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Malay folk genre pantun: traditions and modernity

Dana K. Bartosh[1] , **Ekaterina O. Kotova[2]**,
Victoria V. Kytina[3] , **Mariya V. Kharlamova[1]** ✉

[1]*Moscow State Linguistic University,*
38 Ostozhenka St, Moscow, 119034, Russian Federation
[2]*Pushkin State Russian Language Institute,*
6 Akademika Volgina St, Moscow, 117485, Russian Federation
[3]*University Kuala Lumpur,*
1016 Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, 50250, Malaysia
✉ m.harlamova@linguanet.ru

Abstract. The aim of the study is to analyze and systematize the features of pantun, both traditional for this Malay folklore genre and due to its historical development, and uniqueness, inherent in individual pantuns, as well as to identify the reasons for the relevance of this genre in Malay culture. Comparative-typological, descriptive-functional, and cultural-historical research methods were used. The main features of pantun as a traditional genre of Malay poetry are systematized. Logic, brevity, and the presence of rhyme are identified as the main structural features due to the historical development of pantun. These features determine in many ways the content: symbolism, allegorical and thematic, as well as the phonetic features of the pantun. The considered features of pantuns that meet certain national characteristics of the Malay people can be identified as the reasons for the popularity of this genre so far. The classic folk pantun is a miniature poetic form, characterized by structural, substantive and phonetic features and strict rules of design. Violations of the traditional rules in individual pantuns are rather exceptional and subordinate to the content component. Being an integral part of the culture of the people, pantuns undergo some changes in the thematic aspect they reflect the realities of modern reality, but these changes do not go beyond the boundaries of the traditions of the genre.

Keywords: symbolism, Malay literature, Malay poetry

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Малайский фольклорный жанр пантун: традиции и современность

Д.К. Бартош[1] , Е.О. Котова[2],
В.В. Кытина[3] , М.В. Харламова[1] ✉

[1]*Московский государственный лингвистический университет,
Российская Федерация, 119034 Москва, ул. Остоженка, д. 38, стр. 1*
[2]*Государственный институт русского языка имени А.С. Пушкина,
Российская Федерация, 117485, Москва, ул. Академика Волгина, д. 6*
[3]*Университет Куала-Лумпура,
Малайзия, 50250, Куала-Лумпур, ул. Султана Исмаила, д. 1016*
✉ m.harlamova@linguanet.ru

Аннотация. Проанализированы и систематизированы особенности пантуна, как традиционные для данного малайского фольклорного жанра и обусловленные его историческим развитием, так и уникальные, присущие отдельным пантунам, а также выявлены причины актуальности этого жанра в малазийской культуре. Применялись сравнительно-типологический, описательно-функциональный и культурно-исторический методы исследования. Систематизированы основные особенности пантуна как традиционного жанра малайской поэзии. Логичность, краткость и наличие рифмы обозначены в качестве основных структурных особенностей, обусловленных историческим развитием пантуна. Данные черты определяют во многом содержательные – символичность, аллегоричность и тематичность, а также фонетические особенности пантуна. Рассмотренные особенности пантунов, отвечающие определенным национальным характеристикам малайцев, можно считать основанием для сохранения популярности жанра. Классический народный пантун представляет собой миниатюрную поэтическую форму, для которой характерны строгие правила оформления. Нарушения традиционных правил в отдельных пантунах носят скорее исключительный характер и подчинены содержательному компоненту. Являясь неотъемлемой частью культуры народа, пантуны претерпевают некоторые изменения в тематическом аспекте, в частности отражают реалии современной действительности, но данные изменения не выходят за границы традиций жанра.

Ключевые слова: символизм, малайская литература, малайская поэзия

Introduction

Pantun is a traditional genre of Malay poetry that traces its roots to medieval Malay folklore. Initially, pantuns were created anonymously in the popular environment and passed down from generation to generation. Pantuns became an integral part of classical Malay literature after the formation of the literary form of the Malay language (Spangenberg, 2015; Tarwiyani et al., 2020; Thomas, 1985). In 2020, UNESCO decided to add Pantun to the list of intangible cultural heritage sites of two countries: Indonesia and Malaysia. We can say that the pantun is an integral symbol of the culture of the entire Nusantara.

Pantuns describe almost all areas of human life, and therefore are popular in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei to this day. The ability to quickly compose improvised poems, choose words beautifully and accurately, and find appropriate comparisons is highly appreciated among the youth of the Malay Archipelago. Pantun writers and performers are called pemantun. During special poetry duels, the pemantun perform improvised pantuns (berpantun[-pantunan]) and exchanging them (berbalas pantun) (Seelig, 2014).

At first glance, pantuns are very simple and universal, applicable to all life situations, and they are close to East Slavic ditties "Chastushka" (Pogadaev. Russian chastushka.., 2008). At the same time, pantuns have special features that characterize them as a traditional genre of Malay poetry. These features relate not only to the structure of the poetic form and sound design, but also to the content component, expressed in quantitative and qualitative indicators. The study of the Malay pantuns is of particular interest to specialists in the field of folklore, linguistics, ethnography and other sciences. Understanding the folklore images presented in the pantuns opens up new frontiers for the study of the ideas of the Malay people, reflected in their cultural codes and symbols.

The purpose of the study is to analyze and systematize the features of the pantun, both traditional for this Malay folklore genre and due to its historical development, and unique, inherent in individual pantuns, as well as to identify the reasons for the relevance of this genre in Malay culture.

Literature review

According to the definition given by V.A. Pogadaev, pantun is "a miniature poetic form, a quatrain with cross-rhyming, breaking up into two couplets, which usually do not have a direct logical connection and are connected according to the principle of sound and (or) figurative-symbolic parallelism" (Pogadaev. Flowers.., 2008, p. 75).

The concepts of continuity and poetry are already embedded in the very name of the genre. Its etymology goes back to the Malay word sepantun, translated as "like", "appropriate". According to another version, the origin of its name comes from the word penuntun of the Minangkabau language – "guide", "escort". Proponents of the third version suggest that this term arose as a result of the merger of the words pan ("polite, ethical") and tun ("leadership, mentoring"). The names of the genre may also differ depending on the region: Javanese often call it parikan, Sunda Islanders-paparikan, and residents of the north of Sumatra – umpasa (Kusnadi, 2016, p. 163). So, some believe that the name "pantun" it is

based on the high Javanese parik, which is similar to the Malay pari, a proverb (peribahasa). In this sense it is close to the Indian sense of the seloka, a two-line verse form (Liaw, 2013, p. 442).

The theoretical literature contains quite a large number of studies devoted to the genre pantun as an integral component of Malay literature in historical and contemporary perspectives (Harun, 1989; Mihardja, 2012; Neverman, 1961; Parnikel, 1980; Parnikel, 1996; Pogadaev, 2009; Rismawati, 2017; Sadikin, 2010; Vinstedt, 1966), as a traditional folk genre (Endraswara, 2010; Neverman, 1961; Puspitasari, 2015; Siagian, 2019). Separate studies are devoted to the analysis of individual varieties of the genre that are common in different regions of the Malay Archipelago (Adnan, Pillay, 2020; Effeny, 2004; Effendi, 2019), description of the linguistic features of traditional pantun and its varieties (Goddard, 2005; Hashim, Mohamad, 2015; Pogadaev, Pogadaeva, 2010), consideration of pantun as a transformer of cultural Malay traditions (Ismail et al., 2015; Natsir et al., 2019; Rais, 2013), the study of figurative symbolism in this genre (Braginsky, 1994; Subet, 2017; Pudjasworo et al., 2017). Pantun is viewed from a philosophical (Zulfikarni, Liusti, 2020) and cultural-educational perspective (Gani, 2010), according to which its educational potential is emphasized (Tarwiyani et al., 2020).

Most researchers agree on the structure of the pantun. It is based on binomial parallelism, built on sound and semantic factors. It is based on binomial parallelism, built on figurative, sound and semantic factors. Sometimes the parallelism goes so far as to link a whole series of pantuns together. This is mentioned by the Russian literary critic M.L. Gasparov, pointing out that the pantun is an improvised quatrain (usually with thematic parallelism), "sometimes connected in a chain so that the 2nd and 4th verses of each previous stanza are repeated as the 1st and 3rd verses of the next stanza."[1] This series can always be continued (the so-called "pantun berikat"). For example, the poem about the Raja Khoja, which appeared in the early 18th century and describes the attack of the Malays on the Dutch who settled in Malacca, consists of ninety-five such interconnected pantuns (Braginsky, 1983, p. 398).

Despite numerous studies of pantun, there is no precise indication of the time of the appearance of this genre in the literature. Thus, according to G. Neverman, in their modern form, pantuns have been known since the XVIII century (Neverman, 1961, p. 22), but it is likely that they existed much earlier. Pantuns are often found in very ancient monuments of Malay writing. And although it is not precisely established whether they are as ancient as these monuments themselves, or were inserted there later, however, their organic connection with the course of the narrative makes it possible to think that they go back to the same distant times.

Some researchers suggest that this genre appeared in the pre-written era, when poems were sung, performed recitatively to music and accompanied by rhythmic gestures or dances (Ismail et al., 2015). In the pre-written period, collective memory was the repository of knowledge, so the most important texts were given a form that promoted memorization. The rhythmic nature, the presence of rhyme, repetitions, the order of lines, imagery, aphorism and laconism made pan-

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[1] Gasparov, M.L. (1993). *Russian poems of the 1890–1925s in the comments: Textbook* (p. 212). Moscow: Vysshaya shkola Publ. (In Russ.)

tunes an easily remembered and reproducible poetic form. Skilled singers-musicians, who composed and performed poems accompanied by musical instruments, were highly respected in ancient times. At the same time, as more advanced in formal terms, this genre of Malay folklore should have emerged at a time when abstract and artistic thinking had reached a fairly high stage of development. It is obvious that pantun is quite an ancient form of oral poetry: information about it in Europe appeared in the XVI century, when the Dutch traveler Jan Van Linschotten visited the Malay Archipelago (Braginsky, 1994).

Most scientists are inclined to believe that the ancestors of the pantuns were proverbs, aphorisms and two-line rhyming riddles (two-line pantuns). The word "pantun" up to the XVI century meant, as a rule, a comparison or a proverb, and only secondarily "quatrain" (Braginsky, 1983, p. 350). The end line is called "jawab" in Javanese, meaning "answer", "solution". Based on this, we can conclude that, before a stable poetic form was developed, it existed in the form of a puzzle game, the solution of which was contained in a hint and suggested by rhyming consonance. In the distant past, hunters, farmers and herders were sure that they were surrounded by hostile forces and tried to deceive the spirits with allegories. Later, solving such riddles became part of the wedding ceremony and other important events.

Then rhyming quatrains began to be born impromptu. The process of their emergence is described by L.A. Mervart in the preface to the Russian edition of the collection of Malay folk songs "The Voice of the Buffalo" by G. Neverman: "After the girls have pushed the rice as much as they need for the day, the rice is sifted out and the floor is poured immediately between the piles or near them. Since the girls work here every morning, all the young men of the village gather around the crowd. Here they joke with working girls, get acquainted, make friends, and take care of them. Here there are amorous and mocking pantuns" (Neverman, 1961, p. 13).

Other songs – pantun nasihat, pantun dagang, and songs about modesty-arise at the balai (men's assembly), where the old men taught the young (Braginsky, 1983, p. 359). These verses contain philosophical ideas about the life of the Malays, as well as rules and norms of behavior passed down from generation to generation. These rules correspond to the principles and values of Islam and foster respect for other people, for national customs and traditions, for family and marriage, and for one's homeland. "Pantun" contains noble values as guiding principles in all aspects of human life, which can become guidelines in the life of the nation and the state. These values include honesty, mutual cooperation, tolerance, justice and truth, so that pantun allows it to be used as a means of shaping the character of Malays (Tarwiyani et al., 2020, p. 1331). Pantun also visualizes the way of thinking, interaction, and values of the Malay community. Therefore, pantun is actively used by the elderly to give advice and teach the basics of religion to children and young people. An important role here is played by the allegory of the pantun, which helps to avoid direct and harsh criticism of an individual member of the community, because of which his feelings can be hurt, which can lead to disunity of the entire team.

The third way in which pantuns arise is for storytellers to compose poems that serve as a "memory support" for them. In Indonesia and Malaya, such narrators were called "penglipur lara" – "comforters of sorrows". In society, they had

an authoritative status as a carrier of information: they delivered the news, entertained and instructed the audience. As a rule, these storytellers know a lot of fairy tales, legends, and legends. As a rule, they know a lot of fairy tales, legends, and legends. They tell them in prose, but as a support for their memory, they enclose individual parts of their story in pantuns – after all, poems are easier to remember than prose (Braginsky, 1983, p.52).

The ancient history of the pantuns, the initial design of this type of folklore as a genre in the pre-written era caused a number of special features that are still inherent in it.

Methods

Comparative-typological, descriptive-functional, and cultural-historical research methods were used in the research. The synthesis of these methods allowed us to present the most complete description of the key features of this genre of Malay folklore. The study material was pantuns published in collections of Malay folklore in Malay, Indonesian and Russian languages. The theoretical basis of the study was the work of such folklorists and literary critics as M.L. Gasparov, V.I. Braginsky, E.M. Diakonova, V.V. Parnikel, V.A. Pogadaev, R.O. Winstedt, M.P. Harun et al.

Results and discussion

The analysis of various studies devoted to pantuns, the study of the works themselves in the original and translation allowed us to identify and systematize the main features of this genre: structural, content and phonetic, while structural ones largely determine the other two groups of features (Figure 1).
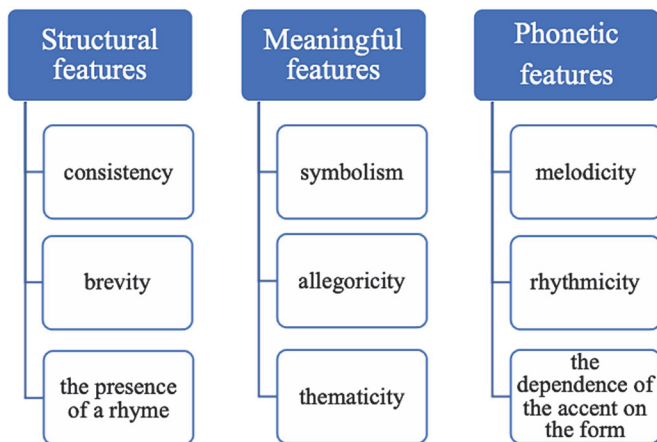
Figure 1. Features of the pantun

Source: compiled by the authors.

Logic and binomial parallelism are among the main structural features of this genre. Pantun is divided into two seemingly independent and loosely related parts: the beginning and ending, or rather, the allegory (pembayang maksud or sampiran) and the content (maksud or isi) (Adnan, Pillay, 2020, p. 15; Ismail et al., 2015, p. 137; Kusnadi, 2016, p. 163; Natsir et al., 2019, p. 166; Neverman, 1961, p. 353; Pogadaev. Russian chastushka.., 2008, p. 48; Spangenberg, 2015, p. 7).

In reality, the pantun is a complete work of art, the parts of which have a close connection. Rhymes and other word associations, such as a pun and repeated sounds (assonance, consonance), connect them. But there is also a hidden connection, and the first statement often turns out to be a metaphor for the second. Both parts, without having, as a rule, a causal relationship, often reveal additional relationships and are a pair, as if expressing the born and the inner (Tarwiyani et al., 2020, p. 1323).

This relationship can be formal or semantic. In some pantuns, there is clearly a logical connection, in some there is only sound parallelism. Most likely, these examples reflect the stages of evolution of the emergence of binomial parallelism, typical of folk poetry (Rismawati, 2017, p. 58).

In the first two lines, you can often find features of the area in which it was created: toponyms, names of typical plants and animals, dialect words:

> Dari Gresik di Surabaya / From Gresik, to Surabaya I went to,
> Pagar siapa saya sesarkan. / No matter whose fence I undo,
> Wahai nasib apakan daya / O Lady of Luck, what am I gonna do?
> Pada siapa saya sesalkan? / For whom, my regret is bestowed to?

Using natural phenomena as specific metaphors, pantuns express complex feelings such as longing, desire, fear, passion, anxiety, etc. Often, when creating a pantun, a metaphor with papaya is used, which can rhyme with budi (kindness) and hati (heart). Limau manis (sweet lime) expresses a hint of discontent:

> Limau manis condong ke paya, / The calamansi tree greets the swamp land,
> Boleh buat sampaian kain; / Fit for the laundry to dry in the sun;
> Mulut manis kepada saya, / Words of honey, you gave promises so grand,
> Hati kasih kepada yang lain / But your heart beats fast for another one
> (Jyh, Muhammad, 2018).

As a rule, the first two lines are related in meaning to the two following ones. From these two parallels, a third arises – morality. For example,

> Mushroom after mushroom is born:
> Rain drizzles day after day.
> We hatch like duck eggs,
> Thanks to the relentless care of the duck.

In this pantun, the semantic connection of the first two lines with the bottom two lines on the surface: thanks to the rain, mushrooms grow, ducklings are hatched by a duck. From these two parallels follows a third: we all grow up because of someone else's care.

However, there are pantun that can be attributed to exceptions. In them, the first lines are not connected in meaning with the subsequent ones, which may indicate illogic:

> One, two, three, six,
> Six plus one is seven.
> We planted a pomegranate with you,
> And the chestnut tree grew up to make everyone laugh.

In this pantun, there is no logical connection between arithmetic operations and further described events. At the same time, the contrast of the first two lines to the last two – strict logic to an unexpected illogical result, emphasizes the discrepancy between the plan and the result and thus increases the comic nature of the situation.

Violation of the norm-logic may be intended to strengthen the impression of the ending of the poem, to draw attention to the described result, which can be both positive and negative.

Some researchers point to the horizontal-vertical structure of the pantun (Spangenberg, 2015). The first two lines describe the relationship between man and the universe, while the ending contains the wisdom that man has received from the powers above. Nature is perceived as a kind of large community, the individual elements of which are in a relationship similar to that of humans. Thus, the pantun reflects the Malay ideas about the division of the large and small world (macro-and microcosm), the world of nature and the world of people. This explains the illogicality of the first part of the pantun: by composing it, the singer unconsciously approaches a metaphysical level of understanding of the mysteries of nature, inaccessible to others. The second part describes a person's place in this world and their relationships with other people:

> Air dalam bertambah dalam, / Deep goes the water in firth,
> Hujan di hulu belum lagi teduh. / The sky up the hill keep shedding tears,
> Hati dendam bertambah dendam, / Green envy, my heart blast and burst,
> Dendam dahulu belum lagi sembuh. / While old vengeance, remains a curse.

In pantun, rhyme is clearly traced, the presence of which also refers to the structural features of the genre. This is due to the fact that the vowel sounds of the Malay language do not differ in tonality and longitude or brevity. It should be noted that oral literature requires a certain organization of speech, since it can only be heard and transmitted from mouth to mouth. The emergence of rhyme was associated with a utilitarian need – so it was easier to remember a particular poem. Only later it began to perform an aesthetic function. The role of rhyme in verse is similar to that of rhythm, but not identical to it: both rhythm and rhyme differentiate the lines of verse, but rhyme also adds to this consonance. In a four-line pantun, the final rhyme is most often cross-linked: a-b, a-b:

> Mestika embun di Gunung Sari, / Mount of Sari saw droplets of dew,
> Putik pauh di dalam dulang. / A mango bud rests on a platter of silver.
> Tiga tahun adinda cari, / Three years have been my waiting due,
> 'Kanda jauh di negeri orang. / My lover's away since what feels like forever.

Here, the first line rhymes with the third ("Sari" – "cari") and the second with the fourth ("dulang" – "orang"). But in addition to the final rhyme, these same lines are also connected with each other internally: "embun" – "tahun", "pauh" – "jauh".

In addition, among the distinctive features of the pantun, it is also necessary to note its brevity. Each line consists of four, mostly two-or three-syllable words and 8–12 syllables (Adnan, Pillay, 2020, p. 15; Natsir et al., 2019, p. 166; Rismawati, 2017, p. 58).

Structural features: consistency and brevity, can be explained by the fact that the pantun was born in the pre-written era and carried a certain functional load, in particular, performed a magical role in primeval society, based on religious beliefs and beliefs (Ismail et al., 2015, p. 137). The history of the origin of the pantun is also explained by its improvisational nature. Composing pantuns, the narrator used the already developed folklore language and system of images, combined ready-made "speech preparations" and artistic components. The genre

allows for the plasticity and variability of the text, its change does not contradict the folklore tradition.

The considered structural features determine the content characteristics of the pantuns. Thus, brevity and consistency make it important to choose a word in terms of its economy and sound. Since pantuns are composed, as a rule, at the time of performance, their content requires special agreement, the extreme simplicity of presentation, repetition. The vocabulary is quite limited, and "epithets and metaphors are so firmly attached to the defined words that they have become a kind of unchanging ornament, a kind of well-established images" (Seelig, 2014).

Pantuns are also characterized by internal allegory, metaphor, complex associative-figurative system, deliberate obscuration of meaning, subtle, elegant symbolism and lyricism (Tarwiyani et al., 2020). The appearance of symbolic images was due to the song tradition, which fixed folk symbols in the minds of both the poets themselves and their listeners. The image of nature through analogy turned out to be closely related to the image of human life. Such symbols perform the function of connectors in folklore – they connect someone or something with the divine world, the other world.

Pantuns are also characterized by internal allegory, metaphor, subtle, elegant symbolism and lyricism (Tarwiyani et al., 2020). The use of the symbol is of great importance for understanding the semantic connection (if any) of the beginning and end. The Polish researcher R. Stiller distinguishes three lexical levels (Braginsky, 1983, p. 354) (Figure 2).
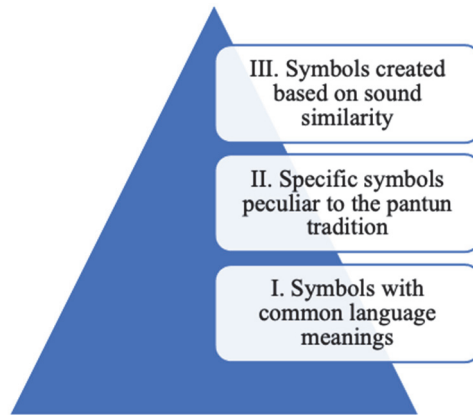
Figure 2. Lexical levels of characters used in pantuns

Source: compiled by the authors.

I. These are common language meanings that are easy to understand without knowing the specifics of Malay artistic thinking. For example:

> Lost a diamond in the high grass,
> Do not find it in the thick grass.
> You're gone, my love, far away,
> But your image remained in my heart.

Here the associations are obvious: just as a lost gem is hard to find, so a loved one cannot be replaced.

II. To understand the verses in this category, you need to know the specific symbols used in the pantun tradition. They can be very diverse. Most often,

the symbols are birds, insects, flowers, the moon, cloud, sea, fire and other elements of nature. For example, a pomegranate symbolizes the mouth of a beloved, a bud, a bird, a moon – a girl, a cloud, a branch – a young man, an unripe palm fruit – a teenager, a yellow walnut – an old maid, a shipwreck – a love failure, a large red ant (kerengga) – love torments, expensive ivory – a new love, a horn – an old love, earrings – maiden innocence, duck eggs – loneliness, a kemboja flower – death, jasmine – a wedding, a white thin mat – a woman.

> The boat sails east,
> The mast cracks and sways.
> On the most beautiful flower
> A lot of bumblebees come together.

In this quatrain, a shipwreck symbolizes a love failure, since the chosen flower girl (in the original, a bud) is so beautiful that she has many suitors ("bumblebees") burning with passion.

III. There is another way to create a symbol – a sound similarity. Thus, "selasih" ("basil") means "kekasih" ("beloved"), "hujan" ("rain") – "bujang" ("young man"), "rama-rama" ("butterfly") – "bersama-sama" ("together"), "padi" ("rice") – "hati" ("heart"), etc. The second word unconsciously revives in the listener the idea of the first, and thus the internal structure of the verse is fixed, clarified by the external expression.

> With pomegranate next to basil,
> And eternity was embodied in a moment.
> Love has united us –
> And blood is twofold with flesh.

This pantun is built on two types of symbols: object (garnet – the mouth of the beloved) and sound ("selasih" ("basil") – "kekasih" ("beloved")). From the first half of it, a picture of mutual pleasure emerges: the lover has the mouth of his beloved next to him. And in the second half, this reciprocity of feeling is even more deeply emphasized: love envelops (in the original, "glues") both. And the last line is a comparison: after all, there is no flesh without blood.

Symbolism helps to express in figurative form feelings, emotions that are difficult to express in an open form. It can be assumed that this characteristic of pantuns contributes in many ways to their popularity.

Thus, M.M. Bakunin, being the consul of the Russian Empire under the Dutch colonial administration in Batavia, noted in his book "Tropical Holland. Five years on Java Island": "In the evenings, you can hear the mezza voce (in a low voice) of young girls in the kampung (village), to which the young people respond with the same verses, improvised on the spot. <...> In a concise form and in a few, usually soft, strokes, full of harmless jocularity, and sometimes melancholy humor, these native improvisers pour out their Schusucht (melancholy) and are able to express everything, even the most subtle, feelings of a sore heart or a victory song of satisfied and triumphant passion" (Bakunin, 2007, p. 87).

The symbolism that is characteristic of pantuns can be correlated with the mystery, which is also explained by the history of the origin of this genre. It is assumed that the ancestors of the pantuns were proverbs designed as riddles, that is, the pantun is a further evolution of the riddles-couplets that turned into a quatrain.

This mystique is embodied in symbolism, which is a distinctive feature of the genre in question:

> Pinggan tak retak, / Plates shatter a heap,
> Nasi tak dingin, / Grains warm and left unjust,
> Engkau tak hendak, / You refuse to be mine to keep,
> Aku tak ingin. / Then, I'm not yours to trust.

This pantun is used when lovers break up: it is enough for a girl to say the first two lines, as the young man understands what is being said (Neverman et al., 1961, 352).

Many pantuns contain proverbs that help to convey a particular image, to express the meaning of a certain phenomenon. For example:

> Crocodile eats on the shore,
> The rock is too low for the tide.
> Than to live in shame,
> I'd rather go straight to the grave.

In this pantun, the last two lines are a proverbial saying. And in the next pantun, the last line is a saying:

> Two swamps and one well,
> One budjuk and the Rouen fry.
> You're there, and I'm here,
> Like an owl that longs for the moon.

The use of symbols helps to expand the verbal formula in which thoughts, experiences are usually clothed.

Another feature of the pantuns is their belonging to a particular theme. At the same time, the general theme of the genre is richer and more diverse than a simple lyric song. Pantuns can reflect all the phenomena of life, as evidenced by the thematic diversity of works of the pantun genre (Kusnadi, 2016). Based on this, there are various classifications of pantuns by content. For example, the age attribute is based on: children's pantuns (pantun anak-anak), youth pantuns (pantun dewasa) and older generation pantuns (pantun orang tua). Then each of these large groups is divided into smaller ones: children – into funny and sad, youth-love, heroic, joking, older generation – into edifying, religious, patriotic, etc.

But we consider it more correct to base the classification on a plot-thematic feature (Figure 3).
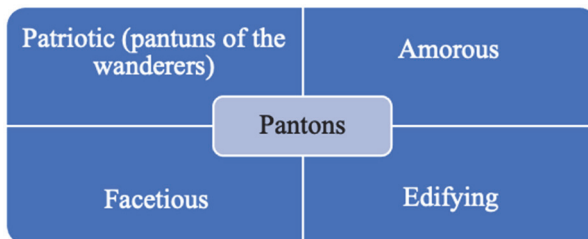

Figure 3. Classification of pantuns by plot and theme

Source: compiled by the authors.

This division is not categorical since some quatrains go beyond its boundaries.

The first group is the patriotic or pantuns of the wanderers, as the Malays themselves call them. Their main theme is love for their native, distant and sweet land. They are imbued with the motives of loneliness and longing, sometimes turning into despair (Rismawati, 2017, p. 59). Let us give as an example the pantun characteristic of this group of quatrains:

> Even a tree is hard to grow
> At the source of a strange river.
> A man in a foreign land is sad,
> Who will cure him of his melancholy?

Our research has shown that the most common in Malay folklore quatrains is a theme of love. Many of the amorous pantuns are very close to each other in both sound and meaning:

> From where does the leech crawl?
> From the field it crawls to the river.
> Where does love come from?
> From the eyes comes to the heart.

> Where does the bird fly from?
> Flies out of the bushes to the river.
> Where does love come from?
> From the eyes comes to the heart.

These quatrains are very similar to each other. They differ only in that at the beginning of the first quatrain it is said about a leech crawling to the river, and at the beginning of the second – about a bird (a small wild pigeon) flying to the river.

Let us now turn to the third group of quatrains – comic pantuns. Often in these cheerful verses, through a carefree joke, an edifying beginning appears. But, unlike edifying pantuns, they do not have direct didactics, moralizing, but only irony or humor:

> A Javanese went to the island of Banda,
> I wanted to buy him some fish.
> An old man married a young woman
> And he thinks he won the cockfights.

The edifying quatrains contain moral teachings, various kinds of advice addressed to young people (Rismawati, 2017, p. 60). For example:

> Golden bananas brought from far away,
> The ripe ones are in a row in the box.
> Cash debt paid by due date,
> You'll go to your grave as a debtor anyway.

In the above pantun, the idea is stated that a person is an eternal debtor to the family and society that brought him up, gave him knowledge, etc. First, it contrasts duty in the direct sense of the word with moral duty. Secondly, we have a complex figurative metaphor: just as this variety of bananas ("golden") was brought from far away by sea (apparently, they are quite rare), so a person drew knowledge from a variety of distant sources, which symbolizes the centuries-old experience of their ancestors, the environment, education, etc. Just as bananas collected from many trees now lie side by side in a box, so all the accumulated experience of previous generations fit into the mind of one person.

In some pantuns, freedom, work, unity and mutual assistance are sung. They can also be classified as edifying, such as the following pantun, which was apparently created during the struggle against the colonizers:

> A bird that flew into the sky,
> You won't get tired of soaring under the sun.
> The one who tasted freedom,
> He won't be a slave again.

The structural and content features, in turn, determine the phonetic ones. Given that pantuns were originally not poems, but songs, and they are still referred to as a song genre, we note their performance in a singsong, which nevertheless is characterized by simultaneous melody and rhythm. It is also necessary to mention the accent in pantuns. Representing four-line songs, they can have as diverse melodies as verbal texts. Each area of Malaysia and Indonesia has its own melody. The accent is easily changed (since it is not fixed in Malay) according to the musical arrangement (Thomas, 1985).

The size and sound of each individual pantun are always subject to general rules. Exceptions to the general rules are quite rare and also do not go beyond the tribal borders. Thus, the Minangkabau Malays, who live in the central part of Sumatra and speak their own special dialect, have six-line pantuns that have no distribution among other Malays (Gani, 2010; Zulfikarni, Liusti, 2020), and the inhabitants of the Southern Moluccas, the Ambonians, along with the usual type of pantuns, sometimes come across those whose line contains only three two-syllable words and whose rhythm goes back to European (Portuguese and Dutch) poetic or musical rhythms (Goddard, 2005). However, such deviations from the norm are extremely rare.

The performance of pantuns by men and women during field work led to the emergence of a special form of "stitched" pantun (pantun berkait). Its peculiarity lies in the fact that it consists of a chain of quatrains, of which the second and fourth lines of the first pantun become the first and third lines of the second, etc. The performance of "stitched pantuns" by the bride and groom is still a traditional element of the wedding ceremony for many peoples of the Malay Archipelago (Braginsky, 1983, p. 59; Rismawati, 2017, p. 50).

Pantuns were so popular that they were also widely used in written Malay literature. Thus, the heroes of medieval stories (hikayats) often exchanged stitched pantuns, demonstrating their art and ability to use poetic language. Pantun was also used as a diplomatic device by which the heroes resolved conflicts among themselves (Shunmugam, Soh, 2017, p. 50; Spangenberg, 2015, p.5).

There is another kind of pantun-talibun (talibun), another name-sesomba (sesomba), which is widespread in the poetry of the Minankabau people. Its peculiarity is that it has not four, but a larger number of lines (6, 8, 10, 12, etc.). Talibuns are less popular due to their bulkiness. Their complexity is determined not so much by the multi-line nature, but by the fact that the rhyming lines are separated from each other by a considerable distance, which, of course, makes it difficult to perceive and remember the verse[2]. As an example, we will give this talibun:

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[2] Gasparov, M.L. (1993). *Russian poems of the 1890–1925s in the comments: Textbook.* Moscow: Vysshaya shkola Publ. (In Russ.)

> Climbing a steep mountain,
> I found myself in the jungle of the primeval,
> Some of the trees here bear fruit,
> Some of them are suitable only for wood.
> I, the insignificant one, stutter timidly,
> Naming the mighty ones:
> Theologians, local rich people,
> Headmen and landowners of the all-powerful.

In this pantun-talibun, the lines rhyme according to the following pattern: a-b-c-d-a-b-c-d, i.e., the first line rhymes with the fifth, the second with the sixth, etc. This principle is maintained in all multi-line talibuns: it is divided in half and each line of the first half rhymes accordingly with the line of the second half of the poem.

It is quite obvious that although there are small structural differences between the actual pantun and the stitched pantun, and the talibun, they are not independent poetic forms. The stitched pantun and talibun are varieties of pantun, because they retain the main feature of this genre – the division of the quatrain in the stitched pantun and the multi-verse in the talibun into the beginning (allegory) and the ending (realization).

The varieties of the same pantuna include seloka-a poem that also consists of four lines, but with a continuous rhyme or monorym (Braginsky, 1983, p. 351):

> Kayu jati bertimbal jalan / Timber woods decked, a house of cards,
> Turun angin patahlah dahan. / Mother wind blows, they fell apart.
> Ibu mati bapa berjalan, / A mother dead, a father runs,
> Kemana untung diserahkan? / What's life if you're eating your heart?

Here all four lines rhyme according to the scheme: a-a – a-a and, in addition, there is an internal cross-rhyme: "jati" – "mati". The above quatrain is really a pantun built on parallelism. But seloka is also called such poems with a monorim, where this main feature of the pantun is absent. The theme of seloka usually becomes a satire of negative phenomena of reality or criticism of inappropriate behavior.

Many researchers note the love of Malays for alliteration, for parallelism with the help of sound hints (Rismawati, 2017, p. 59). It is the considered features of pantuns, which make it possible to figuratively express feelings and emotions in a simple accessible form, that contribute to the popularity of this genre so far. Pantuns, as well as prayers, traditionally begin and end any official event in Indonesia. They reflect modern reality, but the form in the quatrains remains traditional: they are built on semantic and syntactic parallelism, break down into a beginning and ending (Effendi, 2019; Natsir et al., 2019; Pogadaev. Flowers.., 2008; Rismawati, 2017; Winona et al., 2017).

Pantun as a genre of poetry is known and popular outside of Malay culture. In the XIX century, Western writers experimented with the form of the pantun: Victor Hugo in the collection "Orientales" (Les Orientales, 1829), Leconte de Lisle, Theodore de Banville, etc. Some modern American writers, such as Anne Waldman, Donald Justice, and John Ashbery, used this form in their works. Pantuns have had a certain attention on the work of Russian poets of the Silver age: Valery Bryusov, Adeline Adalis, Nikolai Gumilyov.

Currently, pantuns are gaining more and more fans on the world wide Web. Aspiring poets try to create their own works in this genre and even hold competi-

tions for the title of "best pantun writer". Also on the poetry forums, the game "pantun" is offered, the essence of which is that the first player offers a quatrain, and the next one must compose his own, where the second and fourth lines of the previous quatrain become the first and third of the invented one. Therefore, the traditional genre of Malay folklore is gradually spreading around the world.

Conclusion

The research allowed to systematize the main features characteristic of the pantun – genre of traditional Malay poetry and draw the following conclusions:

– classic folk pantun is a miniature poetic form, the quatrain rhyme with cross decaying into two couplets, which usually do not have each other any direct logical connection, but connected by the principle of sound and, most importantly, figurative and symbolic parallelism;

– brevity and conciseness are important: pantuns use two-and three-syllable words, each line consists of 8–12 syllables;

– structural features: consistency and brevity, can be explained by the fact that the pantun was born in the pre-written era and carried a certain functional load, while the violation of the norm-logic-may be intended to draw attention to the content aspect, namely, to strengthen the impression of the ending of the poem;

– the considered structural features determine the content characteristics of pantuns: brevity and logic make it important to choose a word from the point of view of its economy and sound, the need to expand the semantic form through the use of allegories, metaphors, and symbolism;

– symbolism helps to express in figurative form feelings, emotions that are difficult to express in an open form, while the symbolism that is characteristic of pantuns can be correlated with mystery, which is also explained by the history of the emergence of this genre;

– the structural and content features, in turn, determine the phonetic ones: based on the original belonging of the pantuns to the song genre, it should be noted that they are melodic and rhythmic;

– it is the considered features of pantuns, including a variety of themes, meeting certain national characteristics of the Malay people, that contribute to the popularity of this genre so far. The modernizing content is nevertheless subject to the established, that is, traditional norms of the design of these verses.

The characteristics of the pantun presented in the article can be supplemented in the course of further research. A separate subject of study can be a typological comparison of individual varieties of the genre that are common in different regions of the Malay Archipelago. The use of the pantun form in European poetry of the XIX–XX centuries also opens up great prospects for the study of literary relations between East and West.

A more detailed study is also required of the modern forms of pantun existence: for example, today we can say that through thematic Internet communities that have united amateur poets, pantuns have been transformed into one of the genres of online folklore.

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Bio notes:

Dana K. Bartosh, Doctor of Sciences in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Department of Russian as a Foreign Language, Moscow State Linguistic University, 38 Ostozhenka St, Moscow, 119034, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0000-0001-9612-8997. E-mail: d.bartosh@linguanet.ru

Ekaterina O. Kotova, postgraduate of Science in Philology, Philological Faculty, Pushkin State Russian Language Institute, 6 Akademika Volgina St, Moscow, 117485, Russian Federation. E-mail: katerynakotowa@yandex.ru

Victoria V. Kytina, PhD in Pedagogy, lecturer of Russian as a Foreign language, Student Development Section, Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology, University Kuala Lumpur, 1016 Jalan Sultan Ismail St, Kuala Lumpur, 50250, Malaysia. ORCID: 0000-0003-4660-4726. E-mail: kytinavictoria@unikl.edu.my

Mariya V. Kharlamova, Candidate of Sciences in Pedagogy, Associate Professor, Department of Grammar and History of the German Language, Faculty of German Language, Moscow State Linguistic University, 38 Ostozhenka St, Moscow, 119034, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0000-0001-5278-8168. E-mail: m.harlamova@linguanet.ru

Сведения об авторах:

Бартош Дана Казимировна, доктор педагогических наук, доцент кафедры русского языка как иностранного, Московский государственный лингвистический университет, Российская Федерация, 119034, Москва, ул. ул. Остоженка, д. 38, стр. 1. ORCID: 0000-0001-9612-8997. E-mail: d.bartosh@linguanet.ru

Котова Екатерина Олеговна, аспирант, филологический факультет, Государственный институт русского языка имени А.С. Пушкина, Российская Федерация, 117485, Москва, ул. Академика Волгина, д. 6. E-mail: katerynakotowa@yandex.ru

Кытина Виктория Викторовна, кандидат педагогических наук, преподаватель русского языка как иностранного, Малайзийский институт авиационных технологий, Университет Куала-Лумпур, Малайзия, Куала-Лумпур, 50250, ул. Султана Исмаила, д. 1016. ORCID: 0000-0003-4660-4726. E-mail: kytinavictoria@unikl.edu.my

Харламова Мария Витальевна, кандидат педагогических наук, доцент кафедры грамматики и истории немецкого языка, факультет немецкого языка, Московский государственный лингвистический университет, Российская Федерация, 119034, Москва, ул. Остоженка, д. 38, стр. 1. ORCID: 0000-0001-5278-8168. E-mail: m.harlamova@linguanet.ru