

# Reflections on the Application of Critical Discourse Analysis to the Legend of Malin Kundang

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**Abstract:** This article examines the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK) to the legend of Malin Kundang which originates from Minangkabau culture, West Sumatra, Indonesia. Specifically, this article aims to explore how the legend of Malin Kundang displays and influences social values, power and ideology in society. This critical discourse analysis uses an approach developed by Fairclough and van Dijk which combines text and illustrations. The object of this research is the legend of Malin Kundang itself. As one of the cultural treasures of the archipelago, the legend of Malin Kundang acts as a medium for moral learning which emphasizes the importance of filial piety towards parents and obedience to social norms. The result is that this legend reveals the dynamics of power and social class, and strengthens the collective identity of the Minangkabau people through cultural representation. This article concludes that the application of AWK offers an alternative and provides a critical perspective on the role of folklore in forming and maintaining social structures.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Power Relations, Malin Kundang

## 1 Introduction

As a genre of folklore, legends are folk tales that contain narratives about human actions that are considered or believed by the listeners and tellers to be true stories that have happened. This legend functions as a medium for conveying social values, preserving traditions and culture, entertainment, strengthening collective identity, a means of education, and social reflection [1-6]. In this article, the legend that will be analyzed is the legend of Malin Kundang which is one of the legendary folk tales in Indonesia, especially in the West Sumatra region. This story tells of a young man named Malin Kundang who became very rich but then disowned his mother. As a result of his actions, he was cursed to become a stone by his mother as a form of punishment for his disobedience.

Many methods have been applied in the analysis of legends in Indonesia, including structural analysis [7], moral message analysis [8], socio-cultural analysis [9], analysis from a feminist perspective [10]. The methods above show a significant role in the findings of the analysis of the Malin Kundang legend. Of the various analytical methods that have been used, there are still opportunities for writers to use critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis can be useful for uncovering the underlying and constructed meaning of texts [11,12].

In the context of increasingly developing academic discourse, the application of critical discourse analysis is emerging as an effective tool for uncovering complex linguistic interactions, power, and social dynamics. According to post-structuralism, culture is the result of power [13]. The application of critical discourse analysis to the Malin Kundang Legend provides a framework for examining how the language and narrative in this story shape and reflect certain power structures and ideologies in society. Critical discourse analysis, which aims to reveal the relationship between language, power, and ideology, allows us to look beyond surface moral messages [14].

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of uncovering the layers of ideology, power and social values hidden behind folklore narratives. The legend of Malin Kundang, which is often considered only as a moral story, has great potential to be analyzed more deeply using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, considering that folklore is often ignored as a subject of critical analysis, even though legends in Indonesia play a role. important in shaping the ideology and views of society. Through this approach, we can identify how folklore is used as a tool to maintain and strengthen certain social values, such as patriarchy, social hierarchy, and concepts of obedience and punishment [15]. Thus, this critical discourse analysis design is very relevant for uncovering layers of meaning in legends that are not always visible on the surface of the narrative.

The author's introduction to critical discourse analysis made the author reflect on how the legend of Malin Kundang had a big impact on the author's own life. In life, reflective thinking is needed, in order to think clearly. Dewey [16] said that reflective thinking is useful in being able to change actions, passions, ignorance, impulsive behavior into wiser actions. Therefore, reflective thinking extends practical control over the experiences that have been experienced. The focus of this article is to explore the application of critical discourse analysis in studying the cultural narrative of Malin Kundang, a legendary folk tale from the region of West Sumatra, Indonesia.

## **2 Method**

### **Study Design**

In writing this article, researchers used a qualitative approach with critical discourse analysis methods. Applying critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary methodological practice [17] (van Dijk, 1993). This can strengthen the studies currently being carried out. The discourse analysis that the author carries out is not only to reveal false meanings, but also hidden meanings used in language that appears neutral.

### **Participants**

The participants in this research were the researchers themselves. Meanwhile, the object of this research is the legend of Malin Kundang itself which was obtained from various media sources.

### **Instrument**

As for the instruments in this research, as explained by Creswell [18] in qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument in the research. When conducting research, researchers do not use instruments from other people, but instead design their own instruments while adhering to guidelines regarding critical discourse analysis.

### Procedure

The procedures in this reflective research are: *First* by collecting various versions of the text of the Malin Kundang legend from reliable sources. *Second*, the texts are analyzed to understand variations in the narrative and key elements that are consistent across versions. *Third*, carry out analysis using critical discourse analysis of the data that has been collected. *Fourth*, interpret the findings. *Fifth*, drawing conclusions.

### Data analysis

Data analysis in this research uses a qualitative approach with critical discourse analysis techniques. This critical discourse analysis uses an approach developed by Fairclough and van Dijk which combines text and illustrations or what is often known as multimodal discourse analysis. Analysis begins with initial coding to identify key elements in the text, such as language use, narrative structure, and character representation. Then, the data obtained was analyzed in depth to understand the construction of power and ideology contained in the Malin Kundang legend.

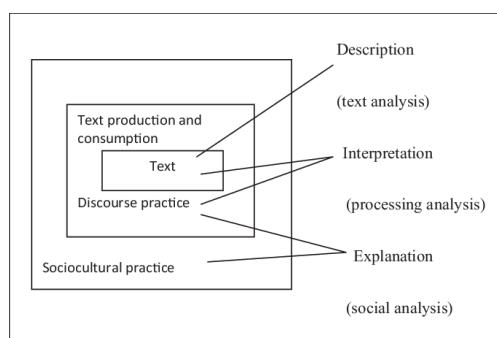


Figure 1. Fairclough's CDA Framework

### Data Verification

In research, data validity plays a role in determining the quality of the research itself [19]. To avoid bias in this research, researchers carried out several processes, including: *First*, multiple perspectives involving perspectives from various points of view by comparing several versions of the Malin Kundang legend or various interpretations that exist in different cultures. This helps avoid the limitations of a single perspective that could lead to bias. *Second*, reflection researchers must actively reflect on their role in the research and how their positions or beliefs may influence the interpretation of the data. Researchers should be aware of their personal biases

or views regarding gender, obedience, or cultural norms in folk tales such as Malin Kundang, and strive to minimize their influence. *Third*, member *check* in which researchers cross-checked the results of the analysis with individuals associated with communities that have a relationship with the Malin legend Kundang.

### 3 Results

In this modern era, folklore is still often used in classroom learning as an effort to shape students' character values and preserve culture [20]. To explain the suitability of the methods used by researchers, Firer [21] recommends that the analysis of books, texts and discourse go beyond just content analysis, and begin to apply critical discourse analysis. On the other hand, Henning and Smit [22] emphasize that data analysis for discourse purposes has similarities and differences with content analysis. Apart from being influenced by the theories and paradigms above, the author's decision to apply critical discourse analysis is how critical discourse analysis considers text (language) and illustrations in a discourse.

From the application of critical discourse analysis to the Malin Kundang legend, the author will explain it in the following points:

#### Linguistic aspects

The sentence structure in the Malin Kundang legend often depicts a hierarchy of power, especially in the dialogue between Malin Kundang and his mother. Command sentences like those given by Malin Kundang to his subordinates to get rid of his mother from his presence. The sentence asking God to pray that Malin Kundang be taught a lesson for his attitude was given by his mother. These sentences emphasize the moral and social authority that each actor has. Meanwhile, metaphors in this legend include the use of "disobedient children" for disobedience and "stones" as symbols for the punishment that must be endured. The following images support the use of metaphors and symbols that reinforce the moral message of respecting parents.



Figure 2. Malin Kundang Stone

### **Social and Cultural Aspects**

The cultural values in this legend highlight the culture of obedience to parents, the importance of good relationships in the family, and the impact of violating applicable social values, norms. If the above is not done, you will get a picture of punishment like what Malin Kundang received. On the other hand, in Minangkabau culture, mothers or women in society are authoritative figures and guardians of family morals, while Malin Kundang or men are expected to bring honor to the family. The legend of Malin Kundang further strengthens traditional gender roles and the prevailing social ideology. In the legend of Malin Kundang, there is a message that explicitly reflects social values, obedience to parents, as well as the consequences of denying one's origins and identity. In the Malin Kundang legend, it shows that the mother's power is constructed, namely by cursing Malin Kundang who does not recognize his biological mother. This legend also reflects the social structure of Minangkabau society which adheres to a matrilineal system, which means women have a position in the family and cultural heritage.

### **4 Discussion**

The results of applying critical discourse analysis to the Malin Kundang legend show that the function of this legend is not only as an ordinary story containing a moral message, but also as a tool to spread and maintain certain power and ideology. Through this critical discourse analysis, the author hopes that readers can find new ways to preserve and reinterpret Indonesian heritage in the face of emerging social, economic and political realities.

### **5 Conclusion**

Even though there are many legends spread across Indonesia, the main focus in this article is the application of critical discourse analysis in the Malin Kundang legend as an alternative methodology. Reflections on the application of critical discourse analysis to the Malin Kundang legend not only provide insight into the meaning and function of folklore in Indonesian culture, but also help us understand the role of traditional narratives in shaping collective identity and social structure.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest in writing this article.

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