



## EXPLORING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN *TERI* MEDAN PRODUCTION: AN ECOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON TOURIST SOUVENIRS

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the environmentally sustainable production methods of Teri Medan, a popular anchovy product from Medan, Indonesia, which has become an eco-conscious souvenir distributed through local markets and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM). The research problem centers on how Teri Medan production integrates sustainable practices and how these are reflected in local cultural narratives. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through field observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The study employs an ecolinguistic framework, which analyzes the language used to describe and communicate environmental values in the production process. Ecolinguistics, a discipline that examines the relationship between language and the environment, provides tools for identifying key cultural terms and narratives that convey sustainability practices. Findings reveal that Teri Medan production emphasizes sustainability across various stages, from selective fishing techniques, such as the use of gill nets that protect marine ecosystems, to eco-friendly methods in washing, boiling, sun-drying, sorting, and packaging. These practices not only minimize environmental impact but also enhance Teri Medan's role as a cultural symbol of Medan's commitment to environmental stewardship. The study highlights how promoting Teri Medan as a souvenir that embodies local traditions and sustainable values can contribute to the growth of sustainable tourism and serve as a model for eco-friendly souvenir production, aligning with global trends in responsible tourism.

**Keywords:** *souvenir; Teri Medan; tourist; UMKM.*

### INTRODUCTION

Medan, the capital city of North Sumatra, Indonesia, is strategically located near the Malacca Strait, a region renowned for its rich marine resources that play a crucial role in the area's economic and social development. Among these resources, anchovies (*Stolephorus spp.*), locally known as *Teri Medan*, stand out for their distinctive bright white appearance and unique aroma. These anchovies are highly valued both locally and by tourists (Sinaga & Sinaga, 2020; Ratnaningsih & Lastariwati, 2021; Rasya, 2023). *Teri Medan* is a small anchovy variety that undergoes a salting and drying process, resulting in a popular dried anchovy product (Nasution et

al., 2025). The product's popularity as a culinary souvenir has fostered a growing market, where it is sold in various forms, including dried anchovies, ready-to-eat dishes, and snacks, largely through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM) (Rahayu et al., 2022; Ermawati et al., 2022).

Souvenirs are integral to enriching tourists' experiences, offering them lasting memories of their visits (Sumardiana & Trisdyan, 2020; Fajraha & Zetlib, 2020). As global attention shifts towards sustainability, there is an increasing demand for souvenirs that not only represent local culture but also embody eco-conscious practices. However, despite the prominence of *Teri Medan*,

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limited research has examined the environmental impact of its production or how it aligns with sustainable tourism goals. This gap is significant, especially as demand grows for products that reflect both cultural heritage and environmental responsibility.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the environmentally sustainable practices in *Teri Medan* production, focusing on sustainable fishing, eco-friendly processing methods, and packaging. By investigating *Teri Medan*'s dual role as a cultural emblem and a sustainable product, this research contributes to the discourse on sustainable tourism in Medan and explores how local products can align with global trends in eco-friendly tourism (Kusyanda & Masdiantini, 2021; Veronica & Facrureza, 2024; Purnomo, 2022).

Ecolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field that explores the relationship between language and ecological perspectives, examining how linguistic expressions, narratives, and cultural terms can shape attitudes toward environmental sustainability (Stibbe, 2015). By analyzing language used in environmental contexts, ecolinguistics seeks to uncover how cultural narratives and terminology influence sustainable practices and ecological awareness. In tourism and local product studies, ecolinguistics can reveal how linguistic choices reflect or promote environmental values, especially in communities that rely on natural resources. For instance, the use of culturally rooted terms in sustainable practices may reinforce environmental stewardship and appeal to eco-conscious consumers. In the context of *Teri Medan*, an ecolinguistic approach highlights the traditional expressions and narratives that emphasize eco-friendly practices, thereby enhancing *Teri Medan*'s value as a sustainable souvenir.

*Teri Medan*, a small anchovy species (*Stolephorus* spp) from the Engraulidae family, is highly regarded in Medan for its distinctive appearance and flavor, which make it a sought-after local souvenir. It is one of the fishery products that is quite widely consumed both in the domestic market and export market (Imam, 2024). Known for its nutritional benefits, including essential vitamins (A, B12, D, E) and minerals such as calcium and phosphorus, *Teri Medan* is a staple in various Indonesian culinary preparations, from traditional dried anchovies to innovative products like *rempeyek* (savory crackers) and chili sauces (Mardiyah et al., 2022; Kamudung et al., 2023; Hafid, 2022; Chandrawati & Hafiludin,

2023). Based on the research conducted by Pulungan and Lestari (2024), anchovies have been found to be beneficial in preventing stunting. Anchovies can be processed into cookies or other anchovy-based food products to support height growth in toddlers, serving as supplementary nutrition to help prevent the occurrence of stunting (Pulungan & Lestari, 2024). Beyond its nutritional and culinary appeal, *Teri Medan* holds cultural significance, with local terms and expressions celebrating its heritage and environmental importance. These narratives not only enhance its value as a souvenir but also resonate with ecolinguistic principles, as they reflect and promote local ecological awareness.

Growing awareness of sustainability has spurred research into responsible fishing methods, particularly for species that hold economic and cultural value, like *Teri Medan*. Sustainable practices in fishing, such as the use of selective gill nets, help minimize environmental impact by reducing bycatch and protecting juvenile fish populations. This approach aligns with both ecolinguistic and sustainable tourism principles, as local narratives around *Teri Medan* emphasize stewardship and eco-friendly methods (Devina & Panggabean, 2024; Febrianti & Fahleny, 2024; Surbakti & Basri, 2024). Language used by local fishermen, including terms like "responsible fishing" and "selective gear," reflects a commitment to sustainability, linking cultural practices with environmental preservation. These ecolinguistic aspects in the production of *Teri Medan* contribute to its reputation as an eco-friendly souvenir that embodies Medan's commitment to marine resource conservation.

The global trend toward eco-conscious tourism has increased demand for sustainably produced souvenirs, with studies indicating that environmentally friendly products enhance tourist experiences and support local economies (Sumardiana & Trisdyan, 2020; Fajrah & Zetlib, 2020). As a culturally significant product, *Teri Medan* aligns with this trend when produced sustainably. Ecolinguistic analysis reveals that terms associated with its production—such as "natural drying," "eco-friendly packaging," and "local tradition"—not only emphasize sustainability but also enhance *Teri Medan*'s market appeal. These linguistic choices shape tourist perceptions of *Teri Medan* as an eco-friendly souvenir, appealing to those who value sustainable travel experiences.

By emphasizing sustainable fishing practices, eco-conscious processing, and promotion through

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (UMKM), Teri Medan serves as a model of responsible production. This ecolinguistic framing strengthens Medan's image as a destination committed to environmental stewardship and highlights Teri Medan's value as a symbol of both Indonesian culture and sustainable tourism (Kusyanda & Masdiantini, 2021; Veronica & Facrura, 2024; Purnomo, 2022).

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore complex processes and gain a nuanced understanding of sustainable practices in Teri Medan production. According to Creswell et al. (2015), qualitative research is particularly effective for examining human behaviors, cultural practices, and contextual factors in depth. In this study, a qualitative approach enables the capture of both the environmental and cultural dimensions of Teri Medan production, aligned with an ecolinguistic perspective that emphasizes the role of language and narrative in framing sustainable practices.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation allowed the researchers to witness each stage of Teri Medan's production firsthand, from fishing and processing to packaging, noting any ecolinguistic elements present in the terminology and expressions used by local workers. Observing language-in-action helped reveal culturally specific terms or phrases associated with sustainable practices, which contribute to the ecolinguistic framing of Teri Medan as an environmentally responsible product.

Interviews were conducted with local fishermen, UMKM producers, and market sellers to gather firsthand accounts of their sustainable practices and perspectives on Teri Medan's cultural significance. In line with the ecolinguistic approach, interview questions were crafted to explore the language participants use to describe sustainability, environmental stewardship, and the cultural value of Teri Medan. These in-depth conversations provided insight into how local narratives and terminology influence the perception and implementation of sustainable practices in Teri Medan production.

Documentation included reviewing relevant records, reports, and local government publications on sustainable fishing practices and environmental regulations for Teri Medan production. This method provided a comprehensive understanding of the regulatory

and cultural landscape surrounding sustainable production. Through this triangulation of methods, the study draws on multiple perspectives and sources, reinforcing the reliability of the findings.

This combination of qualitative methods, informed by an ecolinguistic perspective, aims to build a thorough understanding of Teri Medan's production and its alignment with sustainable tourism. The ecolinguistic approach not only adds depth to the analysis but also highlights how local language and cultural narratives reinforce environmentally sustainable practices, positioning Teri Medan as an eco-friendly souvenir in Medan's tourism sector.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The production of Teri Medan, a local anchovy-based delicacy, is grounded in sustainable practices that aim to minimize the environmental footprint from fishing to final distribution. This process, which emphasizes the importance of preserving marine ecosystems and ensuring resource sustainability, is reflected in the language used by the community involved in its production. From fishing practices to the careful steps taken during the processing, packaging, and distribution of Teri Medan, the community consistently uses language that signals a deep respect for the environment, reinforcing the idea that sustainable practices are integral to both their cultural identity and livelihoods.

### *Sustainable fishing practices: Language of stewardship*

The fishing process for Teri Medan reflects the principles of environmental stewardship and sustainability. Local fishermen adopt selective fishing methods, particularly through the use of gill nets designed to capture only anchovies of the appropriate size. This selectivity helps prevent the capture of smaller, non-target fish, reducing disruptions to the marine ecosystem (Devina & Panggabean, 2024). Gill nets are favored by local fishermen because they can be adjusted to allow smaller or non-target species to escape, thus protecting juvenile fish and preserving biodiversity (Febrianti & Fahleny, 2024; Surbakti & Basri, 2024). The careful use of these nets helps maintain the balance of fish populations, preventing overfishing, which is essential for the long-term sustainability of both local ecosystems and the livelihoods of fishermen (Pramesthy et al., 2020; Tatontos et al., 2019; Nanga et al., 2024). As the negative environmental impacts of

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traditional fishing practices become more evident, the local fishing community has increasingly embraced these eco-friendly techniques, recognizing that sustainable fishing practices are vital for the health of the marine environment and the continued viability of their work.

The language used by the community surrounding these practices is imbued with sustainability values. Terms like "selective fishing," "wise fishing," and "in harmony with nature" are frequently used in discussions of fishing methods. This terminology underscores that fishing is viewed not merely as a means of resource extraction but as a conscious, responsible act that ensures the long-term health of the sea. The term "wise fishing," for example, embodies a philosophy of balance and moderation, where fishermen see themselves not as exploiters of marine resources but as caretakers of the ocean. The notion of balance is often emphasized, with fishermen recognizing that selective fishing is essential for maintaining fish populations for future generations.

Additionally, phrases such as "sustaining the ocean" and "protecting marine wealth" reflect a deep sense of responsibility toward the environment. These expressions indicate that the practice of fishing is not solely for economic gain but is framed as an ongoing duty to the marine ecosystem. This language fosters a narrative where the fishing community is portrayed as active stewards of the ocean, committed to ensuring its resources remain viable for the benefit of future generations (Devina & Panggabean, 2024; Febrianti & Fahleny, 2024; Surbakti & Basri, 2024).

This holistic approach to sustainable fishing not only promotes the health of the marine ecosystem but also reinforces the value of Teri Medan as a product of Medan's commitment to environmentally responsible practices. By framing the product as a symbol of ecological stewardship, it enhances its appeal as a culturally significant and eco-friendly souvenir for tourists.



Figure 1. Fishing Teri Medan using gill net

Fishermen catch anchovies directly on land during fishing trips that typically last 7-8 hours, from 04:00 to 11:00 WIB. Once caught, the anchovies are stored in styrofoam boxes packed with ice to maintain their freshness and prevent spoilage.



Figure 2. The catch of Teri Medan

Generally, high-quality anchovies have a firm, chewy texture, a fresh and pleasant fish aroma, and a vibrant, bright appearance with a white to bluish hue.

### *The language of resource preservation in processing*

The washing process for Teri Medan is carried out in a washing tub with running water, and the anchovies are held in a porous plastic basket. According to Maryeni & Saputri (2022), the washing process is facilitated by the worker's hands, which help to evenly distribute the washing action, ensuring that the anchovies are thoroughly cleaned. After washing, the anchovies are drained in a plastic basin placed between the washing tub and the boiling tub.

The processing of Teri Medan is rooted in sustainable practices, which are reflected in the careful language used to describe each stage. For example, terms like "cleansing" and "purifying" are used to describe the washing process, suggesting a deep respect for the anchovies as raw materials. The intent behind this process is to remove contaminants while preserving the natural quality of the fish. Phrases such as "preserving purity" and "maintaining freshness" go beyond the technical aspects of the process and convey a cultural commitment to sustainability. These terms emphasize that each step in the production

process is seen as an act of conservation—protecting the inherent qualities of the anchovies without relying on harmful additives or excessive energy. This language reinforces the value placed on keeping the product as natural and wholesome as possible. The process of washing the anchovies can be seen in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3. *Washing and cleaning Teri Medan*

After the washing process is thoroughly completed, the boiling stage follows, where the anchovies are immersed in hot water at a boiling temperature of 100°C for 3-5 minutes. This step serves two purposes: it cooks the anchovies and releases any gas trapped within the raw material, which also reduces their weight. During the boiling process, salt is added—specifically fine, iodized sea salt. Sahubawa (2018) explains that salting helps inhibit the rotting process, thereby extending the shelf life of the anchovies as a natural preservative. The ideal salt content for the anchovies is set at 5%. If the salt concentration exceeds this level, it may cause white powder to form on the anchovies, which negatively affects their taste.

In the local community, the boiling process is often described using metaphors like "locking in the sea's essence" or "capturing the ocean's nutrients." These expressions emphasize the significance of boiling not only in cooking the anchovies but also in preserving their natural flavors and nutritional value. The addition of iodized sea salt is framed as more than just a

technical necessity; it is seen as a way of safeguarding the anchovies for long-term storage and future consumption. The meticulous attention to the salt content, ensuring it remains within the recommended range, reflects an awareness of environmental impact. It highlights the principle of "moderation," emphasizing the importance of avoiding overuse of resources, which aligns with the broader sustainability practices adopted by the community.



Figure 4. *Boiling of Teri Medan*

Traditionally, the boiling process is conducted in a specialized boiling tank, which is equipped with an iron plate to enhance heat transfer from the gas combustion source. As the boiling water heats up, the salt added to the basin dissolves into the water. The use of a basin helps prevent impurities in the salt from contaminating the boiling water. For a fully filled boiling tank, 50 kg of salt is required, and the water volume in the tank is typically 1,000 liters. Once the salt is completely dissolved and the water reaches a boil, the anchovies are added to the boiling bath using a basin. The boiling process lasts approximately 5 minutes, during which the contents are occasionally stirred to ensure an even cooking process. After boiling is complete, the basin is removed, and the anchovies are drained using a draining rack. The drained anchovies are then spread on a *sanoko* (a drying surface) covered with *waring* (a protective net) and cooled using a blower. This cooling process halts the cooking, preventing the anchovies from becoming overcooked.

#### *Sun-drying: The language of eco-harmony*

The drying process is designed to reduce the water content of the anchovies, ensuring they become fully dried and safe for long-term storage. The company has established a standard water content for dried anchovies, typically set between 31-35%, which ensures their shelf stability. This drying is achieved using sunlight, a natural and

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sustainable method. According to Siregar et al. (2024) and Surbakti (2023), this technique not only preserves the anchovies but also underscores an eco-friendly approach to food processing.

The use of sun-drying in the production of Teri Medan exemplifies how language reflects ecological values. This method, which harnesses the sun's natural power, is often described with terms like "working with nature" or "in tune with the environment." Such descriptions frame the drying process as a symbolic act of harmonizing human activity with the natural world. Local producers emphasize the importance of weather conditions and sunlight, suggesting that the success of the drying step is deeply connected to the natural forces that sustain life on Earth.

Sun-drying, a simple and energy-efficient method, is often referred to as "nature's method" or "the earth's way of preserving" anchovies. These expressions reinforce the idea that the process not only minimizes energy consumption but also aligns with ecological principles. Words like "gentle drying" and "natural preservation" further reflect a cultural narrative that values the environment's role in creating high-quality products, without resorting to artificial or energy-intensive methods. The focus on natural sunlight symbolizes a profound connection to the earth, underscoring that sustainability is integrated into every aspect of Teri Medan's production process.



Figure 5: *Drying Teri Medan*

The traditional drying process used for Teri Medan relies on the sun-drying method, where anchovies are exposed to direct sunlight in an open space. This method utilizes the heat generated by solar radiation, making it a simple yet effective way to reduce moisture content in the anchovies. The anchovies are placed on racks about one meter above the ground, allowing for optimal exposure to sunlight. The drying process typically occurs between 07:00 and 10:30 WIB, lasting approximately 3 to 4 hours, depending on weather conditions, particularly the strength of the sunlight and wind speed. On sunny days with

favorable wind conditions, the drying time may be reduced.

Several factors influence the effectiveness of the sun-drying process. The thickness of the anchovies spread on the racks and the practice of turning them regularly are crucial in ensuring even drying and maximizing efficiency. While sun drying is a straightforward and low-energy method, it is highly dependent on the weather, making it vulnerable to external conditions. Additionally, the open-air setting introduces the risk of microbial contamination. If not properly monitored, the drying process can create an environment conducive to mold growth, which can cause the anchovies to develop undesirable brown spots or red discoloration. Therefore, it is essential to protect the anchovies from fungal contamination by ensuring they are thoroughly dried before storage, as incomplete drying can compromise the anchovies' appearance and quality.

*Sorting and packaging: The language of care and protection*

The sorting process is designed to differentiate anchovies from non-anchovies. Anchovies are characterized by their small size, similar to grains of rice, their bright white color, and the absence of snouts. Those that meet these criteria are separated and moved on to the next stage of processing. Non-anchovies, on the other hand, are further sorted by type to ensure only the appropriate materials proceed through the production process (Chandrawati & Hafiludin, 2023).



Figure 6. *Sorting*

Once the sorting process is complete, the anchovies are typically packaged for transportation, storage, or shipment. This step involves using materials such as boxes, plastic, or bubble wrap to protect the anchovies from damage during transit. Proper packaging is crucial to ensure that the products arrive safely and in optimal condition.



Figure 7. *Packaging*

The sorting process of Teri Medan, which separates high-quality anchovies from those that do not meet the required standards, is framed through terms like *"ensuring quality"* and *"protecting the product"*. This language reflects the community's commitment to preserving the integrity of the product, ensuring that only the best anchovies are processed and packaged for consumption. The sorting process is not merely functional but is imbued with a sense of care and respect for the product, ensuring that no part of the catch goes to waste (Chandrawati & Hafiludin, 2023).

When it comes to packaging, the community often refers to the use of *"eco-friendly materials"* or *"minimal-impact packaging"*. Terms such as *"sustainable packaging"* and *"earth-conscious wrapping"* convey an awareness of the environmental impact of packaging materials. The use of recyclable and biodegradable materials reflects an effort to reduce the ecological footprint of the product. This shift towards environmentally responsible packaging is framed as a way to ensure that Teri Medan remains a symbol of sustainability, not just through its production methods but also in how it reaches consumers. This narrative of care extends to the consumer's role in the environmental cycle, with phrases like *"reducing waste"* and *"supporting sustainable practices"* frequently used to encourage eco-conscious purchasing decisions (Maryeni & Saputri, 2022).

#### *Distribution and eco-conscious marketing*

The packaged Teri Medan will then be distributed through markets so that it can be purchased by the public or tourists. In the distribution and sale of Teri Medan, the language of sustainability continues to play a central role. The product is marketed not only as a local delicacy but as an eco-friendly souvenir that supports sustainable practices. At Pasar Sambu, where Teri Medan is sold, the language

surrounding its sale often includes terms such as *"supporting sustainable tourism"* and *"buying eco-conscious souvenirs"*. By framing Teri Medan as both a cultural product and a sustainable choice, the community encourages tourists to engage with the local economy in a way that aligns with environmental values.

Local vendors often use phrases like *"choose sustainability"* or *"make an eco-friendly choice"* when describing Teri Medan to customers. These messages reflect a broader effort to educate consumers about the importance of sustainable production practices, aligning purchasing decisions with values of environmental responsibility. This is further supported by the use of visual cues and symbols on packaging that communicate a commitment to sustainability and eco-tourism (Pramesthy et al., 2020; Tatontos et al., 2019).



Figure 8: *Selling and buying*

Teri Medan is primarily distributed through central markets, with sales concentrated at Sambu Market in Medan. In addition to Teri Medan, various types of salted fish are available, allowing tourists to purchase anchovies directly and inspect the quality of the products before selecting souvenirs. In addition to distribution through Pasar Sambu, Teri Medan is also sold through small and medium enterprises (UMKM). The anchovies are typically packaged in attractive packaging, either in their raw form or as ready-to-eat products.



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Figure 9. Packaging of Teri Medan by UMKM



Figure 10. Packaging of Teri Medan snack by UMKM

The language used by the Teri Medan community goes beyond merely communicating technical processes; it is deeply intertwined with the environmental values that guide their practices. Terms and metaphors such as "balance," "wisdom in fishing," "preserving the ocean," and "working with nature" reinforce the

community's commitment to sustainability at every stage of production. This ecolinguistic perspective demonstrates how language both shapes and reflects the broader cultural and ecological narratives that underpin sustainable practices. Through their thoughtful choice of words and metaphors, the Teri Medan producers not only preserve the integrity of their product but also contribute to a growing culture of environmental responsibility, aligning with both community values and the broader global movement toward sustainability.

## CONCLUSION

The production of *Teri Medan* exemplifies a comprehensive approach to sustainability, where environmental stewardship is ingrained in every stage of the process, from fishing to distribution. The community's dedication to preserving marine ecosystems and ensuring the long-term viability of local resources is evident not only in their practices but also in the language they use. Terms such as "wise fishing," "working with nature," and "preserving the ocean" underscore the community's profound respect for the environment and their commitment to maintaining a harmonious relationship between human activity and ecological health. Through selective fishing techniques, careful processing, and eco-friendly practices like sun-drying and sustainable packaging, the *Teri Medan* community demonstrates that sustainability is not merely a set of practices but a core cultural identity.

Moreover, the language used in the production and marketing of *Teri Medan* serves as a crucial vehicle for reinforcing this commitment, shaping consumer perceptions, and promoting environmental responsibility. In this way, *Teri Medan* not only stands as a local delicacy but also symbolizes eco-conscious production that aligns with global sustainability movements. This research contributes to the field of ecolinguistics by illustrating how language in the context of local production can reflect and reinforce environmental values, offering valuable insights into how cultural narratives and sustainable practices intertwine. Additionally, the study offers important implications for sustainable tourism by demonstrating how local products like *Teri Medan* can be positioned as eco-friendly souvenirs that resonate with the growing global demand for responsible tourism. As such, *Teri Medan* presents a model for other communities seeking to integrate environmental values into

their practices, contributing both to cultural preservation and environmental sustainability.

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