


# Analysis of the Implementation of Malay Oral Tradition in Indonesian Language Learning for Student Character Formation at Kasih Karunia Junior High School

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i3.2550>

\*Anggi Nur Febriani, Tia Maharani, Siti Azura, Nurul Asiyah Syahkila, Fitriani Lubis<sup>abcde</sup>   
<sup>12345</sup>Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: [angginrbriani@gmail.com](mailto:angginrbriani@gmail.com)

## A B S T R A C T

Indonesian language instruction plays a crucial role in developing both students' language skills and character. However, instruction in schools still tends to focus on cognitive aspects and has not yet optimally integrated local culture as a learning resource. This study aims to analyze the implementation of Malay oral traditions in Indonesian language instruction and their role in shaping student character at SMP TK Kasih Karunia. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, involving one Indonesian language teacher and five students as research informants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques, following the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that Malay oral traditions, particularly Syair Perahu by Hamzah Fansuri, have been incorporated into the teaching of classical poetry through activities focused on structural analysis, symbolic meaning, and moral values. The integration of oral traditions makes learning more contextual, enhances student engagement, and helps instill religious values, responsibility, good manners, and social awareness. Students showed positive responses because the learning material was related to their culture and daily experiences. This study indicates that the Malay oral tradition has the potential to serve as a medium for Indonesian language instruction that supports character education while also contributing to the preservation of local culture within the school environment.

**Keywords:** *Oral Tradition, Malay Culture, Character Education, Indonesian Language Learning*

### Article History:

Received 13th May 2026

Accepted 02nd June 2026

Published 15th June 2026



## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language learning has an important role in developing language skills as well as shaping the character of students. However, the implementation of Indonesian language learning in schools still tends to focus on cognitive aspects and mastery of the material alone, while the cultivation of cultural values and character education has not been carried out optimally. This condition causes learning to emphasize academic results more than the formation of student attitudes and behaviors. In fact, education not only aims to improve intellectual abilities, but also to form individuals who have an honest attitude, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and care for the social environment. This situation shows that learning Indonesian requires innovations that are able to connect learning materials with students' real lives so that the learning process is not monotonous and only theory-oriented.

One approach that can be used to create more meaningful learning is Contextual Teaching and Learning. Contextual learning is an approach that relates subject matter to students' real experiences so that students are able to understand and apply the material in their daily lives. Hasanuddin et al., (2025) explained that contextual learning emphasizes the relationship between learning materials and the real-life context of students so that the learning process becomes more effective and meaningful. This approach also encourages active student involvement through discussions, problem-solving, cooperation, and hands-on experience so that learning is not only teacher-centered. Nababan et al., (2023) state that

contextual learning strategies emphasize the full involvement of students in finding the connection between the material being studied and the reality of their lives. Learning that is associated with students' experiences and environment will be easier to understand because the material feels close to their lives.

The application of contextual learning in learning Indonesian can be done through the use of local culture as a learning resource. One of the forms of local culture that can be used is the Malay oral tradition. Malay oral traditions include poems, poems, folklore, legends, and traditional expressions that are passed down from generation to generation in the community. Oral traditions not only function as entertainment, but also contain moral values, social values, life norms, and cultural teachings that can be used as a means of character learning. Hasanah & Andari (2021) explained that oral tradition is a cultural heritage that is conveyed orally from generation to generation and functions as a medium for conveying social and cultural messages of the community. Oral traditions also contain various life values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, religiosity, tolerance, and respect for others which are still relevant in the lives of students today.

The Malay oral tradition has great potential to be used in learning Indonesian because it is able to create learning that is more interesting and close to students' lives. Through rhymes, poems, and folklore, students not only learn linguistic elements, but also understand the moral messages contained in them. Sarkowi et al., (2024) stated that oral traditions have a function as regional identity, a source of local history, and a medium of cultural inheritance to the next generation. The use of oral traditions in learning is also a form of preserving local culture in the midst of technological developments and globalization trends that cause the younger generation to begin to know less about their own regional culture. If this condition continues, oral traditions as cultural heritage are feared to be increasingly abandoned and lose their existence in society.

In addition to being related to cultural preservation, the use of Malay oral traditions in learning is also closely related to character education. Character education is the process of instilling moral values and positive behavior in students through educational activities. Fadilah et al., (2021) explained that character education aims to shape students to have personalities, noble morals, responsibility, discipline, and behavior in accordance with social norms and community culture. Character education not only teaches the concepts of good and bad, but also accustoms students to apply those values in daily life. Character values such as honesty, discipline, hard work, tolerance, social care, communicative, and responsibility can be instilled through learning that utilizes local culture because students more easily understand values that are close to their social environment.

Several previous studies have shown that oral traditions have a positive contribution to the world of education. Hasanah & Andari (2021) found that oral traditions can be a medium for learning social and cultural values of the community. Sarkowi et al., (2024) also explained that oral traditions play a role in strengthening the value of local wisdom and becoming a means of cultural inheritance to the younger generation. Another study conducted by Hasanuddin et al., (2025) shows that contextual learning is able to increase learning motivation, concept understanding, and active involvement of students in the learning process. The results of the study show that local culture and contextual learning have a strong relationship in creating meaningful learning.

However, research on the implementation of Malay oral traditions in Indonesian language learning for the formation of students' character has not been widely done, especially at the junior high school level. Previous research has mostly discussed oral traditions as a form of culture or source of local history, while studies that link Malay oral traditions with Indonesian language learning and the formation of students' character are still limited. In addition, research on the application of Malay oral traditions in the SMPTK Kasih Karunia environment has never been carried out so that this research has novelty in the object of study and the focus of research. Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Malay oral tradition in learning Indonesian language and find out its role

in shaping the character of students at SMPTK Kasih Karunia. This research is expected to contribute to the development of Indonesian language learning based on local culture as well as an effort to preserve Malay oral traditions in the educational environment.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it is able to provide a deep understanding of social and educational phenomena that occur in the learning process. Qualitative research allows researchers to examine in detail the implementation of Malay oral traditions in learning Indonesian language and see how the process plays a role in shaping students' character in the school environment. The focus of the research lies not only on learning outcomes, but also on the processes, experiences, interactions, and meanings that emerge during learning activities.

The research was carried out at SMPTK Kasih Karunia on February 18, 2026. The informants in this study consisted of one Indonesian language teacher and five students who were directly involved in the learning process. Indonesian language teachers were chosen as the main informants because they have experience and direct involvement in integrating Malay oral traditions into classroom learning activities. The criteria for selecting teachers are based on several considerations, namely teachers who actively teach Indonesian language subjects, understand the use of Malay oral traditions in learning, and have experience in implementing learning based on local culture. Meanwhile, five students were selected as participants to obtain data on students' responses, experiences, and views on the implementation of the Malay oral tradition in learning Bahasa Indonesia. The selection of students is carried out purposively by considering their active involvement during the learning process.

The data collection technique used in this study is in-depth interviews. Interviews are conducted directly with teachers and students using interview guidelines that have been systematically compiled so that the data obtained remains focused according to the research objectives. Interview questions to teachers include an understanding of Malay oral traditions, forms of oral traditions used in learning, implementation strategies in the classroom, character values instilled in students, and obstacles faced during the learning process. Meanwhile, interviews with students focused on learning experiences, responses to the use of Malay oral traditions, understanding of character values gained, and their impressions during learning. Through these interviews, researchers obtained data that was in-depth, reflective, and in accordance with real conditions in the field.

The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely data reduction, data grouping based on certain themes and categories, systematic presentation of data, and drawing conclusions. The data reduction stage is carried out by selecting and focusing data that is relevant to the research objectives. After that, the data was grouped based on themes related to the implementation of Malay oral traditions and the formation of students' character. The data that has been compiled is then presented in the form of a descriptive description so that it is easy to understand and analyze thoroughly. This analysis aims to produce a clear picture of the implementation of the Malay oral tradition in learning Indonesian language and its contribution to the formation of student character at SMPTK Kasih Karunia.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Teachers' Understanding of Malay Oral Traditions

The results of the study show that Indonesian language teachers at SMPTK Kasih Karunia have a good understanding of the Malay oral tradition as a cultural heritage that contains moral values, customs, and the identity of the Malay community. Oral tradition is seen not only as a literary work, but also as an educational medium that can be used in the

Indonesian language learning process. Teachers understand that oral traditions have an important function in conveying the value of life to the younger generation.

This can be seen from the results of the interview when the teacher stated that "the Malay oral tradition is a cultural heritage that is inherited from generation to generation through speech. This tradition is not only in the form of stories, but also contains customary, moral, and identity values of the Malay community" The statement shows that teachers view oral traditions as an important part of maintaining cultural continuity as well as a means of character education.

The teacher also explained that the form of Malay oral tradition that is most understood and used in learning is poetry, especially Syair Perahu by Hamzah Fansuri. The poem was chosen because it has a deep meaning and is relevant to old poetry material in learning Bahasa Indonesia. One of the verses used reads:

*"O young man, know yourself  
Is the boat of your body  
It doesn't matter how long you live  
To the hereafter you will remain silent"*

The teacher explained that the poem contains the value of self-reflection and spiritual awareness that is close to the life of students. In addition, poetry is also considered to be able to help students understand the value of life through simple and meaningful literary language.

### **Implementation of Malay Oral Tradition in Learning**

The implementation of the Malay oral tradition is carried out through the use of poetry in old poetry materials. Syair is included in teaching modules and lesson plans as part of Indonesian language learning activities. In the learning process, students are asked to analyze the structure of the poem, rhyme, symbolic meaning, and moral values contained in the verse.

The teacher explained that "I included the poems in the teaching module and lesson plans in the old poetry material. My students asked to identify the structure, symbolic meaning, and moral value in the poem". The statement shows that the Malay oral tradition has been applied directly in learning activities, although it is still limited to certain materials. The use of poetry in learning makes the learning process more contextual because the material studied is related to the culture and environment of the students. Learning not only focuses on linguistic theory, but also invites students to understand the moral messages and values of life contained in Malay literary works.

### **Student Response and Participation**

The results of the interviews showed that students responded positively to learning based on Malay oral traditions. Students seem more enthusiastic and actively participating in learning because the materials used feel close to their daily lives and culture. The use of poetry makes it easier for students to understand old poetry material than learning that only uses theory. The teacher stated that "the students were quite enthusiastic because the material felt close to their culture. They also find it easier to understand moral values when they are associated with regional literary works."

The results of interviews with students also showed that learning using poetry made the learning atmosphere more interesting and not monotonous. One of the students stated that learning with poetry helps them understand the content of poetry as well as the message of life contained in it. Other students also admitted that they were more interested in participating in learning because the material they learned was related to the culture of the region they knew. The findings show that learning based on local culture is able to increase student engagement in the learning process. Cultural proximity makes it easier for students to understand the material while building a sense of pride in their own regional culture.

**The Value of Character in the Malay Oral Tradition**

The results of the study show that the Malay oral tradition contains various character values that can be instilled in students through the learning process. These values include religious, moral, responsible, manners, and social care. The value of these characters is contained in the content of the verses used during learning. The teacher explained that "the values contained in it include religious, moral, and social values. Poetry often teaches about life, responsibility, and the relationship between humans and God and others"

In addition, the teacher also said that the Malay oral tradition has a function as a means of moral education and strengthens the cultural identity of the community. Through poetry and other literary forms, students can learn about manners, religious values, and social norms that apply in the life of the Malay community. These findings show that Malay oral traditions not only function as language learning materials, but also as a medium for shaping students' character.

**Obstacles to the Implementation of Malay Oral Traditions**

Although the implementation of Malay oral traditions in learning has a positive impact, this study found several obstacles in its implementation. The main obstacle faced is the absence of a school policy that specifically integrates the Malay oral tradition into the curriculum. The application of oral traditions still depends on the initiative of teachers so that it has not been carried out thoroughly and sustainably. The teacher stated that "there is no specific policy that makes it an explicit part of the school curriculum" In addition, the limitation of references and teaching materials based on local culture is also an obstacle in the development of learning.

This is reinforced by the teacher's statement that "the obstacle is the limitation of school policies and the absence of a special program that emphasizes local content systematically. In addition, supporting references are also still limited". Although they still face various obstacles, teachers hope that the Malay oral tradition can be paid more attention and systematically integrated in the world of education. The teacher said that "language learning will be more meaningful if it is based on one's own culture". These findings show that learning based on local culture is seen as having great potential in creating contextual, meaningful, and supportive learning for students.

**Discussion**

The results of the study show that the Malay oral tradition has been applied in learning Indonesian language at SMPTK Kasih Karunia through the use of poetry in old poetry materials. The use of oral traditions in learning shows the efforts of teachers to present learning that is more contextual and close to students' lives. Oral traditions are not only used as literary teaching materials, but also used to help students understand the value of life contained in Malay literary works. These findings show that learning Indonesian language can be an effective space to connect linguistic, cultural, and character education aspects.

The use of Syair Perahu by Hamzah Fansuri is a form of implementation of oral traditions that are relevant in learning. Poetry is used to help students understand the structure of old poems, symbolic meanings, and moral messages contained in the text. The teacher not only directs students to the theoretical aspect, but also invites them to understand the value of life contained in the poem. This process makes learning more meaningful because students not only learn the literary form, but also reflect on the content and messages related to daily life.

These findings are in line with the concept of contextual learning that emphasizes the relationship between learning materials and students' real experiences. Learning that is associated with the local culture makes it easier for students to understand the material because they have a closeness to the context being studied. This cultural closeness can be seen from the students' responses who showed enthusiasm during the learning. Students find

learning to be more engaging because the material used is related to the social and cultural environment they are familiar with.

In addition to increasing students' understanding of Indonesian language materials, the Malay oral tradition also contributes to the formation of students' character. Religious values, responsibility, manners, and social concern contained in poetry are an important part of the learning process. These values are conveyed through simple and reflective literary language so that it is easier for students to understand. In the learning process, students are not only asked to understand the content of the poem, but also to relate these values to daily life.

The Malay oral tradition has the power to convey moral messages in a subtle and non-patronizing manner. This is one of the reasons why students more easily accept the character values contained in the poem. Literary learning based on local culture provides a learning experience that is not only academic, but also emotional and reflective. Students are invited to understand that regional literary works do not only function as entertainment, but also as a source of moral and social learning.

The implementation of the Malay oral tradition in learning also shows relevance to the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes contextual learning and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. The values contained in the Malay oral tradition, such as religiosity, mutual cooperation, and respect for others, have a strong relationship with the dimension of the Pancasila Student Profile. The use of oral traditions in learning shows that local culture can be a source of learning that supports character formation while strengthening students' cultural identity. Based on the results of the research, it was found that the implementation of Malay oral traditions in schools is still developing and requires wider support so that it can be implemented more optimally. The use of oral tradition is currently still focused on certain materials and depends on the creativity of teachers in developing learning based on local culture. This condition shows that teachers have a very important role in providing innovative and meaningful learning for students.

The limitation of references and teaching materials based on local culture is also one of the challenges in the development of learning Malay oral traditions. Teachers need more varied learning resources so that learning can be developed more widely and interestingly. Nevertheless, the efforts that have been made show that there is concern for the preservation of local culture through the world of education. This is a positive step in maintaining the sustainability of the Malay oral tradition in the midst of technological developments and globalization currents.

The results of the study also show that schools have great potential in developing learning based on local culture. Malay oral traditions can be used as part of school literacy activities and strengthening students' character through learning Indonesian (Badeni & Saparahayuningsih, 2023; Nuraedah et al., 2023; Shkoukani, 2019; Sudaryatie et al., 2022). The use of digital media, such as audio, video, and interactive media, can also be an alternative to introduce oral traditions to students in a more interesting way and in accordance with the times (Ginusti, 2023; Hobbs, 2021; Lubis & Lubis, 2020; Nafisah et al., 2024). The implementation of Malay oral traditions in Indonesian language learning at SMP TK Kasih Karunia shows that local culture has an important role in creating contextual, meaningful, and supportive learning for students. Oral traditions not only help students understand the subject matter, but also strengthen cultural awareness and moral values in everyday life (Khalaf & Zin, 2018; Narykova, 2023; Tang et al., 2020).

## CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Malay oral tradition in Indonesian language learning at SMP TK Kasih Karunia has been effectively carried out through the use of traditional Malay poetry in poetry-related learning materials. The integration of oral traditions into classroom activities enables students to better understand poetic structures, symbolic meanings, and the

moral values embedded in Malay literary works. By connecting learning materials with students' cultural backgrounds, the learning process becomes more meaningful, engaging, and relevant to their daily lives. The study also demonstrates that the Malay oral tradition contributes positively to students' character development. Values such as religiosity, responsibility, politeness, and social awareness were successfully introduced and reinforced through analysis, discussion, and reflection activities. Furthermore, students showed greater enthusiasm and participation because the learning content was closely related to their local culture and experiences. These findings highlight the potential of local culture-based learning as an effective approach to creating contextual and reflective Indonesian language instruction. The study also emphasizes the important role of teachers in preserving cultural heritage by integrating local wisdom into educational practices. Overall, the Malay oral tradition serves not only as a medium for language learning but also as a means of strengthening character education, cultural identity, and appreciation for local heritage among students.

## REFERENCES

- Badeni, B., & Saparahayuningsih, S. (2023). The Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Character Education in Elementary School. *Journal of Educational Issues*, 9(2), 1. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jei.v9i2.20768>
- Fadilah, R., Alim, W. S., Zumrudiana, A., Lestari, I. W., Baidawi, A., & Elisanti, A. D. (2021). *Pendidikan Karakter*.
- Ginusti, G. N. (2023). *The Implementation of Digital Technology in Online Project-Based Learning during Pandemic : EFL Students ' Perspectives*. 10(1), 13–25.
- Hasanah, L. U., & Andari, N. (2021). Tradisi Lisan sebagai Media Pembelajaran Nilai Sosial dan Budaya Masyarakat. *Jurnal Online Fonema*, 4(1), 48–66.
- Hasanuddin, C., Efendi, M., Qodri, M. S., & Karoluslina. (2025). Pembelajaran Kontekstual. *Jurnal Lisdaya*, 21(1), 14–28.
- Hobbs, R. (2021). Media literacy and digital citizenship in education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 13(2), 1–10.
- Khalaf, B. K., & Zin, Z. B. M. (2018). Traditional and inquiry-based learning pedagogy: A systematic critical review. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(4), 545–564. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2018.11434a>
- Lubis, N., & Lubis, A. (2020). *Project-Based Learning Collaborated With Digital Media For Indonesian Efl Learners ' Self-Confidence*. 02(01), 10–18.
- Nababan, D., Panjaitan, N. S. M., & Simbolon, O. (2023). Strategi Pembelajaran Kontekstual. *Pediaqu: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 2(2), 591–600.
- Nafisah, D., Permatasari, D., Dayu, K., Nurlaili, V. A., & Cindy, A. H. (2024). *Pelatihan Kegiatan Literasi Digital Untuk Meningkatkan Kompetensi Guru Di Era Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Training in Digital Literacy Activities To Improve Teacher Competencies in the Era of the Independent Learning Curriculum*. 5(1), 53–59. <https://doi.org/10.52561/abma.v5i1.373>
- Narykova, O. N. (2023). Traditional approaches and innovative technologies in teaching students of non-linguistic specialties. *Directions for Educational Development in the Year of the Teacher and Tutor*, 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.31483/r-108014>
- Nuraedah, N., Junarti, J., & Kapile, C. (2023). The Influence Of Local Wisdom Characteristics Of The Community Inhabit Megalitics Sites At Napu Valley On The Integrated Social Studies Learning At Junior High Schools In Napu Valley. *KnE Social Sciences*, 2023, 642–650. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i4.12955>
- Sarkowi, Sustianingsih, I. M., & Irwansyah, Y. (2024). Tradisi Lisan Masyarakat Dusun Batu Urip sebagai Penguat Nilai Kearifan Lokal Kota Lubuklinggau. *Sindang: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Kajian Sejarah*, 6(2), 47–63.
- Shkoukani, M. (2019). *Explore the Major Characteristics of Learning Management Systems and their Impact on e-Learning Success*. 10(1), 296–301.
- Sudaryatie, S., Yulianto, W. W. E., Subagio, H., & Prasetyo, D. (2022). The Importance of Local Wisdom in Higher Education as a Philosophy of Strengthening the Character of State

*Analysis of the Implementation of Malay Oral Tradition in Indonesian Language Learning for Student Character Formation at Kasih Karunia Junior High School*

Defense. *Ideas: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Budaya*, 8(3), 707.  
<https://doi.org/10.32884/ideas.v8i3.776>

Tang, S., Long, M., Tong, F., Wang, Z., Zhang, H., & Sutton-Jones, K. L. (2020). A comparative study of problem-based learning and traditional approaches in college english classrooms: Analyzing pedagogical behaviors via classroom observation. *Behavioral Sciences*, 10(6). <https://doi.org/10.3390/BS10060105>