

Semiotic Interpretation of the “Munggah Molo” Tradition as a Framework for Local Literacy Education

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to describe semiotic interpretations within the Munggah Molo tradition and identify its potential as a framework for local literacy education. The methodology was tailored to the data sources, which included cultural phenomena, traditional symbols, visual documentation, and observational findings in Punggulrejo, Rengel, Tuban, East Java. The data are qualitative in nature, consisting of multimodal texts verbal narratives, visual images, and the context of cultural phenomena in the field). Data analysis was conducted using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory, which encompasses denotation, connotation, and myth, as well as the local literacy perspective by Barton and Hamilton. The research findings indicate that various requirements in the Munggah Molo tradition, such as market snacks (*jajan pasar*), roasted chicken (*pitik ingkung*), tumpeng, sugarcane, coconuts, umbrellas, a bundle of rice, a bunch of bananas, and the Indonesia flag, carry religious, social, moral, ecological, agrarian, and nationalistic meanings. In addition to serving as ritual paraphernalia, these symbols also function as a medium for the transmission of Javanese cultural knowledge. The research findings indicate that the Munggah Molo tradition possesses strong potential as a source and framework for contextual local literacy education to strengthen students' character, cultural identity, and awareness of local wisdom.

Keywords: Munggah Molo, Semiotic, Local Literacy.

INTRODUCTION

The Munggah Molo tradition, a Javanese custom, is observed when house construction reaches the stage of erecting the roof frame (or molo) as the central structural element of the building (Wahyuni & Musdalifah, 2025). In various regions of Java, this tradition is known by different names, including Munggah Suwunan and Slametan Adheg Omah. This tradition is not only interpreted as a series of rituals in house construction but also as an expression of gratitude to God, respect for ancestral values, and hopes for safety and well-being for the home's inhabitants (Ratnawati & Suparta, 2022).

In its practice, Mungguh Molo incorporates various cultural symbols such as tumpeng, agricultural produce, coconut leaves, communal prayers, and other ritual items rich in philosophical meaning. The relationships between the Javanese people and God, others, and the surrounding environment are embodied in those symbols (Gunawan et al., 2024). As one of the intangible cultural heritages, the Mungguh Molo tradition holds educational value that can be utilized as a medium for local literacy education (Minsih et al., 2025). Local literacy is not only related to the ability to read and understand information but also to the ability to recognize, interpret, and preserve the knowledge and cultural wisdom that has developed within the community (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Through an understanding of the Mungguh Molo tradition, the younger generation can gain knowledge regarding the values of mutual cooperation, gratitude, togetherness, and the philosophy of life passed down through generations by the Javanese people (Latuconsina & Syaidah, 2022).

To understand the meanings embedded in the various symbols and signs of the Mungguh Molo tradition, an approach is needed that can uncover the meanings behind these cultural practices. One relevant approach is semiotics, including Roland Barthes's semiotics, as it offers in-depth analysis at the levels of language, myth, and culture (Barthes, 2004). Semiotics is the study of signs, symbols, and meanings used by humans in the processes of communication and socio-cultural life (Noth, 2006). In a cultural context, semiotics allows researchers to interpret the various symbols that appear within a tradition and to understand the messages that its community seeks to convey (Barthes, 1988).

This study analyzes semiotic interpretation within the Mungguh Molo tradition as a form of local literacy education. Semiotic analysis is used to identify and interpret the various signs, symbols, and meanings found in each stage of the Mungguh Molo tradition. Through this approach, meanings that have long been passed down orally can be documented and understood more systematically, thereby serving as a relevant learning resource for the community, particularly the younger generation.

Studies on the Mungguh Molo tradition and local literacy are rarely conducted, given the declining public understanding of the philosophical meanings of various local traditions due to technological advancements, modernization, and changes in people's lifestyles. One study related to Mungguh Molo is by Wahyuni & Musdalifah (2025), which focuses on the Mungguh Suwunan tradition; the difference in analysis lies in the use of semiotic theory, which is not directly related to local literacy. Research related to semiotics and education includes that by Salahuddin (2023), who examined the use of posters in pedagogy; of course, the differences between that study and this one lie in the research objectives, subjects, and approaches employed. Furthermore, research on local

literacy in Indonesia includes studies on the relationship between hermeneutics and Quranic exegesis in the context of digital literacy. Through this research, the researcher observed that the proliferation of hermeneutical studies in Indonesia is often linked to Quranic exegesis as part of local and digital literacy (Imron & Walad, 2025).

Therefore, this study is expected to provide a novel contribution to efforts in preserving local culture while simultaneously strengthening the cultural literacy of the community through the revelation of symbolic meanings found within the Mungguh Molo tradition. This study not only enriches semiotic analysis within the realm of local culture but also serves as an alternative source of contextual local literacy education. Thus, the Mungguh Molo tradition is not merely viewed as a cultural heritage that needs to be preserved but also as a source of knowledge that can be utilized to instill cultural values, character, and local identity in future generations.

METHOD

The research method was tailored to the data, data sources, and research objectives. The data in this study fall under the category of qualitative data, specifically multimodal texts comprising language, images, context, and field phenomena of the Mungguh Molo tradition. Data sources were obtained through observations conducted at the location where the Mungguh Molo tradition takes place, namely in the village of Punggulrejo, Rengel Subdistrict, Tuban Regency, East Java. The stages of this study are: 1) selecting the research topic, 2) selecting the research focus, 3) selecting appropriate theories, 4) designing the research, 5) collecting research data, 6) analyzing the data, and 7) drawing conclusions from the analyzed data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009).

This study employs an ethnographic research design based on Spradley's (1997) framework, supplemented by a literature review. Informant selection was based on five criteria: having undergone full enculturation, being directly involved with the research subject, having sufficient time, maintaining a non-analytical perspective, and understanding the cultural context under study. The research informant was a community leader, Abdul Rochim, who played a leading role in the *Mungguh Molo* procession. Sudikan, (2001) explains that cultural research need not limit the number of informants, as the quantity is determined by the research objectives. Data collection was conducted through interviews, recording, and note-taking. Danandjaya, (2002) distinguishes between directed and non-directed interviews, approaches that should be combined, starting with non-directed interviews to obtain an open, general overview, followed by directed interviews based on pre-formulated questions. Recordings were made with careful attention to the informant's comfort, timing, atmosphere, equipment

positioning, and sound conditions to ensure data clarity (Hutomo, 1991). Documentation included the date and location of the recording, community conditions, recording type, the recorder's identity, and the informant's details, such as name, age, gender, occupation, education, ethnicity, daily language, and social status (Hutomo, 1991). Transcription followed the EYD (Enhanced Indonesian Spelling) 5th Edition in effect since August 16, 2022 as the interviews were conducted in Indonesian. Triangulation was achieved through observation, interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions (FGD).

The data obtained were then analyzed using Roland Barthes's semiotics and the local literacy perspective of Barton & Hamilton. There are three components in Barthes's semiotic theory: denotation, connotation, and myth (Safira & Sunarto, 2022). Denotation refers to the objective facts perceived by the eye, while connotation is the interpretive derivation of what emerges from denotation (Rahmawati, 2022). Although connotation possesses the inherent nature of a sign, when interpreting or analyzing that sign, the researcher must possess the necessary insights to ensure that the connotation gives rise to new interpretations and assumptions, which are then termed myths (Wicaksono & Fitriyani, 2021).

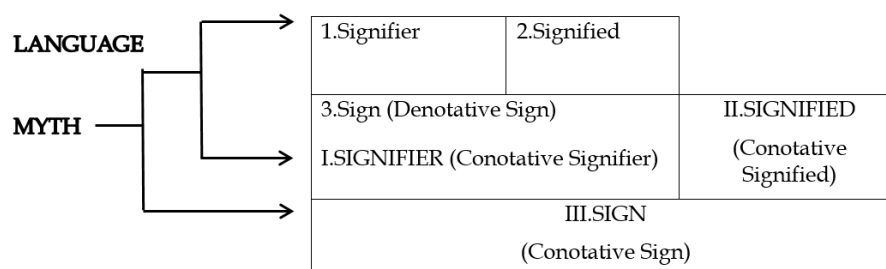


Figure 1. A concept map of semiotics from Roland Barthes' perspective.

From Barthes's diagram above, it can be seen that a denotative sign consists of a signifier and a signified; furthermore, denotation is also a connotative sign (Rusmana, 2014). Denotation occupies the first level, and Barthes associates the sign with representing the true meaning of an idea or concept (Wulansari et al., 2020). Meanwhile, connotation is a meaning that can produce a second layer of meaning that is implicit, hidden, or connotative (Eco, 2009).

Studies in semiotics, literary texts, language, culture, and anthropology converge on a concept known as "new literacy" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). According to Barton and Hamilton (1998), "local literacies" are grounded in the field of new literacy studies, one of which is the starting point of literary theory within literacy studies (Triwardhani et al., 2023). Literacy is not merely about reading or writing; both are present in various contexts

(Lailiya et al., 2025). Literacy encompasses all accompanying experiences, such as everyday texts, expressions, and literature possessed by students (Darmastuti et al., 2019). Barton & Hamilton, in their perspective on local literacy, also emphasize the diverse ways individuals use literacy skills in daily life (Rowsell & Pahl, 2015). Reading and writing practices often take place in specific environments such as the home, school, community centers, or cultural settings like digital video games (Ge et al., 2026).

This indicates that phenomena occurring within a cultural context particularly those related to real-world practices demonstrate that local literacy is indeed thriving and can serve as a tangible, living educational resource within the community. Such educational materials are easier for students to learn because they are not confined to the context of textbooks; consequently, field-based learning helps provide students with real-world experiences (Maranta et al., 2023). The focus of this research then becomes clear: when a phenomenon has been analyzed through a specific perspective (in this case, semiotics and local literacy studies), the results of this reading, interpretation, and analysis are highly useful in supporting student learning and providing insights regarding the application or development of the Munggah Molo cultural phenomenon within local literacy studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Munggah Molo tradition is understood not only as a series of ceremonial activities in the process of building Javanese homes, but also as a system of symbols that embodies philosophical, social, religious, and cultural values. Every object used as a requirement in this tradition holds symbolic meaning passed down through generations and is understood by the community as a representation of hopes, prayers, and an ideal worldview. Therefore, to uncover the hidden meanings behind these various symbols, the following is an analysis using Roland Barthes’s semiotic approach.

An Analysis of the Philosophical Symbolism of the Ritual Objects Used in the “Munggah Molo” Tradition

Through this approach, various elements in the Munggah Molo tradition—such as market snacks, ingkung chicken, tumpeng, sugarcane, coconuts, umbrellas, a bundle of rice, a bunch of bananas, and the red-and-white flag—can be interpreted as cultural symbols representing the values of Javanese society.

A semiotic analysis was conducted to identify the relationship between the physical forms of these objects and the cultural messages they convey. Thus, this study not only describes the function of these objects as ritual paraphernalia but also reveals the living and evolving local knowledge system within the community that upholds the Munggah Molo tradition.

1. *Jajan Pasar* (Traditional Javanese Snacks or Desserts)

The first analysis focuses on the symbolic meaning or philosophical signs embedded in one of the customary requirements of the “Munggah Molo” tradition. The Javanese community believes that *jajan pasar* symbolizes various aspects of life, ranging from kinship and social relationships to human existence itself. *Jajan pasar* is also regarded as a symbol of “*saratan winadi*,” which signifies a virtuous offering or almsgiving intended to ensure safety and well-being in life, particularly spiritual protection and protection from disturbances caused by *lelembut* (astral beings). In addition, *jajan pasar* represents the hope that people will engage in “*serawung*” (social interaction and harmonious association with others). This meaning is reflected in the way different varieties of *jajan pasar* are presented together in a single container, symbolizing unity amid diversity. Furthermore, *jajan pasar* is associated with prosperity because the market, as the source of these traditional snacks, is a place abundant with goods and sustenance.

Lho, jajan pasar iku kan saratan winadi, biar selamat tidak ada lelembut (Rochim, 2023)

Wait, *jajan pasar* is a *saratan winadi*, so that we remain safe and are not disturbed by *lelembut* (Rochim, 2023)

This analysis finds that Javanese beliefs, particularly among the people of Punggulrejo, regard *jajan pasar* as food and a form of *sedekah* (charitable offering) whose distribution symbolizes the sharing of blessings with the surrounding community, including supernatural beings such as spirits and other non-human entities, as a way of sharing sustenance, happiness, and gratitude. This finding constitutes a novelty in the results and discussion, distinguishing the present study from previous research, particularly Wahyuni and Musdalifah (2025) and Salahuddin (2023). Wahyuni and Musdalifah (2025) focused primarily on the forms and procession of *Munggah Suwunan*, which carry different meanings, while Salahuddin (2023) focused on the integration of religious values within the tradition.



Figure 2. *Jajan pasar* consisting of various traditional snacks such as *onde-onde*, *putu ayu*, *gethuk*, *lumpia*, and others, which, despite their diversity, are presented together in a single container.

Table 1. Roland Barthes’ Semiotic Analysis of *Jajan Pasar* as a Requirement in the “Munggah Molo” Tradition

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A variety of traditional snacks commonly sold in traditional markets and consumed as refreshments. These snacks differ in shape, color, taste, and type, yet they are placed together in a single container and served collectively as one unified presentation.	The diverse assortment of <i>jajan pasar</i> symbolizes the diversity of human beings. Although individuals differ in characteristics, backgrounds, and identities, they coexist, interact, and unite within the shared space of social life. In the “Munggah Molo” tradition, <i>jajan pasar</i> represents almsgiving, brotherhood, kindness, and social harmony, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and mutual support in creating a harmonious community.	The community believes that <i>jajan pasar</i> holds an essential symbolic role within the tradition. Its absence is thought to signify a lack of brotherhood, mutual cooperation, and social interaction among community members, values that are embodied by <i>jajan pasar</i> . Since the construction of a house traditionally requires collective participation and assistance from neighbors and relatives, <i>jajan pasar</i> serves as a cultural symbol reinforcing the importance of solidarity, cooperation, and communal support.

2. Ayam Inkung (Traditional Javanese Main Dish)

The second analysis focuses on the symbolic meaning and philosophical signs embedded in one of the customary requirements of the “Munggah Molo” tradition, namely Ayam Inkung. Ayam Inkung carries the meaning of protection and care (*mengayomi*), derived from the words “*jinakung*” and “*manekung*” in Old Javanese, which refer to praying or offering supplications. Chicken was chosen as the primary ingredient because it possesses a distinctive symbolic significance. In the past, chicken was commonly used as an offering because it was regarded as a symbol of human beings. This symbolism is reflected in the belief that chickens do not consume everything available to them indiscriminately; instead, they select what is suitable and avoid what is not. Through this symbolism, humans are reminded to distinguish between good and bad choices in life and to embrace what is beneficial while rejecting what is harmful.

Furthermore, Ayam Inkung is served whole in a crouching or bowing position. This posture conveys a deeper philosophical meaning, representing human humility before God. It symbolizes the attitude of lowering oneself, surrendering, and praying sincerely to the Creator:

Kalau ayam ingkung itu mas, tujuannya supaya jadi doa, ayam ingkung itukan jinakung dan manekung (Rochim, 2023)

Regarding the *ayam ingkung* bro, its purpose is to serve as a prayer. *Ayam ingkung* comes from the words *jinakung* and *manekung* (Rochim, 2023)

Ayam ingkung based on its etymological origin constitutes a distinguishing feature and a novel finding of this study. This differs from previous research on the *Munggah Surwunan* tradition, in which *ayam ingkung* was interpreted differently.



Figure 3. Traditional Javanese Ayam Ingkung, in which both the choice of chicken as the primary ingredient and its serving position embody specific philosophical meanings.

Table 2. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of *Ayam Ingkung* as a Requirement in the "Munggah Molo" Tradition.

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A traditional dish consisting of a whole chicken cooked with various spices and seasonings and served together with vegetables on a platter. The chicken is presented in the characteristic <i>ingingkung</i> position. Both the choice of chicken as the main ingredient and the manner in which it is served carry particular meanings and philosophical values.	The connotations arising from the ingredients, form, and presentation of <i>Ayam Ingkung</i> suggest that individuals performing the "Munggah Molo" tradition, particularly those building a house, are encouraged to embrace goodness in life and continuously pray with humility before God. The dish symbolizes the aspiration to accept beneficial influences, reject harmful ones, and maintain a sincere relationship with the Divine through prayer and self-reflection.	The myth embraced by the community and formed through these connotations is that <i>Ayam Ingkung</i> serves as a symbolic offering and a reminder of moral conduct. Within the "Munggah Molo" tradition, the chicken symbolizes the importance of accepting only good things and rejecting negative influences, reflecting the perceived behavior of chickens in selecting what they consume. In addition, the bowing posture of the chicken reinforces the belief that people should remain humble, avoid arrogance, and always submit themselves respectfully before God.

3. Tumpeng (Hidangan Utama Khas Jawa)

The next analysis concerns the symbolic meaning and philosophical signs embedded in one of the customary requirements of the "Munggah Molo" tradition, namely tumpeng. In Javanese society, tumpeng symbolizes the relationship between God and human beings, as well as the relationship among fellow humans. The philosophy of tumpeng is closely associated with the values of tolerance, sincerity, nobility of character, and admiration for the greatness of God Almighty.

When observed carefully, the cone-shaped form of *tumpeng*, surrounded by side dishes and vegetables, represents the ecosystem of life. The towering cone symbolizes the majesty of God the Creator, while the various side dishes and vegetables surrounding it symbolize the richness and abundance of nature. In addition, the colors commonly found in *tumpeng* (white and yellow) carry different meanings. White symbolizes purity, whereas yellow represents prosperity and noble morality:

Lha kalau tumpeng itu kan, kamu lihat bentuknya seperti gunung, kerucut, artinya Tuhan Maha Esa, Maha Tinggi (Rochim, 2023)

As for *tumpeng*, you can see that its shape resembles a mountain, a cone, symbolizing that God is One and Almighty (Rochim, 2023)

The interpretation of the form and symbolism of *tumpeng* differs slightly from that of the *Mungguh Suwunan* tradition, in which previous research primarily focused on the mountain as a symbol of the dwelling place of gods and goddesses.



Figure 4. Traditional Javanese *tumpeng*, consisting of cone-shaped rice in yellow or white, surrounded by various side dishes, each of which carries its own philosophical meaning.

Table 3. Roland Barthes’ Semiotic Analysis of *Tumpeng* in the “Mungguh Molo” Tradition

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A dish consisting of cone-shaped rice, either yellow or white, surrounded by various side dishes. This dish is known as <i>tumpeng</i> and is commonly found at communal thanksgiving ceremonies (<i>selametan</i>). The mountain-like shape of the rice, together with the abundant side dishes beneath it, resembles the abundance of nature’s bounty.	<i>Tumpeng</i> connotes both a religious relationship between humans and God and a social relationship among fellow human beings. The cone-shaped form symbolizes divine unity and a vertical relationship with God. Meanwhile, the various side dishes arranged harmoniously around the base symbolize human beings and their horizontal relationships with one another.	The community believes that a thanksgiving ceremony is incomplete without <i>tumpeng</i> because it serves as a symbolic representation of both the human–God relationship and human–human relationships. To attain safety, prosperity, and happiness in this world and the hereafter, individuals must maintain harmony both vertically with God and horizontally with fellow humans.

4. Sugarcane (The Raw Material for Granulated Sugar)

The following analysis concerns the tradition of munggah molo, in which sugarcane is pulled up by its roots. Sugarcane was one of the most widely cultivated crops during the colonial era; for the lower classes of Javanese society at that time, they could only eat the sugarcane pulp, while the juice was used to make sugar. Consequently, sugarcane was considered a valuable commodity and could only be enjoyed by certain groups:

Tebu iku kan dulunya, biyen, itu tanaman perkebunan pas zaman Belanda. Kalau sekarang diniati agar manis nasib nya, kayak tebu (Rochim, 2023)

In the past, during the Dutch colonial era, sugarcane was a plantation crop. Nowadays, it is used with the intention of bringing sweetness to one's fate, like sugarcane (Rochim, 2023)

This study demonstrates how elements of nature are interpreted as prayers and hopes, aligning with Salahuddin's (2023) finding that the tradition is consistent with religious beliefs, specifically Islam in both studies. Furthermore, this study offers a novel finding by revealing prayers and hopes for the future that are expressed through and aligned with the symbolism of nature.



Figure 5. Sugarcane, a major raw material for sugar production and an important livelihood commodity for Javanese society, especially during the colonial era.

Table 4. Roland Barthes's Semiotic Analysis of the Traditional "Munggah Molo" Ritual, Specifically the Sugarcane

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
The illustration depicts sugarcane that has been pulled up by the roots and placed on the roof	The uprooted sugarcane symbolizes the hope that the family will remain steadfast (istiqamah) in performing good deeds, just as the base of the sugarcane firmly supports the stalk.	Sugarcane is regarded as a representation of life itself, reminding families to remain steadfast and united in facing challenges and hardships together.

5. Coconut (A Plant Commonly Used in Javanese Cuisine)

The following analysis examines the munggah molo tradition in relation to the symbol of the coconut. The coconut is a plant commonly found in coastal areas and has become an integral part of Indonesian (Nusantara) culture, including Javanese culture, and even more broadly, Austronesian culture:

Kelapa itukan semua bagiannya bisa di gunakan toh mas, lha kenapa yang dipilih kok buahnya, karena tunas itu munculnya dari situ mas, jadi lambang masa depan (Rochim, 2023)

Coconut trees can be used in their entirety, but why is the fruit chosen? Because the sprout emerges from it, symbolizing the future (Rochim, 2023)

The coconut is symbolized based on the benefits it provides and the qualities it embodies. This interpretation distinguishes the present study from previous research while also showing a strong connection with Salahuddin’s (2023) finding that the purpose of this tradition is aligned with religious values.



Figure 6. Coconut, a plant widely used in Indonesian cuisine and a characteristic Austronesian coastal plant.

Table 5. Roland Barthes’s semiotic analysis of the traditional “Munggah Molo” ritual, specifically the coconut

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A coconut is placed on the roof and tied to one of the house pillars along with other ceremonial objects.	The coconut symbolizes the hope that the family will become strong and beneficial to others, just as every part of the coconut tree has practical value and usefulness.	The coconut tree is considered a representation of a meaningful life. Because every part of the tree is useful, people believe that human life should likewise provide benefits to others.

6. Umbrella (An Item Often Used in Javanese Traditional Ceremonies)

The following analysis examines the munggah molo tradition in relation to the symbol of the umbrella. The umbrella is an object frequently used in Javanese traditional ceremonies, spanning all stages of human life, from marriage and birth to coming-of-age rituals and death:

Sesuai adatnya orang Jawa mas, payung itu jadi pelindung, ya pelindung saat lahir, nikah, bangun rumah, sampai nanti meninggal (Rochim, 2023)

According to Javanese customs, bro, the umbrella serves as a form of protection, protecting us from birth, through marriage and building a house, and ultimately until death (Rochim, 2023)

The umbrella is closely associated with Javanese traditions, which is also consistent with research on *Munggah Suwunan*, as both studies reveal that the umbrella symbolizes

protection. However, the present study further elaborates on the role of the umbrella, extending from birth and marriage to death.



Figure 7. Traditional Javanese umbrellas are now rarely seen, and Munggah Molo often uses modern umbrellas.

Table 6. Roland Barthes’s semiotic analysis of the traditional “Munggah Molo” umbrella.

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
The denotation of the illustration is an umbrella placed on the roof of a house during the Munggah Molo ceremony.	The connotation arising from this denotation is that the umbrella serves as a symbol signifying that the Creator of the universe will protect and bestow His grace upon the family living in that house, so that they may live in prosperity.	A myth that has arisen from this connotation is the belief that an umbrella serves as a protective symbol against all dangers and disasters

7. A Bundle of Rice (Rice is the Staple Food in Java)

The bundle of rice used in the Munggah Molo tradition is typically a bundle of harvested rice tied together with string or woven coconut leaves. This bundle of rice is then placed on top of the offerings prepared for the ceremony. During the Munggah Molo ceremony, the bundle of rice is hoisted onto the roof of a house or a sacred site using a rope tied to it. Once on the roof, the bundle is then secured atop a bale or a prepared pole:

Makanan kita itu ya ini, beras, seikat beras itu jadi harapan agar selalu punya makanan (Rochim, 2023)
 Our staple food is rice. A bundle of rice represents the hope that we will always have food (Rochim, 2023)

Rice is interpreted as an essential source of food and as a form of hope that the family will always have sufficient sustenance. Meanwhile, previous research on the *Munggah Surwuhan* tradition found that rice is interpreted as a symbol of human character, reflecting the principle that the more one possesses or knows, the more humble one should become.



Figure 8. Rice is the staple food of the Javanese people and is often associated with fertility, prosperity, and justice in various aspects of Javanese culture.

Table 7. Roland Barthes’s semiotic analysis of the traditional “Mungguh Molo” ritual, specifically a bundle of rice.

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A sheaf of white rice symbolizes a recently harvested crop; it represents the agricultural produce and natural resources owned by the community.	In the Mungguh Molo tradition, a bundle of white rice symbolizes fertility, abundance, and success in farming.	In the mungguh molo tradition, a bundle of white rice is also considered a symbol of respect for ancestors. This is because rice has been a vital food source and the foundation of life for communities in Indonesia since ancient times. Therefore, rice is seen as a symbol of survival and success in farming.

8. A Cluster of Bananas (A Plant Often Used in Javanese Traditional Ceremonies)

A bunch of bananas is typically one of the items paraded in the Mungguh Molo tradition. A “bunch of bananas” refers to a cluster of bananas that is still intact and tied together with its leaves. In this tradition, a bunch of bananas is considered a symbol of fertility, good fortune, and abundance. The bunches of bananas paraded in the Mungguh Molo tradition are usually decorated with various flowers and other fruits:

Pisang itu juga hampir semua bagian nya bermanffat, selain itu untuk tumbuh pisang baru juga mudah, dengan tunas, jadi pisang ini simbol kesuburan (Rochim, 2023)

Bananas are also beneficial in almost every part. Moreover, banana plants can easily produce new plants through shoots, so bananas symbolize fertility (Rochim, 2023)

In this study, the interpretation of bananas as a symbol of fertility constitutes a novel finding, as previous research on *Mungguh Suwunan* interpreted bananas as representing the hope of being beneficial, like the usefulness of all parts of the banana plant.



Gambar 9. Bananas, a plant frequently used in Javanese *selametan* ceremonies as a symbol of safety and smooth progress in life.

Table 8. Roland Barthes’s semiotic analysis of the traditional “Munggah Molo” ritual, specifically regarding bananas

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A bunch of bananas is a cluster of bananas tied together with a banana leaf serving as the binding.	A bunch of bananas holds deep symbolic meaning in Javanese tradition. It is regarded as a symbol of success and achievement. Furthermore, a bunch of bananas also symbolizes togetherness and unity, as the bananas bound together represent unity within the family.	There are several myths associated with bunches of bananas in Javanese tradition. One of these myths is that a bunch of bananas must be carried properly and tied securely so that it does not come loose or fall, because if this happens, it can bring bad luck or misfortune to the person carrying it.

9. The Red and White Flag (National Emblem of the Republic of Indonesia/National Identity)

In the context of the Munggah Molo ceremony, the red-and-white flag also symbolizes gratitude and respect for the ancestors who played a pivotal role in the formation of the Indonesian nation. In the Munggah Molo tradition, the red-and-white flag is paraded by young people who play a vital role in preserving and maintaining Javanese culture and customs. This procession of the red-and-white flag is accompanied by gamelan music and traditional Javanese songs, which add to the ceremony’s vibrancy and solemnity:

Kita kan orang Indonesia, sebagai wujud cinta tanah air, tempat rumah didirikan simbolnya bendera Indonesia (Rochim, 2023)

We are Indonesian, so as an expression of love for our homeland, the Indonesian flag symbolizes the place where the house is built (Rochim, 2023).

This study demonstrates that the tradition also embodies meanings related to nationalism, national identity, and love for the homeland. The findings reveal a new relationship between the tradition and statehood, distinguishing this study from the two previous studies.



Gambar 10. The national flag as a symbol of Indonesian identity, reflecting national responsibility and patriotism.

Table 9. Roland Barthes’s semiotic analysis of the traditional “Mungguh Molo” flag.

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
The red-and-white flag consists of two colors: red, which symbolizes courage and spirit, and white, which symbolizes purity and sanctity. In the Mungguh Molo tradition, the flag is placed on the house as a symbol of the Indonesian nation.	In addition to symbolizing courage, spirit, purity, and sanctity, the red-and-white flag represents national unity and love for the homeland. Its presence in the Mungguh Molo tradition signifies that the construction of a house is not merely a personal or family event but can also be connected to broader national identity.	The use of the red-and-white flag in the Mungguh Molo tradition constructs a myth of cultural and national continuity. The involvement of young people in carrying and placing the flag can be understood as a symbolic representation of the younger generation's role in sustaining cultural traditions and national identity. Thus, the flag does not merely represent the Indonesian state but also naturalizes the idea that cultural heritage and national values should be continuously passed on to future generations.

Analysis of the Local Cultural Value of the “Mungguh Molo” Tradition and Its Implementation in Education

Following a semiotic analysis of the various elements within the Mungguh Molo tradition, the next step is to identify the potential of these values as a source of local literacy. The perspective on local literacy proposed by Barton and Hamilton views literacy as not limited solely to reading and writing, but as encompassing social practices, cultural knowledge, symbols, values, traditions, and life experiences that develop within a community. In this context, the Mungguh Molo tradition can be understood as a cultural literacy practice that embodies the Javanese community’s local knowledge regarding the relationship between humans and God, fellow humans, nature, and the values of life passed down through generations.

Through an analysis of local literacy, each requirement within the Mungguh Molo tradition is viewed as a contextual learning medium that can be used to introduce values such as religiosity, mutual cooperation, ecological wisdom, cultural identity, and even nationalism to students. The results of the analysis indicate that all symbols within the Mungguh Molo tradition contain cultural knowledge relevant for integration into locally-based cultural learning, so that students not only understand culture as a heritage but also as a living source of learning within the community.

Table 10. Local Cultural Value of the “Mungguh Molo” Tradition and Its Implementation in Education

No.	Requirements	Local Literacy Values	Implementation in Learning
1	Jajan Pasar	Social literacy and diversity literacy. The variety of traditional snacks presented together in a single container teaches the values of togetherness, tolerance, and mutual cooperation in community life.	Students observe a video or photograph of the jajan pasar procession and write a short reflection on how the variety of snacks represents diversity, togetherness, and mutual cooperation.
2	Ayam Inkung	Religious and moral literacy. It teaches humility, the ability to distinguish between good and bad behavior, and the importance of prayer in daily life.	Students write a short personal reflection on how prayer, humility, and good behavior can be practiced in their daily lives after discussing the meaning of ayam ingkung.
3	Tumpeng	Religious and social literacy. It represents the relationship between humans and God as well as harmonious relationships among fellow human beings.	Students create a simple diagram showing the relationship between humans, God, and fellow human beings based on the symbolism of tumpeng, followed by a brief explanation.
4	Sugarcane	Character literacy and life resilience. It symbolizes steadfastness (istiqamah), perseverance, and sincerity in facing life's challenges.	Students write a short narrative about a personal challenge and identify how perseverance, consistency, and sincerity can help them overcome it, relating their reflection to the symbolism of sugarcane.
5	Coconut	Ecological literacy and social usefulness. It teaches that every aspect of life should provide benefits to the surrounding environment and society.	Students identify the different uses of the coconut plant and create a short poster explaining how natural resources can be used sustainably and benefit society.
6	Umbrella	Religious literacy and social protection. It symbolizes hope for divine protection and a prosperous life.	Students discuss situations in which people need protection and write three examples of how they can protect or support others in their family, school, or community.

Semiotic Interpretation of the “Mungguh Molo” Tradition as a Framework for Local Literacy Education

No.	Requirements	Local Literacy Values	Implementation in Learning
7	A Bundle of Rice Stalks	Agrarian literacy and respect for ancestors. It contains knowledge related to agriculture, fertility, and the sustainability of community life.	Students observe rice cultivation through photographs or video and create a short explanation of the relationship between rice, food security, and community life, including the importance of preserving agrarian traditions.
8	A Bunch of Bananas	Family literacy and togetherness. It symbolizes unity, success, and solidarity within families and communities.	Students work in small groups to identify examples of cooperation in their families or communities and present how these practices reflect unity and solidarity.
9	The Red-and-White Flag (Indonesian Flag)	National literacy and national identity. It reflects patriotism, unity, and responsibility as citizens.	Students write a short reflection on how preserving local traditions can contribute to national identity and present one action they can take to appreciate both local culture and Indonesian national identity.

The Mungguh Molo tradition has been shown to contain various forms of knowledge relevant as a source of contextual learning. The values identified include social, religious, moral, ecological, and agrarian literacy, as well as a sense of community and national identity. The various requirements of the tradition serve not only as ritual elements but also as a medium for transmitting knowledge and cultural values that are actively practiced in community life. This finding reinforces Barton and Hamilton’s view that literacy is present in everyday social and cultural practices, not merely in reading and writing activities.

Thus, the Mungguh Molo tradition can be positioned as a potential source of local literacy to be developed in culture-based learning. Integrating these values into learning activities allows students to gain learning experiences that are more contextual, meaningful, and closely connected to their cultural environment. In addition to serving as a means of cultural preservation, utilizing the Mungguh Molo tradition as a source of local literacy can also strengthen character development and increase students’ awareness of the importance of preserving regional cultural heritage as part of national identity.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, the Mungguh Molo tradition is a cultural system rich in philosophical meanings and Javanese values. Through Roland Barthes’s semiotic

analysis, its elements, including jajan pasar, ayam ingkung, tumpeng, sugarcane, coconut, an umbrella, rice, bananas, and the red-and-white flag, contain denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings representing religiosity, mutual cooperation, humility, usefulness, fertility, protection, unity, and nationalism. These meanings demonstrate that Munggah Molo functions not only as a house-building ritual but also as a medium for transmitting cultural knowledge and local wisdom across generations. The local literacy analysis further shows that these symbols encompass social, religious, moral, ecological, agrarian, family, and national literacy values that can be integrated into contextual learning because they are closely connected to students' cultural experiences. Thus, Munggah Molo contributes to cultural preservation while providing a learning resource for strengthening character, cultural identity, and awareness of cultural heritage. However, this study is limited to Punggulrejo Village, so its findings may not represent variations of the tradition across other Javanese communities. Future research should compare Munggah Molo traditions across different Javanese regions to identify similarities, differences, and variations in their symbolic meanings and local literacy value.

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