

The Implications of Pantun in Moulding the Identity of the Malay Community

Nur Salihah Binti Mohamad and Salmah Jan Noor Muhammad

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM
Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v9-i5/6799>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v9-i5/6799

Published Date: 28 May 2019

Abstract

Pantun is a form of old Malay poem or literature composition which depicts the finesse of values and the community's sensitivity towards the nature and its scope of culture. However, the changes of time has made poem forsaken by the society especially by the younger factions. The assumption that pantun is not relevant in the scientific world these days are pretty rampant among the younger factions. Many strategies and suggestions need to be crafted to dignify pantun in the eyes of its people. Hence, the objective of this study is to identify and analysis the implications of pantun in moulding the identity of the Malay community. Literature and texts analysis methods are applied in this research. In order to obtain reliable results this research also applies a theory introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce, the Peirce's Semiotic Theory. Results show that pantun is able to give implications in moulding the identity of the Malay community. This research involves texts from *Pantun Melayu: Bingkisan Permata* as the main topic for discussion. This research aims to be utilized as a reference to highlight the Malay identity especially among the younger generations.

Keywords: Pantun, Malay, Implication, Identity, Semiotic

Introduction

Pantun is a treasure left behind by our ancestors for the generations to come. According to Ali (2006), pantun is defined as a series of stories which uses musical instruments as a background during recitals. The Malay community however regards pantun as a literature structured in four rows in every stanza in a rhyme scheme. Osman (1987) state that the form of pantun must be obeyed as pantun is a convention. Even famous pantun are recited as proverbs but we are free to interpret the pantun as seen while replying pantun alternately.

Piah (2001) states that pantun is an old-time Malay literature which tell stories about depths and finesse of values along with the community's responsibility towards the environment and the scope of community's culture. The scope of Malay community's culture not only involves joy, sadness and hatred but also spreads to diplomatic and economic issues. In addition, the senior generations also incorporates pantun in their daily conversations. Reciting pantun indirectly stimulate a person's mind and promote pantun to the community (Said, 1994).

The traditional Malay community is based on communalities and its custom. The feeling of responsibilities will grow in people whom live in the community. According to Salim (1983), the format of a pantun is the same and does not carry the name of the writer to portray the bond in the community. Pantun are different from individualistic people of the community who crafts modern poems. Sajak is a modern genre produced by people who preserves their copyright and individuality to avoid their art being copied by others. These individuals will never allow their poems to be used by others plainly without mentioning the original composer. Nonetheless, pantun created in this modern era makes the poet want recognition for their works. This kindles the poets to issue copyrights on the pantun composed by them. All the pantun found in books are copyrighted pantun, not joint ownership (Salleh, 2000).

Literature Review

There are few researchers whom have done researches on this topic such as Ali, Hassan, Ja'afar and others. Ali (2016) researched on the relationship between icons and symbols in the process of creating pantun to impact the community positively. Hamid (2006) discussed the emotion intelligence and creativity of the Malay community to manipulate a person's emotion through pantun. Other than that, Hassan, Ja'afar and Ali (2016) also focused on the social critics found in pantun with aspects such as ethics, love and bad attitudes of human.

The next research was done by Man (2013) which discusses on the relationship between significance and relevance of pantun in the development of the country and humanity with influence of technology. Yusof (2014) concluded that pantun is uplifted due to the intrinsic values which can be used in advertisements and political campaigns besides traditionally used as an entertainment. Research by Daud (2012) reviewed that part of the community still believes taboos and customs highly influenced by Hinduism even if it goes against the Islamic teachings. In her research, Salleh (2014) concluded the Malay community portraying decency and morality symbolizes their attitude. Previous researches focused on how pantun is able to influence a person's lifestyle according to the application of pantun in their daily life.

Research Methodology

This research applies the qualitative methods which are literature research and texts analysis. This research also adopts the Peirce's Semiotic Theory by Charles Sanders Peirce. Peirce had established processes to validate signs as the reason for humans' feelings, thoughts, actions and expressions of emotion. In conjunction to that, Peirce created firstness, secondness, and thirdness terms which relates to representamen, objects and interpretant. Therefore, the three signs of representamen are qualisign, sinsign dan legisign. The signs of objects are icon, index and symbol while the three signs of interpretant are rheme, discisign, and arguments. This research however only uses the signs related to index and icons.

Data Analysis

The Implications of Pantun on the Identity of the Malay Community

Pantun is a national treasure which needs to be preserved well to this day even if it is practiced less by the community. Identity comprises of religion, mind-set, language, beliefs and opinions of a community. These values can mould a person's identity, the way they toss ideas, dressing and how they bring themselves in raising the values of their identity in the eyes of the world (Vun, 2013). Besides that pantun is able to cause implications in the Malay

community through the values of identity correlating with Islam which teaches its people to be polite while interacting with others, foster relationships through marriage, preserving the local customs and traditions and moulding a person's identity.

The Value of Identity Based on Islam

Religion provides guidance to human in living their life. Without religion, a person's life is similar to not having lights in a dark tunnel. The Malay community adheres strongly to the Islamic teachings. The value of identity adheres to Islam because they are able to learn something new and differentiate between the rights and wrongs through their religion. Through religion, people will also perform good acts which benefit the community and its people. This can be seen from the pantun:

Buah remenia bawa ke huma
Untuk dimakan sambal menjerat
Hidup di dunia tidaklah lama
Patut amalkan bekal akhirat.

(Pantun Melayu: Bingkisan Permata, 2001)

The extract above shows that we as humans need to do good so that our good deeds are able to help us in the afterlife. We will be granted rewards by Allah for all our good deeds. Allah will always help us if we do well and follow His instructions. Islam teaches people praiseworthy characters and forbids its followers to do despicable acts. Values of identities which uphold Islam will be able to form good and noble characteristics between the Malay communities.

The Usage of Politeness while Interacting

According to Muhammad (2015), the Malay community is a community rich with eastern values and possess exceptional characteristics such as grace, politeness and courtesy. Pantun also visualizes the mind-set, interactions and values of the Malay community. This is also explained by Ismail dan Mohamad (2017) where pantun is used as hints during festivals and celebrations as jokes and to state their wishes. Pantun is also used by the elderly to give advice and teach the religion's principles to kids and younger adults. Besides being used as a joke and entertainment, pantun can also be a medium to teach and advice with innuendoes which suits the attitude of the Malay community to educate their people indirectly but effectively as seen in the stanza below:

Burung dara burung merpati
Pohon capa hampir rumahnya
Jangan gusar kecil di hati
Adinda manis siapa punya?

(Pantun Melayu: Bingkisan Permata, 2001)

According to the stanza, we can see that the Malay community stresses on communicating with politeness and grace in their daily life. This is because in pantun the community will have to reassure the words used is polite and will not hurt anyone's feelings when it is uttered to the other person. Pantun teaches the people to always be cautious with the words used on other people to ensure no one in the community is rudely addressed. This is the reason to why people in the past generations embrace pantun because they believe

pantun is able to influence an individual's life. Therefore metaphore in pantun is able to mould a person's attitude and politeness.

Fostering Relationships through Marriage

Marriage is one step to avoid the immorality. According to *Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat* (2005), marriage is about merging two different elements. Marriage also means a lawful tie between a man and a woman through the vows taken. According to Effendy (2007); Azmy & Zain, (2018); Mehedy, Sajib, Karim, (2018) pantun from earlier days played a role in matchmaking during some occasions. The man will be able to communicate with the woman by replying each other's pantun. This event often ends with engagements and marriage. The elderly are very used to incorporating pantun while speaking in their daily lives and seem to be a daily activity for them. Pantun is not compulsory but have been a tradition of the Malay community for ages to learn and understand the meaning behind pantun. Pantun is able to form a relationship between two families through marriage as can be seen in the stanza below:

Cik Hamid belayar ke Jawa
Buah jarak masak merkah
Tabir langit sudah sedia
Malam esok nak menikah.

(*Pantun Melayu: Bingkisan Permata*, 2001)

Based on the extract, it is known that even from different countries, two families are able to form a tight bond through marriage. Especially since people of the older generations are often involved in interracial marriages. They tend to meet each other when traders from other countries come to this country. The merge between cultures are able to create a liberal society with broader thoughts.

Preserving the Local Culture

Pantun is not alien to the older generation in the Malay community. This traditional literature plays an important role in their life as it brings many benefits in their life. This statement is supported by Effendy (2007) which states pantun is often used as a joke, pun and innuendoes to reveal the wishes and aspirations of the community. On the other hand pantun is also used as a medium to rely moral values, principles of religion, cultures and social norms embraced by the local community. Due to the variation of pantun and the vast dissemination, pantun is deemed important among the Malay community. Pantun also teaches the people values such as politeness, grace and respect as seen in the extract below:

Buat meniaga di kedai Cina
Timun Bali dimakan pahit
Biar miskin bertambah hina
Budi bahasa mau yang baik.

(*Pantun Melayu: Bingkisan Permata*, 2001)

Based on the extract, we can see that the Malay community emphasizes on courtesy in every individual because courtesy mirrors the individuality of a person. The Malay community also uses pantun as a platform to embrace courtesy in their daily lives. As explained by Ahmad (2012), without pantun a ceremony will be lifeless and boring like eating rice without the dishes. People of the older generations were very smart in composing pantun

spontaneously, not like people these days that uses pantun as a part of speech. Therefore, it is important to preserve pantun as pantun is a national treasure and a heritage of the local culture for the future generations.

Moulding Individuality

Pantun is a reflection of the Malay community. Pantun has taught the norms in the life of the Malay community, social manners, courtesy in living as a community and others. The environment surrounding the community plays an important role in moulding a person's individuality. A good individual makes other people respect and be comfortable around us. The depth of an individuality in the community as stated in pantun can be an eye opener for other communities to look up to our culture. Other communities will be interested to learn about the Malay culture if we can be a good role model and example to them as stated in the stanza below:

Buah nanas dibawa belayar
Dimakan sebiji di Tanjung Jati
Hutang emas boleh dibayar
Hutang budi dibawa mati.

(Pantun Melayu: Bingkisan Permata, 2001)

Based on the stanza above, we can see that the Malay community puts importance in politeness and courtesy in interactions. Through interactions, a community will get to know a person's attitude and manners. On top of that, pantun also teaches us to be grateful to people who have provided us assistance. Therefore, we must always remember other's good deeds for us and be mindful of all the good people have done for us.

Summary

As a result of this research, we can conclude that this research uses a different approach compared to Peirce's Semiotic Theory. This research uses index and icon approach derived from the Peirce's Semiotic Theory. Index means the signals that refer to a collection of one or several signs, phenomenon and reason. Icon refers to the signs that directly regard objects pictured or carried by the subject. It is hoped that the approaches used in this research is able to give a depth understanding on the matter and results to readers.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, pantun is a medium to send messages and knowledge to the Malay community. Pantun is not complicated which requires precise thinking at all time. Pantun must be practiced everyday to be able to produce a good result and to make the person an expert in this field. The Malay community is known as a community with courtesy and politeness. Due to this reason, other communities have higher respect for the Malay community because the Malay community are able to mingle with others while being cautious while interacting with people of other culture. The Malay community embraces good values while interacting with people of different culture, religion and background disregarding the time and place. It is common for pantun to reflect on people in the Malay community because the variety of aspects in the content of pantun is able to influence an individual's characteristics. It is hoped that this research is able to expose the uniqueness of pantun and able to attract the current generation to explore pantun.

Corresponding Author

Nur Salihah binti Mohamad
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 Serdang
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Malaysia
Email: salihahmohamad94@gmail.com

References

- Ahmad, M. Y. (2012). *Pantun Jiwa Masyarakat Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Akademi Seni Budaya Dan Warisan Kebangsaan (ASWARA).
- Ali, A. H. (2006). *Mendekati Puisi Melayu Tradisional*. Bangi: ELPOS Print Sdn Bhd.
- Ali, I. M. M. (2016). Ikon dan Simbol Agama dalam Pantun Melayu. Dalam Salinah Ja'afar et.al. (pnyt.). *Wacana Pantun Melayu* (hlm 28-60). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Effendy, T. (2007). *Khazanah Pantun Melayu Riau*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Hamid, R. A. (2006, Oktober). Kebijakan dan Emosi dalam Pantun. *Dewan Sastera*, 11-15.
- Hassan, Z., Ja'afar, S., & Ali, I. M. M. (2016). Kritik Sosial dalam Pantun Melayu: Lambang Ketekalan Minda. Dalam Salinah Ja'afar et.al. (pnyt.). *Wacana Pantun Melayu* (hlm 142-159). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Imo, O.T., Des-Wosu, C. (2018). An Assessment on the Effect of Budgetary Control on Return on Assets and Net Profit of Government-Owned Companies in Rivers State, International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences 8 (3): 277-286.
- Ismail, A. M. & Daud, M. N. (2012). Kajian Mengenai Adat Perkahwinan Masyarakat Jawi Peranakan India Islam di Pulau Pinang, Malaysia: Dari Perspektif Islam. *Jurnal Perspektif*, 5, 121-131.
- Ismail, A. R. & Mohamad, K. (2017). *Kesusasteraan Melayu*. Petaling Jaya: Sasbadi Sdn. Bhd.
- Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat*. (2005). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Man, S. H. C. (2013). Kelestarian Pantun: Rencah dan Leluhur Bangsa Dulu, Kini dan Selamanya. *International Journal of the Malay World and Civilisation (Iman)* 1(1), 75–81.
- Muhammad, S. J. N. (2015). Warkah Sebagai Medium Diplomatik Kesultanan Melayu dalam Menjalinkan Hubungan dengan Kuasa Barat. *Jurnal Melayu*, 14(1), 2015, 136-148.
- Osman, M. T. (1987). *Warisan Puisi Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Piah, H. M. (2001). *Pantun Melayu: Bingkasan Permata*. Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan.
- Rafedzi, E. R. K., Zainal, N. K., Yu, H., & Kamal, J. I. A. (2018). Barriers to Access the Information by Male Juvenile Delinquents in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 7(3), 86–95.
- Said, A. (1994). *Puisi Warisan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Salim, A. (1983). *Puisi Melayu*. Petaling Jaya: Polygraphic Press Sdn. Bhd.
- Salleh, M. (2000). *Puitika Sastera Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Salleh, N. (2014). Tepak Sirih: Komunikasi Bukan Lisan dalam Adat Perkahwinan Melayu. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 30, 177-190.
- Vun, M. (2013). *Pembentukan Jati Diri Rakyat Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://marymichelle0512.blogspot.my/>
- Yusop, S. H. (2014). Pantun Milik Orang Melayu. *Berita Harian*, 4.