

## The Role of Language in The Folklore Si Pahit Lidah as a Culture-Based Character Education Media in South Sumatra

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**ABSTRACT** - This study aims to analyze the discourse structure in the folk tale Si Pahit Lidah and identify the local culture-based character education values contained within it. Teun A. van Dijk's model can be used to analyze the folktale "Si Pahit Lidah" by examining its text structure, language use, and social context to reveal the moral values, cultural beliefs, ideology, and local wisdom reflected in the society of South Sumatra, particularly in how the story conveys messages about behavior, social norms, supernatural power, and the consequences of human actions. This study uses a qualitative method with a discourse analysis approach based on Teun A. Van Dijk's model. The data collection technique was carried out through documentation and note-taking techniques, while data analysis used an interactive model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the discourse structure in the story of Si Pahit Lidah consists of narrative, cohesion, and coherence aspects. The narrative structure includes intrinsic elements such as theme, characters, plot, and setting, which build the story systematically. Cohesion is seen through the use of references, conjunctions, repetition, substitution, and ellipsis that create text unity, while coherence is shown through cause-and-effect relationships, chronology, explanations, as well as continuity of meaning between sentences. Moreover, this story contains values of character education such as responsibility, self-control, wisdom, and social care that reflect the local wisdom of the South Sumatran community. Thus, the folk tale Si Pahit Lidah can be utilized as a source of local culture-based learning in character education.

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with rich cultural diversity, one of which is reflected in the existence of folktales that develop across various regions. Folktales, as part of oral literature, function not only as entertainment but also as a medium for conveying life values that reflect the character of society. They contain moral values, social norms, and local wisdom passed down from generation to generation. This is in line with Viora (2022), who states that folktales contain moral values that can be used as a medium for character education. However, in the era of globalization, younger generations tend to show declining interest in local culture, which may lead to a shift in cultural values (Naibaho & Sianturi, 2025). On the other hand, the education sector currently faces challenges in shaping students' character, such as low responsibility, lack of self-control, and declining politeness. Therefore, efforts are needed to

integrate character education values into the learning process through sources that are relevant to community life. Folktales can serve as an alternative because they convey moral values contextually through characters and plot. Pristiwanti (2022) emphasizes that character education plays an important role in shaping students' personalities, while Ramadhan and Zulfikarni (2023) highlight that literary texts can serve as effective media for character learning.

To deeply understand the meaning contained in folktales, an approach is needed that examines not only linguistic aspects but also the social context behind the text. This study applies Teun A. Van Dijk's discourse analysis model, focusing on narrative structure, cohesion, and coherence. Rahmalia and Hamdani (2025) state that discourse analysis can reveal deeper meanings through the relationship between language and social context. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the discourse structure in *Si Pahit Lidah* and identify its local culture-based character education values as a relevant learning resource.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a discourse analysis design. The qualitative approach is used to understand meanings within the text through data interpretation Creswell, (2020). The discourse analysis refers to Teun A. Van Dijk's model, emphasizing the relationship between text structure and social context.

### **Study Sample**

The sample in this study was in the form of the folk tale text *Si Pahit Lidah*, which comes from South Sumatra. The sample selection was done purposively, that is, based on certain considerations according to the research objectives. According to Sugiyono (2022), the purposive sampling technique is used to determine the sample based on characteristics deemed relevant to the research, so that the data obtained is more in-depth and aligns with the focus of the study.

### **Study Instrument**

The main instrument in this study is the researcher themselves (human instrument), because qualitative research places the researcher as the primary tool in data collection and analysis. Creswell, (2020) states that in qualitative research, the researcher plays a direct role in interpreting the data. Additionally, a data analysis sheet is also used, containing categories of discourse analysis, namely narrative structure (theme, characters, plot, setting), cohesion (reference, conjunctions, repetition, substitution, ellipsis), and coherence (cause-effect relationships, chronology, explanation, and continuity of meaning).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation techniques and note-taking techniques. Documentation techniques are used to obtain data in the form of written texts, while note-taking techniques are used to identify important parts of the text. According to Sugiyono (2022), documentation techniques are data collection methods carried out by analyzing documents relevant to the research. Furthermore, the researcher conducted an intensive reading of folklore texts to obtain data that aligns with the research focus.

### **Data Analysis Method**

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model consisting of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This model was developed by Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2014), who stated that qualitative data analysis is carried out interactively and continuously until the data reaches saturation. Data reduction is carried out by selecting relevant data, data presentation is in the form of analytical descriptions, and conclusions are drawn through data interpretation based on discourse analysis theory.

## Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on a limited scale to ensure the clarity of the analysis categories used before the main research was carried out. According to Creswell (2020), the pilot study aims to test the feasibility of research instruments and procedures so that the data obtained are more valid and aligned with the research objectives. Validity and Reliability The validity of data in this study was tested through theory triangulation, which involves comparing the results of the analysis with various relevant theories. In addition, the reliability of the data was ensured through thorough observation and repeated checking of the data. Sugiyono (2022) stated that validity in qualitative research can be achieved through triangulation, while data trustworthiness is reinforced by consistency in the analysis process. Table 1 shows the narrative analysis of folklore Si Pahit Lidah.

**Table 1.** Narrative analysis of folklore Si Pahit Lidah

Column number 1	Column number 2	Column number 3
Theme	Figure	Plot
As a result of words	The Bitter Tongue	Chronological
Moral value	Society	Conflict-Resolution

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Discourse Structure

The results of the study show that the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” has a systematically organized and narrative discourse structure. The story is constructed through a series of interconnected events that create a storyline easily understood by readers. The main theme found in the story is the consequences of human speech and behavior toward oneself and the surrounding environment. This theme becomes the core moral message conveyed throughout the story.

Based on the analysis of the narrative structure, the story begins with the introduction of the main character along with the setting and the social conditions of the community. Furthermore, the conflict emerges when the main character demonstrates behavior and speech that negatively affect the surrounding environment. The climax occurs when the main character’s words lead to certain consequences believed to be a form of supernatural power. At the end of the story, the resolution reveals the consequences of the main character’s actions

The cohesion analysis shows the use of references in the form of personal pronouns and demonstratives that function to maintain connections between sentences. Other forms of cohesion identified in the story are substitution and ellipsis. Substitution is used to replace certain elements in order to avoid excessive repetition, while ellipsis is used to omit elements that are already understood by readers. The use of these two elements makes the text more effective while maintaining semantic unity.

From the aspect of coherence, strong cause-and-effect relationships were found throughout the sequence of events in the story. Every action and speech of the main character is followed by certain impacts that become the logical continuation of previous events. The relationships among ideas in the story are systematically arranged so that readers can understand the story comprehensively. This study also found that the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” contains character education values relevant to social life. The value of responsibility is reflected through the consequences experienced by the main character because of his behavior and speech. The story teaches that every action has consequences that must be accounted for.

The value of self-control is reflected through the moral message encouraging individuals to be careful in speaking and acting. The main character is portrayed as suffering negative consequences because he is unable to control his speech and emotions. These findings indicate that folklore functions as an educational medium for instilling wise communication behavior.

In addition, the value of wisdom is found in the message that humans should consider the impact of their words on others and the surrounding environment. The story emphasizes the importance of thinking before speaking in order to avoid causing harm to oneself and society. This value represents a form of local wisdom passed down from generation to generation.

The value of social care is reflected in the relationships among characters and the social life of the community within the story. Society is portrayed as living within a social order that requires mutual respect and the maintenance of good relationships with others. Therefore, the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for social and cultural learning.

Overall, the findings show that the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” has a cohesive discourse structure through narrative, cohesion, and coherence aspects. Furthermore, the story contains character education values such as responsibility, self-control, wisdom, and social care. These findings demonstrate that folklore has an important function as a medium for preserving the local culture of the people of South Sumatra while also serving as a means of moral education for younger generations.

The findings show that the discourse structure includes:

- a. Narrative: theme of consequences of speech, chronological plot
- b. Cohesion: references, conjunctions, repetition, substitution, ellipsis
- c. Coherence: causal relationships, logical flow, continuity

These findings align with Fauzi & Sabardila (2023) regarding cohesion and Muhammad (2024) on coherence.

### Character Education Values

The folktale contains important values: Responsibility, Self-control, Wisdom, Social care. These values are conveyed through the consequences experienced by the main character. This supports Putri et al. (2025) that folklore contains moral and cultural values. Table 2 shows the explanation of the finding data based on structure findings and table 3 based on character education value findings.

**Table 2.** Discourse Structure Findings

Discourse Structure Aspect	Findings Data	Explanation
Narrative	Theme of the consequences of speech and behavior	The story focuses on the impact of the main character’s words and actions
Narrative	Chronological plot	Events are arranged sequentially from introduction, conflict, climax, to resolution
Narrative	Introduction of character and conflict	The main character is introduced along with the conflict that develops throughout the story
Cohesion	Reference	The use of personal pronouns and demonstratives to maintain textual connections
Cohesion	Conjunction	The use of conjunctions such as and, then, but, because, and therefore
Cohesion	Repetition	Repetition of certain parts to emphasize moral messages
Cohesion	Substitution	Replacement of certain elements to avoid excessive repetition
Cohesion	Ellipsis	Omission of elements already understood by readers
Coherence	Cause-and-effect relationship	Every speech and action of the character has certain consequences
Coherence	Logical sequence	Events in the story are arranged systematically and are easy to understand

*continued*

Discourse Structure Aspect	Findings Data	Explanation
Coherence	Story continuity	Each part of the story supports one another in constructing the overall meaning

**Table 3.** Character education findings.

Character Education Values	Findings Data	Explanation
Responsibility	The main character receives consequences from his words	Teaches that every action has consequences
Self-control	The character is unable to control his speech and emotions	Shows the importance of being careful in speaking
Wisdom	The character is reminded to consider the impact of his words	Teaches wise behavior and careful decision-making
Social Care	Relationships among characters within society	Instills respect and concern for others
Moral Values	The story functions as a medium for advice	Shows the function of folklore as a medium for character education
Cultural Values	The existence of local wisdom in society	Demonstrates cultural preservation through the folklore of the people of South Sumatra

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” has a systematically organized discourse structure through narrative, cohesion, and coherence elements. The narrative structure of the story is constructed through a chronological plot beginning with the introduction of the character, the emergence of conflict, the climax, and finally the resolution of the story. The main theme found in the story is the consequences of the main character’s speech and behavior. This theme becomes the central focus of the story’s development as well as a medium for delivering moral messages to society. The well-organized narrative structure indicates that folklore functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for transmitting social and cultural values from generation to generation.

From the aspect of cohesion, the study found the use of references, conjunctions, repetition, substitution, and ellipsis that create textual unity. References are used through personal pronouns and demonstratives to connect sentences within the story.

The coherence aspect of the story is reflected through strong cause-and-effect relationships between the actions of the main character and the consequences he experiences. Each event has a logical connection with the following event, creating a continuous and unified storyline. This coherence clarifies the meaning that a person’s words and behavior can bring certain impacts on themselves and their surrounding environment. Therefore, the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” demonstrates semantic unity that effectively supports the delivery of moral messages to readers or listeners.

The findings of this study are in line with the perspective of Teun A. van Dijk, who states that discourse is understood not only through text structure but also through the relationship between language, social context, and meanings constructed within society. In the story of “Si Pahit Lidah,” the text structure is used to represent the social and cultural values of the people of South Sumatra. Through discourse analysis, it can be understood that folklore serves as a medium for indirectly conveying ideology, social norms, and the worldview of society.

Besides the discourse structure, this study also found character education values embedded in the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah.” The value of responsibility is reflected in the consequences experienced by the main character because of his words and actions. The story teaches that every individual must be responsible for their speech and behavior in social life. This value becomes a form of moral education passed down through oral tradition.

The value of self-control is also clearly reflected in the story. The main character is portrayed as experiencing negative consequences because he is unable to control his speech and emotions. This shows that folklore is used as a medium to teach the importance of maintaining proper speech and controlling emotions in social life. Self-control becomes an essential part of shaping an individual’s character in order to live harmoniously with others.

The findings of this study support the opinion of Putri et al. (2025), who state that folklore contains moral and cultural values that can be used as a medium for character education. In addition, the findings regarding cohesion and coherence are also consistent with the studies of Fauzi and Sabardila (2023) and Muhammad (2024), which emphasize that unity and interconnected meaning are important elements in constructing the quality of discourse. Therefore, the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” possesses both linguistic and educational values that can be utilized in the teaching of Indonesian language and literature.

Overall, this study shows that the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” has a strong discourse structure and contains significant character education values. Through narrative, cohesion, and coherence elements, the story effectively conveys moral messages to society. The values of responsibility, self-control, wisdom, and social care found in the story indicate that folklore plays an important role in preserving local.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” has a well-structured discourse consisting of narrative, cohesion, and coherence aspects. The narrative structure is reflected in the chronological storyline with the main theme focusing on the consequences of the main character’s speech and behavior. The cohesion aspect is shown through the use of references, conjunctions, repetition, substitution, and ellipsis that create textual unity. Meanwhile, coherence is reflected through causal relationships, logical sequences, and continuity between events in the story, allowing the meaning of the folktale to be understood comprehensively. In addition, the study reveals that the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” contains character education values, including responsibility, self-control, wisdom, and social care. These values are conveyed through the actions of the main character and the consequences he experiences because of his words and behavior. Therefore, the folktale “Si Pahit Lidah” functions not only as traditional entertainment but also as a medium for delivering moral messages, character education, and preserving the local cultural values of the people of South Sumatra.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

**Author 1.:** Conceptualization, data collection, writing original draft. **Author 2.:** Research topik initiator, supervision, validation, reviewing, and editing.

## AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data available within the article or its supplementary materials.

## DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI was used in writing this manuscript.

## ETHIC STATEMENTS

Not applicable.

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