



Speaking Skills in the Perspective of Malay Oral Literature: A Conceptual Study for the Strengthening of Indonesian Language Learning in Higher Education

Muliawiwin¹, Zaitun², Suhardi³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ✉ : dr.muliawiwinmpd@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

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Speaking proficiency is a language skill that has a strategic role in the academic and professional world. Despite this, many students still face various obstacles, especially in terms of vocabulary mastery, the use of proper intonation, and confidence when speaking. This research aims to offer a conceptual model of speaking learning based on Malay oral literature as a local cultural treasure rich in rhetorical value, diction choices, and aesthetic language styles. The method used in this study is a literature review by examining various theories about speaking fluency, classical and modern rhetorical concepts, and characteristics of Malay oral literature. The results of the study show that forms of oral literature such as pantun, poetry, gurindam, and traditional speech have relevant communicative values to be used as models in learning to speak. The concept offered in this article is in the form of a speaking learning model based on oral literature which consists of three stages, namely text exploration, rhetorical analysis, and speaking practice. This model is expected to strengthen students' speaking skills while fostering appreciation for the richness of local culture.

Speaking Skills, Malay Oral Literature, Rhetoric, Language Learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking proficiency is one of the four language skills that exist and is the most important skill in academic and professional contexts (Aizawa et al., 2023). In the world of higher education, good speaking skills are needed to convey ideas clearly, formulate arguments sequentially, and build effective academic interactions (Hill, 2021). In the professional realm, this skill is the main capital in presentation, negotiation, and public communication activities that require clarity, politeness, and mastery of rhetoric (Bylkova et al., 2021). Thus, speaking skills not only serve as a means of communication, but also reflect a person's intellectual abilities and character.

Spoken language is the main means of human interaction, expressing ideas, and convincing others (Djalolovna, 2025). In the academic context, effective speaking skills greatly determine the success of students in presentations, discussions, seminars, and

other scientific forums (Seals, 2022). However, the reality on the ground shows that many students still face difficulties when it comes to presenting ideas in a structured, logical, and convincing way in formal situations. Some of the obstacles that often arise include limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, difficulty maintaining intonation and clarity of voice, and not being trained in composing effective sentences. In addition, speaking skills are often marginalized compared to writing or reading skills, even though oral communication skills play an important role in determining the quality of students' academic and professional interactions in the future (Mahbub & Hadina, 2021).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of innovation in speaking learning, but there is still a research gap in the context of integrating local cultural values as a source of learning. Research by Mislawiyadi (2023) emphasizes the need for a communicative approach in speaking learning (Mislawiyadi, 2023). Meanwhile, Kumari (2024) underlines the role of social context in shaping oral skills (Kumari, 2024). On the other hand, research by Misriani et al., (2023) shows that speaking learning in universities in Indonesia still focuses on linguistic aspects without paying attention to local cultural and rhetorical elements (Misriani et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, a study by Tazhitova et al., (2024) confirms that the use of cultural-based materials can increase students' confidence and rhetoric in speaking (Tazhitova et al., 2025). However, until now, there has not been much research that specifically links Malay oral literature which is rich in rhetorical and aesthetic values with the development of students' speaking skills at the university level. This gap is an important basis for this research to develop a conceptual model rooted in the richness of local oral traditions.

Indonesia has a wealth of oral literature that is full of communicative and aesthetic values. In the Riau Islands region, Malay oral literature such as pantun, poetry, gurindam, and traditional speech is still alive and passed down from generation to generation. This literary form not only functions as entertainment, but also as a medium of moral education, ethics, and speaking skills (Abubakar, 2024). The Malay oral tradition contains elements of rhetoric, the beauty of diction, and the mastery of intonation that can be used as a model in learning to speak.

This research aims to provide a conceptual framework regarding the use of Malay oral literature as a model of speaking learning in higher education. By integrating the rhetorical, aesthetic, and ethical values contained in oral literature into the learning process, it is hoped that students will not only be skilled in speaking academically, but also have cultural sensitivity and communicative character that is polite and rooted in local wisdom. The lack of use of Malay oral literature in teaching speaking skills in higher education is one of the main challenges. Despite its great potential, there has not

been much research that specifically links Malay oral literature with strengthening the learning of speaking skills at the university level.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of science in the field of applied linguistics and language education, especially in enriching the perspective of local culture-based speaking learning. Meanwhile, practically, the results of this research are expected to be a reference for lecturers, language educators, and curriculum developers in designing learning strategies that are contextual and based on Malay cultural values, so that the learning process of speaking is not only oriented to linguistic competence, but also to the formation of students' character and cultural identity.

RESEARCH METHOD

Approaches and Types of Research

This study uses a qualitative approach with a conceptual type of library research (Almowil et al., 2022). This approach was chosen because the research aims to formulate a conceptual model of speaking learning based on Malay oral literature through the study of theories and the results of previous research. Literature review allows researchers to critically examine various relevant scientific sources, such as books, journal articles, proceedings, and cultural documents regarding poems, poems, gurindam, and traditional speeches.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The research population includes scientific literature and Malay oral literature manuscripts relevant to the topics of speaking learning and rhetoric. The sampling technique is carried out using purposive sampling, which is the selection of sources that are considered the most relevant to answer the focus of the research (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). Literature criteria include: (1) scientific publications between 2021–2025 that address speaking proficiency, rhetoric, and culture-based learning; (2) authentic Malay oral literature manuscripts; and (3) conceptual or empirical articles that support the development of language learning models.

Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments

Data was collected through a systematic literature search using a scientific database. Each relevant literature is extracted through a literature record sheet containing the author's identity, year, research objectives, methods, key findings, and relevance to the research topic. The main instruments of the research are the researcher as a key instrument, assisted by Mendeley software for reference management, and NVivo 14 to assist the process of coding, categorization, and theme tracing (Plard & Martineau, 2021).

Research Procedure

The implementation of the research was carried out through four systematic stages. First, identification and selection of literature based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Second, data reduction and coding, which is grouping important concepts into themes such as rhetorical aspects, diction, discourse structure, and cultural values. Third, thematic analysis and conceptual synthesis to connect the results of the study between sources and find conceptual thinking patterns. Fourth, the formulation of a conceptual model of speaking learning based on Malay oral literature through the integration of analytical results. The validity of the data is strengthened through triangulation of sources and peer discussion in order to maintain the objectivity of interpretation (Meydan & Akkaş, 2024).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic and conceptual analysis (Naeem et al., 2023). Thematic analysis is used to identify recurring patterns and categories from the results of literature review, while conceptual analysis serves to construct logical relationships between relevant theories and concepts. The analysis process is carried out both inductive and interpretive, with the support of NVivo 14 software to systematically map the code and themes. The results of the analysis are synthesized into a conceptual model of speaking learning which includes three stages: text exploration, rhetorical analysis, and speaking practice.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Communicative Values in Malay Oral Literature

Malay oral literature holds rich and relevant communicative values to strengthen students' speaking skills in college. This tradition is not only a means of entertainment or cultural heritage, but also a manifestation of the linguistic intelligence of the Malay community who integrates the aesthetics of language with the function of social communication. Each form of oral literature, whether pantun, verse, gurindam, or traditional speech, displays performative aspects involving intonation, rhythm, word choice, and the ability to compose polite and persuasive messages. These communicative values can be the pedagogical foundation for speaking learning that is rooted in local wisdom but relevant to the modern academic context.

Linguistically, intonation and rhythm play a major role in building clarity and appeal of communication. In Malay pantun and verse, regular rhythmic patterns function not only as an aesthetic element, but also as a prosody training that trains sensitivity to pressure, tempo, and low pitches. This is in accordance with the findings of Anagel (2025) who affirmed that performativity in oral traditions helps learners develop prosodic awareness that supports clarity of articulation and confidence in public speaking (Anagel, 2025). In an academic context, the ability to maintain

intonation and rhythm is essential to foster credibility (ethos) and audience engagement (pathos) in formal communication.

Furthermore, the diction and style of language in gurindam and rhymes contain beauty as well as depth of meaning. Both require the speaker to choose dense, symbolic, and aesthetic words, which in the context of speaking learning can teach students to convey ideas effectively without losing the subtlety of expression. Altamirano Martínez (2022) emphasized that the use of rhymes trains the ability to think analogously and sharpens sensitivity to the nuances of meaning. Diction mastery is not only a linguistic skill, but also a representation of intellectual and cultural sensitivity in speaking (Altamirano Martínez, 2022). Thus, oral literature-based learning allows students to balance the clarity of the message with the beauty of language.

In addition, the rhetoric and persuasion in Malay traditional speech show that effective communication is not just about conveying a message, but also building an emotional and moral connection between the speaker and the listener. The tradition of traditional speech requires the speaker to convince the audience with polite, structured, and respectful language. According to Tsvetkova (2024), traditional speech contains elements of ethos (speaker's personality), logos (message logic), and pathos (emotion), which are conceptually rooted in Aristotle's classical rhetorical theory (TSVETKOVA, 2024). Gurindam and traditional speech also function as a medium of moral persuasion that instills the values of wisdom and social ethics.

These communicative values can conceptually be viewed as a pedagogical framework of speaking learning that combines aesthetic, cognitive, and moral dimensions. Aesthetics train the beauty and clarity of speech; cognitive honing the ability to formulate logical arguments; while morality instills politeness and empathy in communication. This approach is in line with the idea of culturally responsive pedagogy put forward by Baker (2022), that language and culture cannot be separated in the learning process (Baker, 2022).

Thus, Malay oral literature serves not only as a cultural artifact, but also as a communicative learning model that unites the beauty of language and social ethical values. This approach can enrich speech learning in college by fostering students' aesthetic sensitivity, social awareness, and rhetorical abilities that are rooted in local culture but adaptive to the demands of global communication.

Relevance to Speaking Learning

In the context of learning in higher education, Malay oral literature has great potential as a contextual and multidimensional pedagogical media. It integrates linguistic (language structure), performative (intonation, expression), and social (communication ethics) aspects. The relevance of oral literature to speaking learning can be seen in the ability of this tradition to bring creative, communicative, and meaningful learning activities to life.

First, rhyme-based presentations or gurindam can train students in choosing diction, controlling rhythm, and composing meaning-dense messages. Through rhymes, students learn to think quickly, compose short but meaningful arguments, and adapt the language style to the context of the audience. Rojas Castillo (2021) emphasized that the use of rhymes in language learning can increase verbal creativity and enrich students' oral expression (Rojas Castillo, 2023). In addition, this activity also trains students to dare to speak in public in a polite and communicative style.

Second, storytelling based on poetry and folklore provides a more emotional and narrative communicative experience. Students are trained to manage storylines, set intonation, and build emotional closeness with listeners. Nair and Yunus (2020) mentioned that traditional storytelling is able to strengthen the relationship between language and emotional experiences, making speaking activities more lively and meaningful (Nair & Yunus, 2021). Through this activity, students not only learn to speak in a coherent and expressive manner, but also understand the cultural context behind oral texts.

Third, traditional speech simulations are an effective means to foster confidence and audience mastery. Traditional speech requires mastery of formal language, the ability to build a logical argument structure, and polite and convincing delivery. Suhardi (2023) shows that the practice of traditional speech in rhetorical learning helps students develop ethical awareness, emotional control, and persuasive skills (Shim, 2025). This activity is in line with the needs of academic and professional communication where speaking ability is judged not only by the content of the message, but also by the style of delivery.

The relevance of oral literature in speaking learning can also be seen from the culture-based learning approach that places culture as the main source of learning. According to Arini et al., (2021), culture-based learning strengthens learning motivation and creates students' emotional engagement with the material (Arini et al., 2025). In this context, Malay oral literature becomes a bridge between language learning and the formation of students' cultural identity.

Thus, the integration of Malay oral literature in speaking learning not only serves to improve technical aspects of communication such as intonation, diction, or narrative, but also fosters affective aspects such as confidence, politeness, and empathy. Oral literature makes learning to speak as a process of forming communicative characters that respect tradition as well as be adaptive to the times.

Conceptual Model of Speaking Learning Based on Malay Oral Literature

The conceptual model of speaking learning based on Malay oral literature is designed to bridge the gap between local cultural heritage and global academic communication needs. This model emphasizes a holistic and integrative learning

process, where students not only master linguistic aspects, but also understand the values of rhetoric, aesthetics, and ethics in communication.

The first stage, Oral Text Exploration, places students as active learners who listen, read, or witness oral texts such as poems, poems, gurindam, and traditional speeches. At this stage, students recognize the patterns of intonation, rhythm, diction, and discourse structure typical of oral literature. In line with the theory of the Input Hypothesis by Krashen, the exploration stage serves as a linguistic exposure that enriches the student's language experience (Гарашук, 2024).

The second stage, Rhetorical Analysis, encourages students to conduct critical analysis of rhetorical elements such as diction, language style, intonation, and persuasion strategies. This stage is important for developing a student's metacognitive awareness of how language works in certain communication situations. Vaara and Fritsch (2022) state that rhetorical analysis helps learners understand the relationship between language forms, communicative goals, and audiences (Vaara & Fritsch, 2022).

The third stage, Speaking Practice, is a real application of learning. Students compose and deliver speeches, presentations, or narratives by imitating and adapting the elements of oral literature that have been studied. According to Mosquera (2022), the use of rhymes in speaking exercises has been proven to increase verbal fluency and creativity (Mosquera, 2022). Meanwhile, according to Abdurakhmonova (2025), the simulation of traditional speech trains persuasion and politeness skills (Abdurakhmonova, 2025).

Conceptually, this model is integrative and contextual. Integrative because it combines exploration, analysis, and practice in one complementary learning cycle; contextual because it is rooted in local culture but is directed at strengthening academic speaking skills. This model is expected to strengthen students' communicative skills while fostering pride in Malay oral literary heritage.

With the application of this model, speaking learning in college focuses not only on language fluency, but also on the formation of communicative characters that are ethical, reflective, and cultured. This kind of approach is in line with the local wisdom-based language education paradigm that places culture as a source of value and inspiration in developing communication skills (Ahmar & Azzajjad, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Malay oral literature contains communicative values that are important for strengthening students' speaking skills in higher education. The tradition of pantun, poetry, gurindam, and traditional speech not only functions as cultural heritage, but also as a pedagogical means that combines linguistic, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions of communication. A conceptual model of oral literature-based speaking learning consisting of three stages of oral text exploration, rhetorical analysis,

and speaking practice can be an innovative approach to improve students' fluency, diction accuracy, and politeness in the language of students contextually and rooted in local culture.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of language education science by emphasizing the relevance of integrating cultural values in the learning of speaking skills. The oral literature-based approach expands the understanding of communication that is not only oriented to the technical aspect, but also builds the character, social sensitivity, and cultural identity of the students. Practically, this model can be adapted by lecturers and curriculum developers to enrich speech learning methods that are more interactive, reflective, and meaningful according to academic and professional needs.

However, this study has limitations because it has not been empirically tested in a classroom context. The limitations of teaching materials, lack of audiovisual resources, and the lack of understanding of students and lecturers in the context of oral literature are challenges in the implementation of this model. Therefore, further research is recommended to test the effectiveness of the model through a classroom action approach or the development of oral literature-based digital learning media. With this step, Malay oral literature can be transformed from just a cultural heritage to a source of pedagogical innovation that strengthens speaking skills and enriches language education in the global era.

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