

# PAK KADUK'S NARRATIVE IN MALAYSIAN POLITICAL NEWS: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

**MUHAMMAD ZAID DAUD \***

Pusat Pembelajaran Bahasa, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, 76100, Durian Tunggal, Melaka, Malaysia. \*Corresponding Author Email: zaid.daud@utem.edu.my

**MARY FATIMAH SUBET**

Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. Email: sufatimah@unimas.my

**AWANG AZMAN AWANG PAWI**

Akademi Pengajian Melayu, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Email: awangazman@um.edu.my

## Abstract

Pak Kaduk (PK) is one of the characters in Malay jokes. PK's character is described as a negative character, and due to this, the society associates PK's character and narrative with the political situation in Malaysia. Therefore, this study will analyze the character and narrative of PK in political news in Malaysia. This study adopts a qualitative method (or specifically, the document analysis method). The theory used for this study is the Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, 1995) in the pragmatic field. In Pak Kaduk's funny anecdotes and jokes, there are six narratives, namely: (1) about his dressing etiquette (PK's paper shirt), (2) regarding the connection of the PK's chicken with the sultan/king, (3) about PK's nutrition (cold rice), (4) about PK paddling a canoe, (5) about PK killing his wife and (6) regarding PK migrating or leaving the village. The results of the study found that a total of 13 pieces of political news linked PK's narrative and character with the political situation in Malaysia. In conclusion, this study can prove that the character of PK is not only studied in the field of literature and linguistics but can even be associated with the context raised in this current work (politics in Malaysia).

**Keywords:** Pak Kaduk, Folk Literature, Political News, Narrative, Pragmatic Analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Ya (2016), the political scene that is happening or has happened can be used as material that can be processed by language and linguistic researchers through the folk literature (FL). The study of language and linguistics has now crossed the boundaries of other non-linguistic fields, including the study of myths (Osman & Jalaluddin, 2018). Therefore, the application of cross-disciplinary fields needs to be applied in the study of language and linguistics so that it is not stagnant (Jalaluddin, 2014). Multidisciplinary fields such as zoology, medicine, communication, politics, geography, education, engineering to name but a few, can be absorbed in FL studies (Subet & Md Nasir, 2019; Daud et. al, 2023a, 2023b).

FL works are seen as a discourse that carries an organic cohesion (Novy, Swiatek, & Moulaert, 2012; Ya, 2016; Astuti, 2018). The aesthetics of FL's work is of high value due to the interweaving of themes, character system, plot, setting, language style and all elements of creativity in it. The aesthetic value of FL's work does not stand alone, except to combine all the disciplines or fields of knowledge that exist in the life of the author and

his community (Ya, 2016). The existence of FL in the form of jokes was not created arbitrarily by the authors of the past, because the philosophy and intellectuality of the Malay community was preserved in the past (Sulaiman, 2014). The characteristics of this FL are partly embedded in the mythical stories that tell about people, creatures or extraordinary events that are irrational or cannot be accepted by human reason (Alam & Qudsi, 2018). The character in FL, on the other hand, is a folk prose story that tells the story of a society set in the past (Illani, 2019).

The scope of FL in this study can be divided into two, namely in the form of story or narrative and in the form of non-story or non-narrative. Characters embodied in Malay myths such as Pak Pandir (PP), Awang Lurus (AL), Pak Kaduk (PK), Pak Belalang (PB) and Lebai Malang (LM) have been classified in FL (joke form). These characters are also found in a genre of old poetry which is *seloka* (non-story or non-narrative form). Despite the existence of these characters in both Malay funny anecdotes and *seloka*, their representative attitudes are the same. This element of similarity has made Malay mythical characters, very interesting to study. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the PK narrative in political news in Malaysia.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

PK's humorous nature is usually studied together with other Malay humorous characters, for example, PP, AL, PB and LM (Winstedt, 1969; Zakaria, 2015; Ismail, Bakar, & Effendy, 2018; Jabar, 2019; Jabar & Ghazali, 2021). The former's character is often associated with negative behavior and attitudes. For example, Winstedt (1969) has described PK's character as "foolish-shit" because this character has been described as having stupid qualities, lacking 'brain' because he is motivated by greed and profit-making intentions. In consequence, his arrogant nature has caused him to lose his thinking power and finally succumb to an unfortunate fate.

According to Mohamad (2016), the elements found in the creation of this mythical character are intended to mock, satirize either seriously or humorously, as well as criticize the behavior and negative or positive traits. The selection of the appropriate political scene is very important to combine the behavior of Malay mythical characters with the local political scene. Therefore, Winstedt's (1969) framework of attitudes and negative characters of Malay mythical characters will be taken into account.

**Table 1: Negative Attitudes of Characters in Malay Myths**

Attitude	Description
Stupid - Unlucky	Such a character exists in PK and LM verses. PK is described as having stupid qualities, not having a brain because he is motivated by greed, and he wants to make a profit. Because of this, his arrogant nature has caused him to lose all his senses and rationality and finally suffer from an unfortunate fate.
Smart idiot	This character is found in the PP <i>seloka</i> , where he can be described as stupid. It is later learned that he will become the laughingstock of others. It is also considered tragic as amid the stupidity, it burns the baby. Nonetheless, on the other hand, PP is also described as a person who uses his brain (intelligence). PP deceives his wife Mak Andeh by saying he is going to sail. Therefore, he asks Mak Andeh to make kuih (cake) but he finishes the kuih placed on the shelf of the

	house. In addition, PP also tricks the giant into crossing the river with a pitcher, but eventually the giant is swept away by the current.
Smart	This character is found in the PB seloka because he uses his brain to deceive or fool others. This character is depicted as safe in times of emergency or bringing profit. Despite him not using his brain, he is somehow still in luck. Because of his good fortune and because of the fact that he uses his common sense, PB is able to overcome the social class that has a higher position or level of thinking. In other words, the fool becomes the victim of the cunning.

A recent writing by Ismail, Bakar, and Effendy (2018) has refuted Winstedt's (1969) claim because the characters in Malay jokes do not refer to negative behavior only. This study has outlined positive characters and characters in Malay anecdotes and *seloka*. This can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2: Positive Attitudes of Characters in Malay Myths**

Attitude	Description
Hardworking	Such a character exists in the character of AL. <i>Ringan tulang</i> means the act of being diligent to do a job such as helping others to get things done. AL is considered light-boned because he helps his mother buy meat at the market for Eid celebrations. AL as a child with a good character uses a rational mind and does a lot of good deeds.
Pursuant to the order	This kind of trait exists in the character of PK. The character according to the order is the character demanded by religion or custom of belief in a society. In relation to that, the use of the word according to this command is also equivalent to the concept of Wa 'ad which is sovereignty and rebellion which has been agreed upon by Seri Teri Buana and Lemang Lebar Daun as shown through "Sejarah Melayu". The traditional Malay community strongly adheres to the agreement.
Defending rights	Such trait exists in the characters of Si Luncai and PK. Si Luncai's character through Malay anecdotes manages to defend his rights from being oppressed by a tyrannical king.
Keep the promise	LM shows a man who firmly adheres to his promise to fulfil the party invitation. LM's character is also described as a noble person. Although he luck is unfortunate because his bounty of supplies has been stolen by dogs, LM still accepts his fate.

Therefore, PK's character also embodies positive traits such as "following orders" and "keeping promises". Based on this statement, the researcher thinks that the characters embodied in Malay anecdotes and stories can be linked to the Malaysian political scene. According to Ali (1986), this Malay mythical character is not only integrated into the soul of the Malay community, but it is a vessel for the preservation of customs, character building, teaching the knowledge of love, entertainment, faith and defence. It should be emphasized that in this study only the political discipline is taken from an interdisciplinary approach as the basis of the study (refer to Figure 1). Among other things, this discipline analyzes political elements in FL such as power struggles, ideological conflicts, and deviations committed by leaders (Ya, 2016).

In this study, the researcher will apply the Theory of Relevance (TR) by Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995) as a procedure to analyze the study data. Based on this theory, the application of the three most important ideas, namely context, cognitive effects and processing efforts will be carried out to describe the research data (Malay *seloka* and

Malay jokes) with more authority. Because this theory emphasizes the context, the researcher thinks it is relevant to relate the literary figure to the context of the political environment in Malaysia. Contexts can exist through various ways, for example built through an observation of the environment that surrounds daily life (for example, the political environment for the context of this study), words that have been spoken that still remain in the memory (findings in political news), things involving the future, scientific hypotheses, or sweet, bitter or funny memories, assumptions about the culture and beliefs of the speaker, historical information and so on (Subet, 2018).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study (text analysis). The corpus of anecdotes is obtained from *Cerita Jenaka* (Yahya, 1973), while the corpus of local politics is obtained from the mass media (printed media, public speeches, and the digital media) and the social media. Purposeful sampling was done to analyze the metaphors of criticism in Malay anecdotes (Pak Kaduk) in the local political context. For the analysis of the study, the researcher applied a pragmatic approach, namely: Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, 1995). There are six (6) pieces of data identified in Pak Kaduk's narrative. The data are as follows:

1. About dressing etiquette (PK's paper shirt).
2. Regarding the connection of PK's chicken with the sultan/king.
3. About PK's nutrition (cold rice).
4. About PK paddling a canoe.
5. About PK killing his wife.
6. Regarding PK migrating or leaving the village.

This study is entirely qualitative in nature. Therefore, a small sample size between one and five research data is sufficient, as long as the selected sample meets the sampling criteria (Liamputtong, 2014). The researcher will take three examples of Pak Kaduk's narrative (yellow colour) for the purpose of the data analysis. The selection of these three narratives is used as a limitation of the researcher's study.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three pieces of data in PK's narrative will be used as a sample of this study. Each of these pieces of data will be linked to the local political context. The data analysis will adopt a pragmatic approach (Relevant Theory).

#### Data 1: A metaphor of criticism on the ethics of dressing (Pak Kaduk's paper shirt)

*In the state of Chempaka Seri, there is a poor couple named Pak Kaduk and Mak Siti. Pak Kaduk wants to try his luck to fight his cockerel with the King's cockerel. Pak Kaduk tells his wife to **\*\*\*make a shirt out of paper\*\*\***. Because he wants to finish quickly, Pak Kaduk asks Mak Siti to simply glue the parts of the shirt.*

*The match begins. Pak Kaduk is very happy to see Si Kunani's dexterity. The Kunani finally wins. Pak Kaduk who forgets that Si Kunani is not his, jumps up and down with joy until he does not realize that his \*\*\*paper shirt is torn\*\*\*. Pak Kaduk finally runs home. When he gets home, Pak Kaduk is scolded by his wife.*

Based on the narrative, the researcher can conclude the implicit meaning as follows:

**Metaphors of Criticism:** A metaphor of criticism on the ethics of dressing (Pak Kaduk's paper shirt).

**Implicature's Assumption:** Torn clothes

**Implicature's Conclusion:** Torn feelings (empty/disappointed/deceived)

**The real meaning:** Criticism of the attitude of someone who is not serious in doing something.

**Concept of Ad Hoc:** Extension

Based on this narrative there is a connection with Malaysian political news. For example:



**Figure 1: PK's narrative related to the paper shirt with the Malaysian political context (Yacob, 2021)**

Based on the political narrative, UMNO leaders have stated that UMNO and BN will contest independently using the BN symbol. They also believe that BN can win a large number of seats and regain control of the country's leadership. UMNO is so enthusiastic and confident that it can come back great when alone, but they still fail to realize that they need to persuade other parties to form an alliance, and further form a competent government.

The lesson for this political news is that UMNO members can decide whether they can perform well or otherwise if they are alone. It could have a disastrous repercussion, should MIC and MCA change direction and win the contested seats. This can be related to the story of PK when the chicken that is swapped by the King wins the cockfighting match



and PK jumps in excitement until his paper shirt is torn. The relevance of Pak Kaduk's narrative and the local political context can be seen in terms of the way one thinks. Pak Kaduk is a straightforward person who has ideas beyond the logic of his mind, and this is akin to politicians who have various ideas when it comes to making the right decision.

#### **Data 2: A metaphor of criticism about Pak Kaduk's cockfight with the sultan/king**

*In the state of Chempaka Seri, there is a poor couple named Pak Kaduk and Mak Siti. Pak Kaduk wants to **\*\*\*try his luck to fight his cockerel with the King's cockerel\*\*\***. Pak Kaduk tells his wife to make a shirt out of paper. Because he wants it to be done quickly, Pak Kaduk asks Mak Siti to simply glue the parts of the shirt.*

*In the cockfighting arena, the king saw Si Kunani, the cockfight belonging to Pak Kaduk who appears to be very lucky. The king persuades Pak Kaduk to exchange Si Kunani with Si Jalak, the king's unlucky cockerel. Without thinking, Pak Kaduk agrees. Pak Kaduk also mortgages his hometown to the king with a value of 50 ryals as the betting money.*

Based on this narrative, there are several lessons. Among them, we need to think about our own interest first, and utilize the reason and wisdom to live life. As for example, Pak Kaduk who agrees to accept the sultan's offer to exchange chickens blindly without thinking of any consequences ends up being the one at the losing end, when the chicken which he exchanges has lost in the competition. In addition, Pak Kaduk loses the house too because of the defeat. In addition, the attitude of manipulating other people's weaknesses is also among the lessons that can be learned. Finally, this story of Pak Kaduk teaches us that this gambling activity only brings bad implications to oneself.

Based on the narrative, the researcher can conclude the implicit meaning as follows:

**Metaphors of Criticism:** A metaphor of criticism about Pak Kaduk's cockfight with the sultan/king.

**Implicature's Assumption:** Torn clothes

**Implicature's Conclusion:** Torn feelings (empty/disappointed/deceived)

**The real meaning:** Criticism of the attitude of someone who is not serious in doing something.

**Concept of Ad Hoc:** Extension

Based on this narrative there is a connection with Malaysian political news. For example:



**Figure 2: PK's narrative related to cockfighting with the Malaysian political context (Mad, 2020)**

This article discusses the saying, literally 'Winning In The Cheering, But The Village is Sold Off' and its connection with the story of Pak Kaduk, where he wins in the cockfighting competition but he loses his village to the King who has won the competition. This article also discusses how this proverb relates to Malay politics, especially in UMNO, and how the leadership of Malay political institutions is still debatable to this very day.

Next, the saying "Refer to many sayings, write as many plans as you like, it's all too late" is to the story of Pak Kaduk, a leader who only focuses on cockfighting competitions.

There is also a discussion on leaders who are good at acting and playing with the emotions of the Malays, and how the bigotry towards Malay leadership does not bring any benefits.

This article discusses the author's concerns regarding the change of slogan from the ummah consensus to national consensus within two months only after the general election. The writer also comments on the Malay promise and how BN's allies that are used to embrace the consensus of the community now challenges each other. This article also discusses the Malay leadership that uses the slogan of community consensus and how different BN allies do not need slogans to work together.

In addition, the author's concerns also revolve around the political situation in Malaysia and how the Malay nation should be aware and should repent to improve the situation. The author also comments on the conflict in the Malay leadership and how this situation will repeat itself in every election. Finally, this article discusses the importance of the

nation and how the actions of Malay leaders who are at war with each other will have a negative impact on the Malay race.

### **Data 3: A metaphor of criticism about nutrition (cold rice) Pak Kaduk**

*At night, Pak Kadok and his wife go to sleep. There is also the version, in which Pak Kadok has become accustomed to eating \*\*\*cold rice\*\*\* that has been soaked by his wife that night, every morning. When he has eaten that rice, then he goes off to work.*

*Even after the next day, Pak Kadok gets up early in the morning, ready to dress up, then he goes down and carries the paddler and walks towards the base. And his wife sees him, she calls out to his husband, saying, "Hi Pak Siti, don't you want to eat this soaked rice again? If you want to eat cows and buffaloes, leave this rice alone.*

*Then Pak Kadok replies, "Don't worry, pour the soil for our chickens to eat."*

*So, his wife actually throws the rice on the ground, and Pak Kadok gets into the boat and rows away.*

The narrative of Pak Kadok's anecdote and cold rice is during the time when Pak Kadok is invited to attend a feast by one of the residents who lives downstream of the river to his house the next day, at noon, and the food served is a buffalo. Then Pak Kaduk replies "Okay". After the residents have left, residents from upstream come to invite Pak Kaduk to his house on the same day at noon, which is a feast of slaughtering two cows and Pak Kadok accepts the invitation. As for Pak Kaduk's custom, it is customary for him every morning to eat cold rice that his wife has soaked that night. The next day, Pak Kaduk's wife admonishes her husband to eat the cold rice first, saying that he wants to eat the cows and buffaloes and leaves the rice. Pak Kaduk responds by saying "Don't worry, pour it on the ground, let our chickens eat it" and his wife then throws the cold rice on the ground.

Based on the narrative, the researcher can conclude the implicit meaning as follows:

**Metaphors of Criticism:** A metaphor of criticism about PK's nutrition (cold rice)

**Implicature Assumption:** PK's daily diet

**Implicature Conclusion:** PK's cold relationship with his wife

**The real meaning:** Criticism of the attitude of someone who does not appreciate the efforts of others or who is ungrateful

**Concept of Ad Hoc:** Extension

Based on this narrative there is a connection with Malaysian political news. For example:





**Figure 3: "cold rice" data with local political context (Mohamed, 2020)**

Among the connections that can be made between the anecdote and the local political context is the nature of ingratitude. For example, Pak Kaduk chooses to order his wife to throw the cold rice on the ground without tasting a bit of the rice or trying to finish the rice even though the cold rice is not stale. In addition, the local political context that is similar to this metaphor refers to a leader who has the nature of never being satisfied with what he or she has such as holding the highest position. However, a few leaders today are willing to do anything to get the position they want like "*enau dalam belukar*" (sugar palm in the bush) without thinking about the result. From these two contexts, it can be seen that Pak Kaduk is unfortunate because there is rice, but it is poured on the ground, and he returns hungry, but he becomes a meritorious dredger. Instead of digging a ship that will sink and ruin everything.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study can prove that the character of PK is not only studied in the field of literature and linguistics but can even be associated with the current context (politics in Malaysia). Through the analysis of TR, the role of pragmatic knowledge is needed. Pragmatic knowledge, especially with the application of TR, can help obtain implicit meaning even if it is not in the form of direct speech because the data analyzed is from the written texts. The analysis is conducted by determining the explicature, detecting the logical form of the explicature, and finding the implicature from the explicature in question as well as assuming the meaning of the implicature and making a conclusion about the meaning of this implicature to help detect the intended meaning. The studies of Malay mythical characters (PK) in reflecting the attitudes from a pragmatic point of view give the identity of attitudes to a society, can provide an overview of the situation and time of an event can show attitudes or elements of heroism, and serve for universal unity. This article also suggests to future researchers that the Malay myth data is to be analyzed by referring to the current environment, for example the state of the country's politics, economy, or current social environment.

## Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka for the funding provided under the *Geran Penyelidikan Jangka Pendek Tahun – Guru Bahasa Tahun 2022* (PJP/2022/PPB/GB/S01905).

## References

- 1) Alam, F., & Qudsi, Z. (2018). Hadis dan mitos Jawa. *Riwayah*, 3(1), 109-120.
- 2) Ali, M. (1989). *Kajian kesusasteraan Melayu klasik*. Flo Enterprise Sdn. Bhd.
- 3) Astuti, S. P. (2018). Keterampilan menulis paragraf mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Diponegoro Semarang. *Nusa: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra*, 13(4), 604-613.
- 4) Daud, M. Z., Subet, M. F., & Pawi, A. A. A. (2023a). Systematic literature review: A study of Malay mythical characters in reflecting attitudes from pragmatic perspective. *Journal of Biomechanical Science and Engineering*, 17(2), 239-249.
- 5) Daud, M. Z., Subet, M. F., & Pawi, A. A. A. (2023b). Interpretasi politik tempatan dalam ungkapan "Aduhai Malangnya Pak Kaduk, Ayamnya Menang Kampung Tergadai": Analisis Pragmatik. *Asian People Journal*, 6(1), 23-35.
- 6) Illani, R. (2019, Jun 28). Perbezaan antara mitos, dongeng, legenda dan hikayat. <https://iluminasi.com/bm/perbezaan-antara-mitos-dongeng-legenda-dan-hikayat.html>
- 7) Ismail, M. S., Bakar, R. A., & Effendy, N. R. N. M. (2018). Cerita jenaka Melayu suatu manifestasi watak dan perwatakan positif. *Jurnal Melayu Sedunia*, 1(1), 296-329.
- 8) Jabar, N. A. (2019). Keunggulan ikon membawa teladan dalam seloka Melayu. *Jurnal Antarabangsa Persuratan Melayu*, 7(1), 172-191.
- 9) Jabar, N. A., & Ghazali, M. F. (2021). Komunikasi bahasa sindiran dalam Seloka Pak Pandir dan Pak Kaduk. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 37(1), 364-378.
- 10) Jalaluddin, N. H. (2014). Semantik dan akal budi Melayu. Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
- 11) Liamputtong, P. (2014). *Kaedah penyelidikan kualitatif*. UPM Press.

- 12) Mad, H. (2021, April 3). Menang sorak, kampung tergadai. *Secretariat Majlis Perundangan Melayu*.  
<https://www.malaysianow.com/my/opinion/2021/04/03/umno-tempah-baju-pak-kaduk-pada-pru15>
- 13) Mohamed, H. (2020, February 26). 'Cah keting' gugat akuan bersumpah (SD)? *Suara Merdeka*. <https://suaramerdeka.com.my/cah-keting-gugat-akuan-bersumpah-sd/>
- 14) Novy, A., Swiatek, D. C., & Moulaert, F. (2012). Social cohesion: A conceptual and political elucidation. *Urban Studies*, 49(9), 1873-1889.
- 15) Osman, M., & Jalaluddin, N. H. (2018). Metafora kritikan dalam mitos peminangan Puteri Gunung Ledang: Analisis pragmatik. *MELAYU: Jurnal Antarabangsa Dunia Melayu*, 11(1), 19-46.
- 16) Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. (1995). *Postface relevance: Communication and cognition*. Blackwell.
- 17) Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Blackwell Publishers.
- 18) Subet, M. F., & Md Nasir, M. R. B. (2019). Analisis Semantik Inkuisitif Peribahasa Bahasa Melayu. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 16(2), 227– 253.
- 19) Sulaiman, M. F. (2004). *Kebahagiaan: Definisi Islam*. Utusan Publications.
- 20) Winstedt, R. O. (1969). *A history of classical Malay literature*. Oxford University Press.
- 21) Ya, C. A. C. (2016). *Novel berunsur politik kenegaraan Malaysia dan Indonesia: Kajian bandingan*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- 22) Yacob, K. (2021, April 3). Umno tempah baju 'Pak Kaduk' pada PRU15. *Malaysia Now*.  
<https://www.malaysianow.com/my/opinion/2021/04/03/umno-tempah-baju-pak-kaduk-pada-pru15>
- 23) Yahya, R. H. (1973). *Cerita jenaka*. Penerbit Fajar Buku.