals contributes significantly to the preservation of LM, both as a marker of cultural identity and as a medium of linguistic expression.

The lines presented in Table 3 further exemplify the deep integration of Islamic elements within the verses as evidenced by the inclusion of terms such as *Allah*, *Rasulullah* (the Prophet Muhammad), and *Ladhza* (a term referring to hellfire in Islamic theology). These words are inherently religious and hold significant theological and cultural weight within the context of Islam. Their presence within the rituals of Burdah and Ngelenggang emphasize the strong connection between these ceremonial activities and the Islamic faith. This linguistic embedding of Islamic terms not only highlights the rituals' spiritual significance but also reflects the inseparable bond between religion and linguistic identity in the LM community.



Photo 7. Burdah and Ngelenggang Preparation by Loloan Community (Photo: Sosiowati)

Not only the performance, but the preparation of Burdah and Ngelenggang also plays a crucial role in the maintenance of LM as these rituals necessitate the active use of the language within the community. Photo 7 shows the gathering of the Loloan community to prepare the performance of Burdah and Ngelenggang. The preparation plays a crucial role in the maintenance of LM as these rituals necessitate the active use of the language within the community.

They also prepare offerings to smoothen the ritual of Ngelenggang. This is also the time when the community prepares the Ngelenggang material comprising layers of clothes, *keris*, banana, rice, grilled chicken, and so on. This gathering practice is in accordance with the congregation principle by Pauwels (2016). People with minority language when having religious practice regularly gather to engage more freely with each other. Such gatherings have been proven to exist in different communities, such as in Baptist Chinese churches in Western Canada (Han, 2013) and Korean communities in Australia (Joo, Chik, & Djonov, 2024). People, old or young adults, still use LM although there are code-mixings of Indonesian. This is also shown in previous research by Yadnya et al. (2020) which states that LM is a preferred language during gatherings.

Regarding code-mixings, interviews with the community head and elderly residents of Loloan reveal that the population of the area now represents a mixture of ethnic groups drawn to Loloan for various reasons, including employment opportunities, marriage, or long-term residency due to job transfers. These newcomers bring their own local languages, leading to increased language contact with LM. This linguistic interaction, coupled with other external factors, poses a significant challenge to the vitality of LM. One major factor is the dominance of Indonesian as the medium of instruction in schools, as mandated by Law No. 24 of 2009 on the National Flag, Language, Symbols, and Anthem. Chapter 29, paragraph 1 of the law requires Indonesian to be used in national education, limiting the use of LM in formal learning environments. Moreover, language contact and the prevalence of Indonesian contribute to lexical borrowing and structural changes in LM, as evidenced in the wordlists that show influences from other languages. These dynamics collectively threaten the maintenance and vitality of LM, underscoring the need for deliberate efforts to preserve it as a cultural and linguistic heritage.

Languages Influence in Loloan Malay

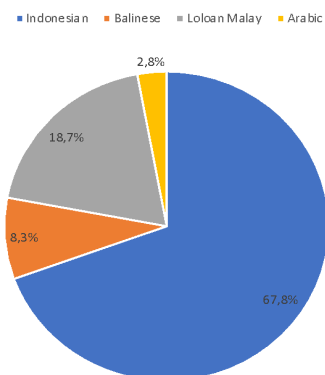


Photo 8. Influences of Languages in Loloan Malay Lexical Resources (Source: Loloan Malay Wordlist collected by Authors)

Chart seen on Photo 8 reveals that 1,163 lexicons in LM are composed of contributions from multiple languages: 67.8% Indonesian lexicons, 8.3% Balinese lexicons, 18.7% native Loloan Malay lexicons, and 2.8% Arabic lexicons. These lexicons span 12 semantic domains, including animals, food, colors, tools, speech, life, the world, agriculture, religion, kinship, emotions, and the body. These percentages were derived from a lexicon taken from Burdah verses, totaling 1,163 words. The lexicon was then recorded with the help of Loloan residents as informants to determine their pronunciation. The words were subsequently analyzed based on their influencing languages, revealing influences from Balinese, Indonesian, and Arabic. The data underscores how LM, over time, has absorbed words from other languages as a result of extensive language contact and sociolinguistic dynamics.

Table 4. Indonesian Influences on Loloan Malay Vocabularies

No.	Indonesian		Loloan Malay		Meaning
	Lexicon	Phonetics	Lexicon	Phonetics	
1.	<i>apabila</i>	apabila	<i>apebile</i>	apəbilə	when
2.	<i>arang</i>	araŋ	<i>areng</i>	arəŋ	coal
3.	<i>neraka</i>	nəra ^h ka	<i>nerake</i>	nəra ^h kə	hell
4.	<i>istana</i>	istana	<i>Istane</i>	istanə	palace
5.	<i>nulis</i>	nulis	<i>noles</i>	nolis	write
6	<i>penyusup</i>	pə ^h ɽusop	<i>penyosop</i>	pə ^h ɽusop	intruder
7.	<i>kelompok</i>	kə ^h lompok	<i>kelompok</i>	kə ^h lompɔ?	group
8.	<i>peluk</i>	pəlɔk	<i>pelok</i>	pəlɔ?	hold
9.	<i>lobang</i>	lobaŋ	<i>lobang</i>	lobaŋ	hole
10.	<i>suruh</i>	suro ^h	<i>Soroh</i>	suro ^h	instruct
11.	<i>penuh</i>	pənɔ ^h	<i>peno</i>	pənɔ	full
12.	<i>tuduh</i>	tudɔ ^h	<i>todoh</i>	todɔ	accuse

Source: Collected Loloan Malay Wordlist

Table 4 shows that LM lexicons have similarity with Indonesian lexicons. The changes take place in Indonesian /a/ which is changed into LM /ə/ both in middle and final position, both in orthography and pronunciation (Table 4: 1,2,3); Indonesian /ɔ/ is changed into LM /o/ (Table 4: 5,6); Indonesian /k/ is changed into LM /ʔ/ (Table 4: 6,7), Indonesian /o/ is changed into LM /ɔ/ (Table 4:9,10); Indonesian /h/ is not pronounced in LM (Table 4: 11,12).

Table 5. Balinese Influence on Loloan Malay Vocabularies

No.	Balinese		Loloan Malay		Meaning
	Lexicon	Phonetics	Lexicon	Phonetics	
1.	<i>aeng</i>	aɛŋ	<i>aeng</i>	aɛŋ	great
2.	<i>anten</i>	anten	<i>anten</i>	anten	bride
3.	<i>bek</i>	bəʔ	<i>bek</i>	bəʔ	full
4.	<i>ngerebek</i>	ŋərəbəʔ	<i>ngerebek</i>	ŋərəbəʔ	abnormal sound
5.	<i>belog</i>	bəlɔg	<i>belog</i>	bəlɔg	stupid
6.	<i>bucu</i>	bucu	<i>bucu</i>	bucu	corner
7.	<i>cedok</i>	cədɔʔ	<i>cedok</i>	cədɔʔ	dipper
8.	<i>dengel</i>	dəŋel	<i>dengel</i>	dəŋel	beautiful
9.	<i>jaran</i>	ʝaran	<i>jaran</i>	ʝaran	horse
10.	<i>lepek</i>	lepeʔ	<i>lepek</i>	lepeʔ	stick stench

Source: Collected Loloan Malay Wordlist

Loloan Malay is also enriched by the Balinese lexicons. The examples in Table 5 show that the Balinese and LM lexicons are similar. In terms of orthography, they are similar, but in terms of meaning, there is a slight shift. There will be no problem when those words are orally used. However, problems will appear when those lexicons are used in written form since there will be misunderstanding due to the wrong way of reading them leading to the creation of different meanings. For examples: the lexicon *ngerebek* [ŋərəbəʔ] ‘abnormal sound’ (especially in the speaker of a sound system) will have different meaning when it is pronounced [ŋərebeʔ] ‘sound like thunder’. In terms of the shift in meaning, the word *dengel* [dəŋel] which means ‘beautiful’ in LM does not only mean ‘beautiful’ in Balinese, but it means ‘beautiful and cute’.

The influence of Arabic on LM has been previously illustrated in Table 2. This linguistic impact is particularly significant in the enrichment of LM vocabulary within the domain of religion. Words such as *barokah* ‘blessing’, *istiqomah* ‘steadfastness in faith’, and *qosidah* ‘a form of Islamic devotional poetry’ are prime examples of this integration. These loanwords reflect the profound connection between Arabic and LM, primarily driven by the historical and cultural transmission of Islamic teachings. The adoption of such terms underscores the pivotal role of Arabic as a linguistic and cultural conduit in shaping religious discourse within the Loloan Malay-speaking community. This phenomenon highlights how the process of lexical borrowing not only enriches the lexicon but also signifies the broader socio-cultural interactions between the Arabic and Malay-speaking worlds. This is aligned with the statement from Mahfud et al. (2021) stating that it is indeed Arabic and languages in Indonesia show a proof of integration and connection because other local languages, such

as Sundanese and Buginese have Arabic loans. The influence of Arabic in the religious domain of a language is also seen in languages outside of Indonesia, such as English (Eremin, 2020).

Table 6. Loloan Malay Native Vocabularies

No.	Lexicon	Transcript	Meaning
1.	ambu	ambu	cloud
2.	awik	awɪʔ	woman traditional veil
3.	basanan	basanan	too much
4.	belantik	bəlantiʔ	fish basket
5.	cabrek	cabrəʔ	torn apart
6.	cekur	cəkʊr	aromatic ginger
7.	darek	darəʔ	monkey
8.	elur	ɪlʊr	saliva
9.	genjeng	genʝɛŋ	quarrel
10.	kacuh	kacuh	stir

Source: Collected Loloan Malay Wordlist

Table 6 presents a selection of lexicons that are distinctly native to Loloan Malay, reflecting its unique linguistic identity. These lexicons are classified as native due to their exclusive derivation from the core Malay language, devoid of any discernible influence or interconnection with Indonesian, Balinese, or Arabic. Their etymological independence underscores the intrinsic linguistic features of Loloan Malay, distinguishing it from surrounding languages and highlighting its role as a repository of authentic Malay expressions. This lexical purity provides valuable insight into the historical and cultural continuity of the Loloan Malay speech community, offering a foundation for further exploration of its linguistic heritage.

This linguistic absorption can be viewed as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the incorporation of external lexicons has made LM a more dynamic and versatile language by enriching its vocabulary and enabling broader communication. On the other hand, this influx poses a threat to LM’s distinctiveness as a unique linguistic system within Indonesia. This risk has been addressed also in other languages which show extensive borrowing or adoption (Ismagilova & Martynova, 2019; Þórdísarson, 2016). The dominance of Indonesian, in particular, risks overshadowing LM’s native elements, which may potentially erode its linguistic identity, especially if children now are exposed more towards Indonesian as stated earlier.

This Indonesian domination also appears in the research of Yoniartini et. al. (2023), but their research stressed that communication within the community makes languages survive. This is exactly what the LM community exhibits

through Burdah and Ngelenggang performance. The LM community also has their own permanent settlement in Bali, although small compared to the Balinese ethnic, as Holmes & Wilson (2022) and Melaku & Semu (2023) stated, communication of speakers who live together can maintain the language as a prevention of going extinct. Therefore, in order to prevent more borrowing or even shifts in the future, communication using LM during community events such as during Burdah and Ngelenggang preparation and procession helps to maintain the language.

As stated in the introduction about LM being a spoken language, this research also shows that LM does not have consistent and standardized orthography. While maintaining the language through documenting wordlist and Burdah verses, it is found that different individuals in the Loloan community produce different orthography for a sound. Table 7 shows the orthographic inconsistency issues.

Table 7. Orthographic Inconsistency in LM

No.	Sound	Orthography options	Examples
1	/ə/	a; e	tiada; tiade
2.	/o/	u; o	tunduk; tondok / tutup; totop
3	/i/	i; e	sedih; sedeh / sakit; saket
4	k	k; ‘	takdir; ta’dir / bawak; bawa’

Source: Documented Loloan Malay Wordlist

The orthographic inconsistency in LM presents a unique opportunity for scholarly documentation as it reflects an important linguistic issue within the community. Recording this variability is crucial as it provides valuable insights into the current state of the LM language. Recognizing the significance of this phenomenon, this research has culminated in the production of the Burdah Book, which is a resource that systematically documents the LM language.

4.2 *Burdah Book as Loloan Malay Maintenance*

The primary output of this research is a comprehensive written documentation of the LM language used in the verses of Burdah and the accompanying poems associated with Burdah and Ngelenggang. This documentation is compiled into a printed book, which serves as a valuable linguistic resource for the Rumah Baca Loloan (Loloan Reading House), which is a result of an initiative led by the community head to encourage Loloan youths to engage in reading and collaborative learning.

The Burdah book, in its original form, has existed as a collection of religious poems in Arabic. However, the version discussed in this study is distinct because

it includes a Loloan Malay translation and description, which did not exist prior to this research. This adaptation is a practical novelty introduced by the study aiming to support the maintenance of Loloan Malay. The inclusion of the photo in the results and discussion section is intended to visually represent this new contribution, not to imply that the translated version predates the research.



Photo 9. Burdah Book as Language Maintenance Medium (Photo: Sosiowati)

By focusing on the language employed in Burdah and Ngelenggang, the book, as seen on Photo 9, provides an accessible medium for the community to study and appreciate the linguistic intricacies and cultural significance of LM. The inclusion of LM texts ensures that the book serves not only as a tool for language maintenance but also as a means of reinforcing cultural identity. Additionally, the book features curated descriptions and photographs to contextualize the performances.

From the perspective of language maintenance to preserve identity, this documentation plays a crucial role in preventing LM from being forgotten. By capturing these oral traditions in written form, this research not only preserves a linguistic artifact but also strengthens the community's connection to its

heritage. This effort is particularly significant in the face of globalization and cultural homogenization, which often pose threats to minority languages and traditions. Moreover, the book acts as an educational and cultural tool that helps to boost intergenerational transmission of knowledge and identity. It ensures that younger generations have access to the linguistic and cultural practices that define their heritage anytime possible; thus, contributing to the continuity of the Loloan identity.

This book represents a significant milestone in the Loloan community's efforts to preserve and care for their linguistic heritage. It is the tangible result of a collaborative endeavor between researchers and the Loloan community. The support from the elders and community leaders of the Loloan community as well as Burdah and Ngelenggang practitioners made it possible for LM to be well integrated in these rituals in order to preserve the language. This collaboration involved a range of activities, including the meticulous documentation of LM wordlists, the translation and verification of Burdah verses from Arabic into LM, and the drafting of the book, which also incorporates detailed descriptions of traditional ceremonies such as Burdah and Ngelenggang.

This cooperative process has not only produced a valuable resource for the community but has also inspired the younger generation of Loloan to take pride in their linguistic and cultural identity. As noted by the community head, the involvement in this project has instilled a sense of pride among the youth, which results in motivating them to actively promote the LM language. As Tangkas & Suari (2023) proved in their research that recognition drives pride and sense of belonging, the recognition through this research of their language and traditions serves as a powerful affirmation of their unique identity. Recognition equals appreciation, and this is brought by the researchers as the fieldworkers as they show dedication towards the community; thus, the community will most likely see great opportunities opening up (Dorian, 1999).

The written documentation also marks a foundational step toward deeper exploration of LM, opening avenues for future scholars to engage with this language across various disciplines and approaches. Budiono & Yanita (2024) emphasize the significance of written documentation initiative as a catalyst for further academic inquiry. Additionally, this book serves as an essential tool for standardizing the LM language, which is a critical step in protecting the linguistic integrity from potential alterations over time. Given that these traditions are transmitted orally, LM and the traditions are particularly vulnerable to changes influenced by human memory and external factors. People may forget the language used and may lose the original LM verses. Rahman & Slamatin Letlora (2018) warn that the absence of written documentation places the language and oral traditions at significant risk of erosion, threatening their survival in the face of modernization and shifting cultural

dynamics. By capturing these rituals in a written form, this book mitigates such risks and ensures the longevity and authenticity of these cherished cultural practices and language used for generations to come.

Producing a religious book in the local language is not a new procedure. The Bible is the ultimate example. It has been a popular step that a Bible is translated to local languages (Avtans, 2022; Currie, 2022; Lao, 2019). Creating religious books in local languages is a long-standing tradition with deep roots, serving as a significant means of both spiritual engagement and linguistic preservation (Openjuru, 2019). A prime example is the Bible, which has been translated into numerous local languages globally. This practice has not only facilitated the spread of Christianity but also contributed significantly to preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages.

For the Loloan Malay community, translating the Burdah book into their local language reflects a similar commitment to preserving linguistic heritage. Originally written in Arabic, the Burdah poems take on a new dimension when adapted into Loloan Malay, making them more accessible and meaningful to the community. This localized version allows the Loloan people to engage with their religious traditions in a language that aligns with their identity while also supporting the maintenance of Loloan Malay. As stated by Barreña et al. (2005), religious institutions and leaders have an obvious influence to choose a language in the religious domain; thus, the language maintenance is ensured. By integrating the language into the sacred and ritualistic context of Burdah performances, the community ensures that it remains vibrant and relevant, particularly for younger generations who might otherwise be drawn to dominant external languages.

In summary, translating religious texts into local languages, as seen with the Bible and the Burdah book in Loloan Malay, is an effective approach to language preservation. It not only deepens the spiritual connection of the community but also secures the continued use and transmission of the local language. This approach underscores the potential of religious materials to act as catalysts for language maintenance.

5. Conclusion

The Loloan Malay language, as a reflection of Loloan identity, is actively preserved through the oral traditions of Burdah and Ngelenggang, which serve as cultural pillars in the community. These traditions embody the core values that shape Loloan identity, reinforcing cultural knowledge while using LM as the primary medium of expression. By engaging in these rituals, the community strengthens the connection between language and heritage, ensuring that LM remains a living linguistic entity.

Burdah and Ngelenggang play a crucial role in language maintenance, serving as platforms where LM is actively used in various ways: naming cultural materials, reciting Burdah verses and poems in LM, and facilitating community communication in the language. Additionally, the way Burdah players dress reflects Islamic cultural values, further emphasizing the religious and linguistic ties within these traditions. As long as these rituals continue, LM remains vibrant and alive.

A key characteristic of LM is that it has been shaped by borrowings from Indonesian and Balinese, while also being strongly influenced by Arabic, particularly through religious texts and practices. Despite its rich linguistic influences, LM exhibits inconsistent orthography, making its written documentation even more essential for preservation and standardization. Within Burdah and Ngelenggang lexicons, 12 semantic domains have been identified: animals, food, colors, tools, speech, life, the world, agriculture, religion, kinship, and the body. These domains reflect the breadth of LM vocabulary used in daily life and religious discourse, further reinforcing its role as a marker of cultural continuity.

The role of these traditions in maintaining Loloan Malay's vitality is particularly critical in an era where formal education and other domains have shifted predominantly to Indonesian. Burdah and Ngelenggang provide intergenerational spaces for LM communication, ensuring that the language remains in active use. These traditions not only foster unity but also prevent LM from experiencing language shift or loss.

Moreover, external efforts, such as academic research on LM, have encouraged the community to take an active role in language promotion. One of the most significant contributions is the creation of a pioneering book in LM, which serves as a linguistic and cultural resource. This book marks an important step in preserving and revitalizing LM, providing a written record for future generations. Through the intertwined efforts of tradition and scholarly support, LM continues to thrive as a distinct marker of cultural and linguistic identity.

This study focuses on documenting language and cultural practices within the religious domain, offering valuable insights into the interplay between language, culture, and religion. However, these rituals represent only one facet of the Loloan community's rich linguistic heritage. A broader documentation encompassing other linguistic and cultural domains is necessary to fully capture the depth of LM maintenance. Future research is encouraged to address these gaps, exploring additional linguistic, social, and cultural domains to contribute to a holistic understanding of Loloan Malay's linguistic and cultural identity.

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*) Author's Note: Pórdísarson is a name and the first character is truly from the name of the author. It produces sound /th/.

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