

ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE STYLE IN PANTUN MELAY: LITERATURE REVIEW OF AESTHETIC VALUE AND MEANING

M. Gema Maulana¹

¹Computer Science, Faculty of Computer Science, Lancang Kuning University,

Email: gemamaulana@unisi.ac.id¹

ABSTRACT

Malay pantun is a legacy of oral literature that has cultural value, aesthetics, and deep meaning in the life of Malay society. The beauty of pantun lies not only in its structure and regular rhyme, but also in the use of language styles that can strengthen the message conveyed. This study aims to analyze the language styles in Malay pantun and examine the aesthetic value and meaning contained therein. The study uses a literature study method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were obtained from various library sources, such as books, scientific articles, journals, theses, and research results relevant to Malay pantun, stylistics, and literary aesthetics. Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation, while data analysis used content analysis techniques that include data reduction, classification, interpretation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the dominant language styles in Malay pantun include metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism. In addition, elements of rhyme, assonance, alliteration, diction, and imagery play an important role in building the aesthetic value of pantun. This language style not only functions to decorate the language, but also as a means of conveying the cultural, moral, social and religious values of the Malay community. Thus, the language style in Malay pantun has a significant role in creating beauty as well as enriching the meaning contained therein.

Keywords: Malay pantun, language style, aesthetic value, meaning, literature study

1 INTRODUCTION

Pantun is a legacy of oral literature that holds a significant place in Malay society. As a traditional poetic form that has developed over a long period, pantun serves not only as a means of entertainment but also as a medium for conveying cultural values, social norms, advice, education, and a societal outlook on life. The existence of pantun today demonstrates the resilience of this traditional literary work in the face of changing times. Even amidst globalization and advances in information technology, pantun is still used in various social, cultural, and educational activities as a means of preserving Malay cultural identity.

The uniqueness of pantun lies in its unique structure and use of language. Generally, pantun consists of four lines with an a-b-a-b rhyme scheme, with the first two lines serving as a preface and the following two as the main body. However, the beauty of pantun is determined not only by the regularity of its form but also by the poet's ability to craft language to produce compelling, meaningful, and aesthetic expressions. In this regard, style is a crucial element in building the strength and beauty of pantun. Through the use of language style, the message conveyed can become more lively, expressive, and able to arouse the imagination of readers and listeners.

Language style or figure of speech is a typical way that authors use to express thoughts, feelings and ideas through certain word choices. In Malay pantun, language style is often manifested in the form of similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, and various other forms of figurative language. The use of language styles not only serves to beautify speech, but also strengthens the meaning contained in it. Through figurative language, Malay people are able to convey moral messages, social criticism and advice in a subtle and polite manner. This characteristic is in line with Malay culture which upholds politeness and tact in communication.

The existence of language styles in Malay pantun also reflects the cultural intelligence of the supporting community. Malay society is known to have a language tradition that is rich in symbols and symbols. The surrounding nature is often used as a source of inspiration in creating rhymes, so that various elements such as flowers, trees, rivers, sea, birds and other natural objects are used as symbols to describe the human condition. For example, flowers symbolize beauty, birds symbolize

freedom, or the sea symbolizes the breadth of knowledge and life experience. The use of these symbols shows that pantun not only contains a series of beautiful words, but also contains deep meaning and is closely related to the life of Malay society.

Aesthetic value is an inseparable aspect of discussions about Malay pantun. Aesthetics in literary works relates to the element of beauty that can provide an inner experience for the reader or listener. In pantun, aesthetic value is reflected through the harmonious choice of diction, rhythm, rhyme, imagery, and the use of stylistic devices. The beauty of the language created not only provides pleasure to listen to or read but also enhances the appeal of the intended message. Therefore, pantun is often considered a literary form that combines entertainment and education in a balanced way.

Beyond aesthetic value, Malay pantun is also rich in meaning, reflecting various aspects of human life. The meanings in pantun can include advice, moral teachings, religious values, social values, or expressions related to love, friendship, and social life. These meanings are often not conveyed directly, but through symbols, similes, and figurative expressions that require deeper understanding from the reader. Therefore, analyzing stylistic devices is crucial to uncovering the hidden meanings behind the beauty of pantun language. Through this study, readers can understand the relationship between the language used and the message the composer intended to convey.

Many researchers have studied the style of language in Malay pantun from various perspectives. Some studies indicate that the use of style in pantun plays a crucial role in establishing aesthetic value and effectively conveying messages. Other research highlights the function of symbolism and metaphor as a means of conveying Malay cultural values. However, studies specifically examining the relationship between style, aesthetic value, and meaning in Malay pantun through a literature review approach are still needed. This approach allows researchers to collect, analyze, and compare the results of various previous studies to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of style in Malay pantun.

A literature review plays a crucial role in literary research because it can provide an overview of the development of previous research. Through a literature review, researchers can identify the various types of style dominantly used in Malay pantun, understand their aesthetic functions, and examine their inherent meanings. Furthermore, a literature review can help identify research gaps that require further study. Thus, the research conducted is not merely descriptive but also contributes to the development of Malay literary studies, particularly in the fields of stylistics and literary aesthetics.

The selection of the theme of analyzing the language style in Malay pantun is based on the importance of preserving and understanding the nation's cultural heritage. In today's modern era, the younger generation tends to be more familiar with popular culture than traditional literature. As a result, understanding of the values contained in pantun is diminishing. Yet, pantun contains a wealth of local wisdom relevant to contemporary society, such as values of politeness, togetherness, respect for others, and love for the environment. Therefore, a study of the language style and meaning of Malay pantun is expected to increase public appreciation of the richness of traditional literature and strengthen efforts to preserve Malay culture.

Based on this description, this research focuses on analyzing the language style in Malay pantun through a literature review, emphasizing the aesthetic value and meaning contained within. This analysis is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how the use of language style contributes to the beauty of pantun and serves as an effective means of conveying messages. By understanding the relationship between language style, aesthetics, and meaning, Malay pantun is seen not only as a beautiful work of traditional literature but also as a reflection of the wisdom and cultural identity of the Malay people that should be preserved and passed on to future generations.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Types of Research

This research employed a literature study method (library research) with a qualitative descriptive approach. Literature study is a research method conducted by collecting, reviewing, analyzing, and interpreting various literature sources relevant to the research topic. In this study, library sources were used to examine the language styles contained in Malay pantun and to understand their aesthetic value and meaning based on the results of previous research and various scientific references.

The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because this study aims to describe and explain the linguistic phenomena contained in Malay pantun in depth without using statistical calculations. The research focuses on identifying the forms of language styles, their aesthetic functions, and the meanings conveyed in Malay pantun literary works.

2.2 Source Data

The data in this study were obtained from various written sources related to Malay pantun, stylistics, literary aesthetics, and meaning in literary works. The data sources used consisted of:

1. Primary data sources, namely books, collections of Malay pantun, scientific articles, journals, undergraduate theses, and research findings that directly discuss stylistics in Malay pantun.
2. Secondary data sources, namely various supporting references such as literary theory books, stylistics books, dictionaries of literary terms, seminar proceedings, and other scholarly sources relevant to the research.

Data sources were selected based on their level of relevance, credibility, and relevance to the research focus.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique in this study was conducted through documentation. Documentation techniques were used by searching, collecting, reading, and recording various information found in library sources relevant to the research theme.

The data collection steps included:

1. Identifying and selecting library sources appropriate to the research topic.
2. Reading and thoroughly understanding the contents of the library sources.
3. Noting important information related to the style, aesthetic value, and meaning of Malay pantun.
4. Grouping data based on the style category and the research aspect being studied.
5. Organizing data systematically to facilitate the analysis process..

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques. This technique is used to identify, interpret, and describe information obtained from various library sources.

The stages of data analysis include:

1. Data reduction, which involves selecting and simplifying data relevant to the research focus.
2. Data classification, which involves grouping data based on the types of figurative language found in Malay pantun.
3. Data interpretation, which involves interpreting the function of figurative language in constructing aesthetic value and uncovering the meaning contained in the pantun.
4. Data presentation, which involves compiling the results of the analysis in a systematic descriptive manner.
5. Conclusion drawing, which involves formulating research findings based on the analysis.

2.5 Data Validity

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation, comparing information obtained from various sources, such as books, scientific journals, undergraduate theses, and previous research findings. By comparing these sources, the data obtained can be tested for consistency and accuracy, thereby enhancing the validity and scientific accountability of the research results.

Through this literature review method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the use of figurative language in Malay pantun and explain the relationship between figurative language, aesthetic value, and the meaning contained within it.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a literature review of several studies on Malay pantun, it was found that style is a crucial element that plays a role in building aesthetic value and reinforcing the meaning contained within the pantun. Findings from various studies indicate that the use of figures of speech, diction, rhyme, imagery, and symbolism are the main elements that distinguish Malay pantun as a traditional literary work rich in cultural values and local wisdom.

Research by M. Ismail et al. (2024) on the Pantun Atui of the Kampar community shows that Malay pantun possesses a richness of form and structure that enhances the beauty of the language. Variations in rhyme patterns such as ab-ab, aa-aa, abc-abc, and abcdef-abcdef, as well as the dominant use of assonance and alliteration, produce a musical effect that enhances the aesthetic value of the pantun. The repetition of certain vowel sounds creates a harmonious rhythm, so that pantun functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a literary work that provides aesthetic pleasure for both listeners and readers.

In addition to the sound aspect, the study also found the use of various figures of speech, such as metaphors, similes, hyperbole, and personification. The presence of these figures of speech indicates that Malay pantun does not convey messages directly, but rather through figurative language that provides deeper meaning. Metaphors and similes that often use natural elements demonstrate the close relationship between Malay society and its surroundings. Nature is not only used as a setting, but also a source of symbols and representations of the community's life experiences. Thus, the use of figures of speech in Malay pantun functions as both an aesthetic tool and a medium for conveying cultural values.

Similar findings were also seen in a study of Sarawakian Malay pantun, which examined the life values contained within them. The results showed that pantun contain religious values, patriotism, and morality, conveyed through beautiful and symbolic language. The use of figurative language allows moral and philosophical messages to be conveyed subtly without appearing preachy. This demonstrates that the beauty of language in pantun is not only intended to enhance speech but also serves as an effective cultural communication strategy in conveying life's teachings and values to the community.

Furthermore, the study emphasized that the meaning of Malay pantun is not only literal but also contains connotative and philosophical meanings. The symbols used in pantun often represent Malay people's perspectives on the relationship between humans and God, fellow humans, and the environment. Therefore, interpreting pantun requires an understanding of the cultural context behind its creation.

The results of other literature studies on Malay pantun in wedding traditions in North Sumatra indicate that the use of figurative language in pantun also serves to maintain politeness. Pantun is used as a medium of communication in various stages of wedding customs, emphasizing polite, refined, and respectful word choice. Aesthetically, the use of orderly diction and natural symbolism lends pantun a unique beauty while reinforcing the intended message.

Natural symbolism is a dominant form of figurative language in Malay pantun. Various natural elements such as trees, fruits, birds, rivers, and journeys are often used as metaphors to describe human life. The use of these symbols demonstrates that Malay society views nature as a source of learning and reflection on life. Through this symbolism, pantun is able to convey moral messages, advice, and outlooks on life in a more engaging and easily accepted way.

Based on the overall findings analyzed, it can be concluded that figurative language in Malay pantun plays a crucial role in building aesthetic value and enriching meaning. Aesthetic value is reflected through the use of rhyme, assonance, alliteration, distinctive diction, and various forms of figurative language that create beauty of sound and meaning. Meanwhile, the meaning contained in pantun is realized through the use of metaphors, symbolism, imagery, and other figurative language that represent the cultural, religious, moral, and social values of Malay society. Thus, figurative language functions not only as a decorative element of language but also as a primary means of conveying cultural identity, life values, and local wisdom contained in Malay pantun.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that figurative language is a crucial element in Malay pantun, playing a role in building aesthetic value and enriching its meaning. Various studies have shown that the use of figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism are distinctive characteristics that enhance the beauty of pantun language. Furthermore, linguistic elements such as rhyme, assonance, alliteration, diction, and imagery contribute to the aesthetic effect that makes pantun engaging to listen to and read.

The study also shows that figurative language in Malay pantun functions not only as a decorative element but also as a means of conveying messages, cultural values, and the Malay outlook on life. Through the use of figurative language and natural symbols, pantun conveys religious, moral, social, patriotic, and moral values in a subtle and polite manner, in keeping with Malay cultural characteristics. The meanings contained in pantun are generally connotative and philosophical, requiring an understanding of the underlying cultural context.

Thus, there is a close relationship between style, aesthetic value, and meaning in Malay pantun. The beauty of language constructed through various forms of style not only provides artistic value but also strengthens the delivery of messages and local wisdom contained within. Therefore, Malay pantun can be understood as a traditional literary heritage that not only serves as entertainment, but also plays a role as a medium for education, cultural preservation, and character formation of society. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for further research on stylistic studies, literary aesthetics, and the preservation of Malay pantun as part of the nation's cultural identity.

REFERENCE

- Fatin, D., & Abang, A. (2022). Philosophy and Values in Pantun Melayu Sarawak. 1(2).
 Jurnal, R., Melayu, P., San, G. H., Pendidikan, U., Idris, S., Wahid, A., Pendidikan, U., Idris, S., San, H., Jurnal, R., & Melayu, P. (2023). Elements of Beauty and Pure Value in Malay Pantun Composed by Loo Mun Based on the Poetic Theory of Malay Literature. 11(2), 54–69.
 Man, M. A. C. (2022a). (Natural Phenomenon in Malay Pantun). 161–176.
 Man, M. A. C. (2022b). Galah and Rudder Object Metaphors in Pantun Melayu: Inquisitive Semantic Analysis. 26(1), 58–74.
 Nur, H. (2025). The Form and Function of Pantun Atui; A Study of Classical Malay Pantun. 11(1), 968–979.
 Pelestarinya, D. A. N., & Telangkai, M. (2024). Representation of Local Wisdom Values in Malay Deli Pantun and Its Preservation Through Telangkai. 12, 115–125.
 Pustaka, B., Hermeneutika, K., & Ricoeur, P. (2024). Educational Values in Pantun Orang Tua in the Malay Pantun Anthology, Nostalgia Literature Series, Balai Pustaka Editorial Team: Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Study. 4(2), 98–107.
 Puteri, R., Nurul, S., & Murtadho, F. (2022). The Function of Pantun as Malay Marriage Tradition of Riau. 7(2), 439–448. <https://doi.org/10.24235/leal.v7i2.8791>
 Rahayu, S., Zahra, P., Kheysa, F., Syahri, A., & Diandra, R. (2026). Metaphor Analysis in Reply Pantun in Traditional Malay Wedding Ceremonies in Bengkalis, Riau (Semantic Approach). 3(3), 764–771.
 Srinita, J., & Mulyani, S. (2024). Structure and Function of Promise Pantun in Malay Weddings in Semparuk District, Sambas Regency. 4, 210–224.