

## **Pantun as a Bridge of Friendship and Connector of Emotions in Malay Society**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the role of pantun as a bridge of friendship and a connector of feelings in the Deli Malay community, especially in Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District, Medan City. Pantun as a rich cultural heritage is still preserved and practiced in the daily lives of the local community, both in traditional events, celebrations, and informal communication. Using a case study approach, this study involved participatory observation and in-depth interviews with various community members in Kelumpang Village. The results of the study indicate that pantun not only functions as a means of entertainment, but also as a tool to strengthen relationships between individuals, maintain social harmony, and convey moral messages and advice. Pantun is also a medium of emotional expression that can relieve tension and create closeness between residents, especially in the context of social gatherings and traditional events. This study is expected to enrich understanding of the role of pantun in strengthening friendship and strengthening the cultural identity of the Deli Malays in the modern era, as well as encouraging the preservation of pantun as an integral part of local traditions that continue to be relevant.

**Keywords:** Literature, Pantun, Social Gathering

### **A. Introduction**

Pantun is one of the forms of oral literature that has long existed in Malay culture, especially in regions inhabiting the Sumatra area, including Deli, Medan. As a cultural heritage, pantun plays a very important role in the social life of the Malay community. In the tradition of the Deli Malay community, particularly in Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District, pantun is not only used as a form of entertainment but also functions as a tool to strengthen brotherhood, maintain social harmony, and convey moral messages and advice. In this context, pantun acts as a connector between individuals, maintaining and strengthening the social bonds that are already established in daily life.

Amid the rapid development of the times and the influence of modern culture, the existence of pantun as a means of communication in the Malay Deli community faces challenges in terms of its preservation and utilization. Many forms of traditional communication are beginning to be replaced by new technologies and media, making oral forms of communication such as pantun increasingly rare in daily social

interactions. Therefore, it is important to study more deeply the role of pantun in the Malay Deli community, especially in Kelumpang Village, which still maintains this tradition in their daily lives. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how pantun functions as a bridge of friendship and a connector of emotions within the local community, as well as its relevance in the modern era.

The Deli Malay community has a very rich tradition and culture, one of which is the pantun tradition. Pantun in Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District, Medan City, is still used in various social activities, both in traditional ceremonies, weddings, major celebrations, and in daily interactions between individuals. In social interactions within the Deli Malay community, pantun functions not only as a creative expression but also as a tool to convey meaningful messages, strengthen social bonds, and foster relationships among residents. Through pantun, the community can express love, affection, advice, even criticism, in a polite and elegant manner.

However, with the cultural shifts brought about by globalization and modernization, the use of pantun in daily life among the younger generation has begun to decline. This can threaten the continuity and preservation of pantun as part of Malay cultural heritage. The decrease in the use of pantun raises concerns that this form of communication will increasingly be forgotten, even though pantun plays a very significant role in strengthening the sense of togetherness and solidarity within the community (Purnama, 2023).

Although pantun as a form of oral literature has been widely discussed in general studies of Malay culture, specific studies on the role of pantun in strengthening social bonds and connecting emotions in the Malay Deli community, particularly in Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District, are still relatively limited. Most previous research has focused more on the function of pantun in the context of entertainment, education, or in formal and ceremonial events with a broader scope, without delving deeper into the social role of pantun in the daily life of local communities in certain areas (Kurniawan, 2024). Furthermore, most studies focus more on analyzing pantun texts without deeply considering the social interactions that involve pantun as a medium of communication.

The lack of research that directly examines the relationship between pantun and the formation of social bonds, the strengthening of kinship, as well as the emotional role of pantun in the lives of the Malay Deli community in the contemporary era represents a research gap that needs to be addressed (Manan, 2020). This is also related to the shift in the use of pantun, which is becoming increasingly rare among the younger generation, raising questions about the sustainability of using pantun in social interactions within the community.

This research offers a different approach by exploring the role of pantun more deeply in the social context of Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District. The case study approach focused on the Malay Deli community provides a new perspective on how pantun functions not only as a means of entertainment or education but also as a

medium for emotional connection and maintaining social bonds within interpersonal relationships in the local environment.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the analysis of the use of pantun in everyday social interactions, which is rarely found in previous studies that tend to focus more on aesthetic or textual analysis. This study also examines the relevance of pantun amid modernization and globalization, as well as the challenges faced in preserving this traditional form of communication, especially among the younger generation. Therefore, this research not only contributes to enriching the study of Malay literature and culture, but also provides practical insights for the preservation of traditions and the social values contained in pantun as part of the local cultural identity.

This study aims to explore more deeply the role of pantun as a bridge for social ties and as a connector of emotions in the Deli Malay community, particularly in Kelumpang Village. Using a case study approach, this research is expected to provide a clearer picture of how pantun can strengthen social relationships, preserve traditional values, and adapt to the developments of the times. In addition, this study is also expected to contribute to efforts to preserve pantun as part of local culture that remains relevant amidst the currents of changing times.

## **B. Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the role of pantun as a bridge for social bonds and an emotional connector in the Deli Malay community, particularly in Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District, Medan City. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand social phenomena in depth through interpretation and analysis of the specific social context, namely the Deli Malay community and the practice of using pantun in their daily lives (Creswell, 2020). This study is designed to examine the use of pantun in various aspects of the social life of the Malay Deli community, focusing on how pantun is used in interpersonal interactions to strengthen bonds and reinforce social ties. The research also aims to observe the relevance of pantun amid the wave of modernization and how the younger generation views and applies pantun in their lives.

This research was conducted in Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District, Medan City, which is an area with a Malay population that still practices the tradition of pantun in daily life. The research participants consisted of diverse local community members, including traditional leaders, religious figures, young generations, as well as the general public who are often involved in social events (Hendri Yahya Sahputra, 2024). Participant selection was carried out using purposive sampling, which involves choosing individuals who have knowledge or experience related to the use of pantun in social life.

To collect data, this study uses the following techniques (Iskandar, 2021). The researcher is directly involved in community activities that involve the use of pantun, such as traditional ceremonies, social gatherings, and religious events. This

observation allows the researcher to understand the direct context of pantun usage and the social dynamics that occur during these interactions. Interviews are conducted with community leaders, traditional leaders, and individuals who are often engaged in social and cultural activities involving pantun. These interviews aim to explore their experiences, understanding, and perspectives on the function of pantun in social relationships as well as its role in strengthening social bonds. The researcher also collects secondary data in the form of documentation on the use of pantun in various community activities, such as photos, videos, or pantun scripts used in traditional and ceremonial events. This provides a more complete picture of the forms and functions of pantun in everyday life practices.

The data collected from interviews, observations, and documentation will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Sugiyono, 2022). The first step is transcribing the interviews and recording the results of observations. Next, the researcher identifies the main themes that emerge from the data, such as the function of pantun in strengthening social relationships, the role of pantun in conveying moral messages and advice, and the challenges faced in preserving the pantun tradition amidst modernization. The collected data will be integrated and analyzed to build a broader understanding of the role of pantun in the Deli Malay community.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this study will use source triangulation and method triangulation techniques (Rahmad Hidayat, 2022). Source triangulation is conducted by comparing data obtained from various participants, while method triangulation is done by combining interviews, observations, and documentation to gain a more holistic picture and reduce bias that may arise from a single data source. This study will pay attention to research ethics principles, especially concerning data collection through interviews and observations. The researcher will ensure that all participants provide voluntary informed consent and that their personal data is kept confidential. In addition, the researcher will also respect local cultural and customary values throughout the research process.

By using this case study method, the research is expected to provide an in-depth view of how pantun functions as a bridge for maintaining social connections and as a connector of emotions within the Malay Deli community. In addition, this study will also offer new insights into the relevance of pantun in the social life of the Kelumpang village community, as well as how the local community responds to the challenges of preserving the pantun tradition in the modern era.

## C. Results and Discussion

### Results

This study reveals several important findings regarding the role of pantun in the Malay Deli community, particularly in Kelumpang Village, Medan Marelan District, Medan City. Pantun is found to have a significant function in strengthening social ties and building emotional bonds among community members. The following are the

main findings of the study.

### **Pantun as a Means of Fostering Friendship**

In the social life of the Malay Deli community, pantun (traditional Malay quatrains) is used as a means to start conversations, greet, and introduce oneself in social gatherings. In addition, pantun is often recited during traditional ceremonies or formal meetings, such as weddings, births, and religious holidays. In this context, pantun functions as a bridge that connects individuals or groups to build closer and more harmonious relationships. Through pantun, community members feel closer to one another, because pantun can create an atmosphere that is light-hearted and full of warmth. This is similar to the results of an interview conducted by the researcher with a Malay traditional figure, who stated;

*"Pantun is not just a form of entertainment, but also serves as a tool to maintain good relationships among people. In traditional ceremonies, pantun is always an important part. When I attend weddings or other major events, we usually start with pantun as an introduction to greet each other and strengthen our bonds. Pantun adds a warmer, softer touch to communication, and those who hear it feel appreciated. For example, in family gatherings, we can use pantun to show respect and foster closer relationships. With pantun, conversations become more fluid and less rigid. It is a more polite and graceful way to start a conversation."*

As for the supporting answer from one of the Malay youths, to whom the researcher asked about pantun as a means of fostering relationships, he replied;

*"I often hear pantun, especially from older people or during traditional events. Personally, I sometimes get confused too, because it feels difficult to memorize long pantun. But I know that pantun is important for maintaining good relationships. For example, if an old relative comes to the house, my parents usually welcome them with a pantun. In my opinion, pantun makes the atmosphere feel more intimate, not just formal. When parents or traditional leaders speak in pantun, it feels friendlier, and we as young people feel more appreciated. So pantun is indeed important as a means of maintaining family and social ties, even though sometimes it can be a bit difficult for young generations like me to follow."*

In both answers, it appears that pantun as a means of fostering social bonds plays an important role in society, both for the older generation who are accustomed to this tradition and for the younger generation who are beginning to experience its benefits despite the challenges in mastering it.

### **Pantun in the Process of Social and Moral Education**

Pantun not only functions as a means of communication but also serves as a tool for social and moral education in society. In many cases, pantun is used to convey moral messages, religious teachings, as well as customary values that serve as guidelines for people's lives. For example, pantun that contains advice about honesty, respect, and the importance of maintaining good relationships with others. Through the repetition of pantun in daily life, these values are introduced to younger generations and

preserved as part of cultural tradition. This is also emphasized by the village head in the results of his interview, where he explained his responses regarding pantun in the process of social and moral education;

*"Pantun has a very significant value in social and moral education, especially in teaching values of goodness to the community, particularly young people. In many religious events or community gatherings, pantun is often used to convey moral messages subtly. For example, pantun containing advice about the importance of honesty, respecting parents, or maintaining good relationships with neighbors. Usually, this pantun is delivered in events such as religious study sessions or family gatherings. We always strive to use pantun as a means to teach children about proper manners, which is part of religious teachings. This also helps preserve cultural traditions that are rich in noble values."*

It was reiterated by one of the local community members from the results of his interview, he explained his answer regarding pantun in the process of social and moral education;

*"In the process of social and moral education at school, we often use pantun to teach students about the importance of manners, mutual respect, and doing good to others. The pantun we teach usually contain positive messages, such as the importance of cooperation or helping each other in daily life. I often encourage students to create their own pantun related to good behavior and positive habits. In addition, pantun also helps them become more familiar with local culture and appreciate traditional heritage. Using pantun in the teaching and learning process provides an enjoyable and effective experience in instilling moral values in children."*

In both of these responses, it is evident that pantun not only serves as a means of cultural communication but also as an effective tool in social and moral education. Pantun can convey important messages in a way that is easy to accept and enjoyable, both in the context of religion and formal education.

### **Challenges in Preserving Pantun**

Although pantun is still used on various occasions, especially among the elderly and traditional leaders, its use among the younger generation is starting to decline. The influence of social media and technology, which are increasingly dominant in daily life, has made communication through pantun increasingly rare. Some respondents revealed that the younger generation tends to prefer more practical and direct forms of communication, such as using text messages or social media, which do not require aesthetic elements like pantun. This is also in line with the results of an interview with a local government official, who said;

*"The preservation of pantun in Kelumpang Village faces major challenges, especially from the development of technology and modern culture that increasingly dominate daily life. In the past, pantun was often used in every traditional event, such as weddings or community gatherings, but now many young people prefer to use social media and more practical forms of communication. They prefer to speak directly or through messaging apps rather than using pantun. The younger generation tends not to be very interested in pantun because they feel it*

*is outdated. In addition, they are less familiar with the structure and proper way of composing pantun. Nevertheless, we strive to maintain this tradition by teaching pantun during traditional events and by encouraging parents to use pantun more often in daily communication."*

It was reiterated by religious and traditional leaders through interview results regarding the challenges in preserving pantun, in which they stated;

*"I think one of the biggest challenges in preserving pantun is the inability of the younger generation to understand and memorize it. Nowadays, social media and technology dominate our lives, and communication has become faster and more direct. So, young people are more often using simple and practical language, rather than speaking in pantun, which requires creativity and language skills. Indeed, I hear pantun from my parents or during traditional events, but using it in everyday conversations is difficult for many of us. We are not accustomed to that form of language. In my opinion, to keep pantun alive, there needs to be an effort from schools or cultural institutions to teach and promote pantun to young people so that they become more interested in and appreciate this tradition."*

In both answers, the challenges faced in preserving pantun are related to the influence of modern culture and technology, as well as the lack of understanding and interest from the younger generation in maintaining the pantun tradition. Therefore, further efforts are needed to integrate pantun into daily life and education so that it remains relevant in the future.

## **Discussion**

Pantun in the Malay Deli community, especially in Kelumpang Village, plays a very important role in maintaining harmonious social relationships. The function of pantun as a tool for social networking reflects the value of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) that is part of the daily life of the Malay people. By conveying greetings or salutations through pantun, a person can create a friendlier and warmer social atmosphere, which forms the foundation for strong social bonds between individuals. In addition, the use of pantun as a connector of feelings provides a deep emotional dimension in social interactions. Pantun allows someone to express their feelings indirectly, thereby reducing the possibility of misunderstandings or open conflicts. This shows that pantun not only functions as a verbal communication tool but also as a medium for regulating emotions in social relationships.

In the context of social and moral education, pantun functions as a tool to transfer traditional and moral values to the younger generation (Putri Syahri, 2024). Most of the pantuns used in social gatherings contain teachings related to good behavior, respect for others, and the importance of preserving customs and culture (Junaidi, 2021). Amid modernization, which brings challenges to the preservation of local culture, the existence of pantun as an educational tool becomes increasingly important to preserve.

However, as found in this study, the biggest challenge facing pantun is its declining

use among the younger generation. This is related to changes in communication patterns influenced by technology and globalization. Social media and faster, more practical digital technology are gradually displacing pantun, with all its formal limitations (Azhar, 2020). Therefore, more serious efforts are needed to involve the younger generation in the preservation of pantun, one of which is through cultural education and activities that integrate pantun into their daily lives.

Pantun in the Malay Deli community, particularly in Kelumpang Village, has been proven to play a significant role in strengthening social bonds, connecting emotions, and conveying moral and social values. Although it faces challenges in preservation among the younger generation, pantun still has great potential to reinforce social ties and maintain local cultural heritage. Preserving pantun requires a more structured effort, including through cultural education and strengthening its role in the broader social life of the community (Idris, 2021). Pantun, as a distinctive form of oral literature in Malay culture, plays a very important role in strengthening social bonds, maintaining relationships, and expressing feelings in daily life (Ramli, 2022). In various studies on pantun, it has been found that pantun is not merely a tool for entertainment or aesthetics, but also has a profound social dimension.

According to (Suryanti, 2023), Pantun is used as a means of communication that strengthens relationships between individuals within the Malay community. Pantun is often used in both formal and informal events, such as weddings, births, or family gatherings. In these situations, pantun serves to start conversations and create a warm and respectful atmosphere. Pantun also fosters a sense of togetherness among individuals, reminding them of the importance of social relationships and mutual cooperation, which are characteristic of Malay society. In this context, pantun functions as a gentler, attentive, and peaceful communication tool, thereby enhancing social harmony within the community (Umi Kalsum, 2023).

In the research conducted by (Azhari, 2022), Pantun is considered a bridge of feelings within the Malay community. Pantun is used to convey feelings or emotions, such as love, sorrow, or joy, in an indirect and subtle manner. Pantun allows individuals to express their emotions without hurting others, due to its figurative and symbolic language. This makes pantun a highly effective form of communication in maintaining harmonious social relationships, especially in emotionally charged situations. Additionally, pantun also provides a space for the community to share their feelings in a more polite and understanding way.

A study by (Hamzah, 2024) stating that pantun also functions as a means of social and moral education. Pantun often contains deep moral messages, such as the importance of maintaining good relationships with others, sharing feelings, and respecting customs and traditions. Passed down through generations, pantun becomes one way to transfer cultural and ethical values to the younger generation. In Malay society, pantun is not only regarded as a form of literature, but also as part of an informal education process that teaches the community to respect each other and maintain politeness in interactions. Therefore, pantun plays a role in building positive social

and moral character in daily life.

Although pantun has high social value, its presence in Malay society faces significant challenges, especially in dealing with the era of globalization and technological development. (Syarifuddin, 2020) It explains that although pantun is still preserved in traditional ceremonies, its use among the younger generation is decreasing. One of the main reasons is the influence of social media, which is more practical and immediate, reducing young people's interest in learning and using pantun in daily life. Therefore, the preservation of pantun requires more intensive efforts, such as integrating pantun into the education system and local culture, as well as using technology to introduce pantun to the younger generation in a more modern format.

Pantun plays a very important role in Malay society as a means of maintaining social bonds and connecting emotions. Various studies have shown that pantun functions to strengthen social relationships, convey feelings in a subtle way, and serve as a tool for social and moral education. However, in the midst of rapid modernization, the preservation of pantun faces challenges, particularly from the influence of technology and the more practical aspects of global culture. Therefore, efforts are needed to integrate the tradition of pantun with contemporary developments, through education and the use of digital technology, so that pantun remains a living part of Malay society.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This research shows that pantun plays an important role in the Malay Deli community in Kelumpang Village as a means of communication that strengthens social bonds, maintains harmony, and conveys moral and cultural values. Pantun functions as a polite form of expression in various situations, while also serving as social education about customs and respect. However, the use of pantun among the younger generation has begun to decline due to the influence of technology and social media. To preserve it, efforts are needed such as introducing pantun early in schools, organizing training or cultural activities, and integrating pantun into traditional and social events. The use of digital media and support from the government as well as cultural institutions is also necessary to ensure that pantun remains relevant and is passed down to future generations as part of the Malay Deli cultural identity.

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