

Unspoken Meanings in the Miyowor Folktale: A Discourse Analysis Based on Grimes' Framework of Non-Event Information

Rinetha Stella Suabey
Universitas Papua, Indonesia
Email: r.suabey@unipa.ac.id

Abstract

Folktales serve as repositories of cultural knowledge and identity, transmitted across generations through oral tradition. Among indigenous communities in West Papua, these narratives preserve worldviews, moral values, and environmental relationships that define communal identity. This study analyzes the folktale Miyowor from the Wandamen community in Teluk Wondama, West Papua, using discourse analysis with a particular focus on non-event information as conceptualized by Grimes. Non-event information includes elements such as setting, background, evaluation, and collateral details, which do not directly narrate events but enrich the overall meaning of the story. The purpose of this research is to identify the occurrence of these elements in the Miyowor folktale and to explain how they contribute to a deeper understanding of the narrative. The findings reveal that all four types of non-event information are present, shaping the story's structure and highlighting key cultural values of the Wandamen people. These values include their perception of time, the importance of hard work, and the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. By uncovering these implicit dimensions, the study shows how folktales function as vital media for the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge and identity.

Keywords: Discourse analysis; folktale; Miyowor; non-event information; Grimes; Wandamen

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are significant media for conveying cultural values and local wisdom. In addition, literature functions as a source of entertainment for its audience (Fadhilah & Sumarni, 2025; Tyagi, 2024). In oral literature, such as folklore, language serves as a medium of communication between the storyteller and the audience whether readers or listeners (Kara, 2025). Language is also the primary tool in the creation of literary works, through which messages, norms, and values reflected in society are expressed (Aminah, Lustyantie, & Chaeruman, 2025; Fernandez, 2025). Although dynamic, the language of literature preserves its fundamental communicative functions (Ma'aji, 2025; Salfin, Kurniadi, & Erwin, 2024).

Language is employed in ways that engage readers' interest and ensure accessibility beyond mere communication. As Wellek and Warren (1956) assert, "language in literature is not only a means of communication, but also a medium of aesthetics and ideology." Literature sets a standard for refined linguistic use, where literary language functions persuasively through three dimensions: *docere* (to teach), *delectare* (to delight), and *movere* (to move) (Agazzi et al., 2022; James, 2023).

This principle also applies to the portrayal of folklore within literary works. As previously mentioned, language functions as a communicative medium (Matan & Velvizhy, 2025; Muraveva, 2025). Across almost every region, there exist tales, myths, and legends collectively referred to as folklore that have evolved over generations and often embody elements of belief systems (Hunter, 2025; Sekulic, 2025). These stories have been transmitted

orally from ancestors to descendants in regional languages (Lebaka, 2025). Folklore commonly reflects traditional thought patterns or cultural worldviews shaped by the natural environment in which communities live (Firdaus, 2025; Huys, 2025).

The Wandamen are an ethnic group residing in the Teluk Wondama region. The Teluk Wondama Regency lies predominantly on the landmass of Papua Island, covering an area of approximately 4,996 km². Geographically, the regency is situated between 132°35'–134°45' E and 0°15'–3°25' S, bordered by Ransiki District of Manokwari Regency to the north, Yaur District of Nabire Regency to the east, and Yuri and Idor Districts of Teluk Bintuni Regency to the west (preliminary data from the Government of Teluk Wondama Regency, 2005).

The folklore examined in this study is a tale from the Wandamen people (Sibihwana, 2024; Zavyalova, 2023). The story titled *Miyowor*, originating from the Wandamen community in Teluk Wondama, West Papua, represents an oral folktale rich in symbolic elements and moral values (Hunter, 2025). The narrative not only presents a sequence of events but also contains various forms of information that deepen the understanding of the cultural and social context of the community (Heersmink, 2023; McDowell, 2021).

This research analyzes the *Miyowor* folktale using discourse analysis theory, focusing on non-event information as conceptualized by Joseph E. Grimes. The study specifically aims to: (1) identify the occurrence of setting, background, evaluation, and collateral information within the narrative structure; (2) explain how these non-event elements contribute to meaning-making and cultural representation; and (3) demonstrate the role of folktales as repositories of indigenous knowledge and worldview.

The significance of this research lies in three dimensions. Theoretically, it contributes to discourse analysis by applying Grimes' framework to an underexplored corpus of Papuan oral literature, expanding the empirical base of narrative discourse studies beyond Western contexts. Practically, the findings serve as documentation of Wandamen cultural heritage, supporting initiatives for cultural preservation and indigenous language education. Methodologically, the research illustrates how linguistic analysis can uncover implicit cultural meanings embedded in narrative structure, offering a replicable analytical model for oral traditions across Indonesia and other regions. Furthermore, in the context of cultural erosion caused by globalization and language shift, this research represents an urgent effort to preserve endangered oral traditions for future generations.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach within the framework of discourse analysis. It is designed to systematically identify and interpret non-event information in the *Miyowor* folktale based on Grimes' (1975) theoretical framework. The research focuses on the *Miyowor* folktale originating from the Wandamen ethnic community in Teluk Wondama Regency, West Papua Province, Indonesia. The Wandamen people inhabit both the coastal and inland areas of Teluk Wondama, where their oral literary tradition functions as a fundamental medium for transmitting cultural knowledge across generations.

The primary data source for this study is the written transcription of the *Miyowor* folktale obtained from documented oral narratives of the Wandamen community. The text was originally narrated in the Wandamen language and subsequently translated into Indonesian. Secondary data were collected from relevant literature on discourse analysis, oral literature

theory, and ethnographic studies of Papuan communities. Data collection was conducted using the documentation technique, specifically through the examination of the transcribed Miyowor text. The complete narrative was compiled and prepared for systematic linguistic analysis, with repeated readings carried out to ensure a thorough understanding of its narrative structure, content, and linguistic features.

Data analysis followed a systematic procedure based on Grimes' (1975) typology of non-event information, encompassing the following stages:

1. Text segmentation: The narrative was divided into meaningful units (clauses, sentences, and discourse segments) to facilitate detailed analysis.
2. Identification of non-event information: Each segment was examined to identify instances of the four types of non-event information: setting (temporal, spatial, and circumstantial context), background (causal explanations and motivations), evaluation (narrator's judgments and emotional commentary), and collateral information (unrealized or potential events).
3. Categorization and coding: Identified non-event elements were systematically categorized and coded according to their function within the narrative structure.
4. Functional interpretation: Each category of non-event information was analyzed for its contribution to narrative coherence, cultural meaning, and reader engagement.
5. Synthesis: Findings were synthesized to reveal how non-event information collectively shapes the cultural and moral dimensions of the folktale.

The validity of the analysis was ensured through triangulation with existing discourse analysis literature and consultation with linguistic experts familiar with Papuan oral traditions. The analytical process was iterative, allowing for the continuous refinement and verification of interpretive claims.

Forms of literary works are generally classified into three categories: poetry, prose, and drama. Among these, prose is considered one of the most comprehensive forms of literary expression, though this depends on its genre—whether a novel, short story, or another narrative form. One example of purely oral or verbal folklore is the folktale. A folktale is a narrative transmitted orally from one individual to another, with an unidentified creator. Typical characteristics of folktales include anonymous authorship, timelessness, symbolic depth, disregard for chronological sequence, simplicity of form, direct expression, and a strong element of fantasy (Eddy, 1991).

Discourse, belonging to the prose genre, encompasses oral storytelling. This type of narrative presents non-event information found in folktales from one of the regencies in West Papua. Such stories can also be regarded as forms of discourse that developed historically and continue to persist today. According to Kridalaksana (as cited in Tarigan, 1987, p. 25), discourse is the most complete unit of language; within the grammatical hierarchy, it represents the highest or most comprehensive level of linguistic structure. Syamsuddin (1992, p. 5) defines discourse as a series of utterances or speech acts expressing a specific topic presented systematically to form a coherent unit comprising both segmental and non-segmental elements of language. From these definitions, several key points about discourse can be identified: (1) it constitutes the largest grammatical unit; (2) it is systematically organized; and (3) it involves strong inter-sentential relationships.

This study employs a discourse analysis approach grounded in Joseph E. Grimes' concept of non-event information from his work *The Thread of Discourse* (1975). According to Grimes (1975), narrative discourse consists not only of sequential events but also of the speaker's organization and evaluation of those events.

"Narrative discourse involves not only the events themselves, but also how the speaker evaluates and structures those events" (Grimes, 1975).

Grimes classifies information in discourse into two categories: event and non-event information. Non-event information functions to provide context and emphasis for the main narrative and consists of the following components:

1. Setting: Information related to the place, time, and conditions of an event.
2. Background: Information that explains the reasons or causes behind an event.
3. Evaluation: Comments or judgments about events that provide emotional or moral emphasis.
4. Collateral: Additional information that is not directly related to the plot, but adds depth to the narrative.

In addition to Grimes, the concept and scope of discourse as the highest unit of language are also discussed by Tarigan (1987) and Syamsuddin (1992). Discourse is understood as a coherent sequence of spoken or written language that is systematically organized and reflects communicative functions within a specific social context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Non-Event Information in Discourse.

In this section, the discourse will be analysed according to Grimes' framework, which categorizes four types of information that are not events within a discourse:

1. Setting,
2. Background,
3. Evaluation, and
4. Collateral information.

Setting in the Story of Miyowor

Setting refers to information related to the place, time, and circumstances in which events in the story occur. Setting can be identified in two forms:

1. complete sentences that fully describe the place, time, and conditions;
2. time or place descriptions that are part of a sentence, which also narrates an event.

In this story, the depiction of place serves as the setting. This type of information is additional and does not form part of the core event itself. Therefore, setting information should be distinguished from the elements of location and place, as well as time and circumstance. All of these will be explained in the following section.

Place in the Story of Miyowor

Place refers to the location-related information found in the *Miyowor* story. Below are several words and phrases that indicate location or place:

Quotation:

1. In the Windesi area (background)

- in the Windesi area (*setting*)
2. somewhere called Azas (background)
in a place called Azas (*setting*)
3. Masaraserani went to a sago hamlet (range/localized target) called Sapari (background)
Masaraserani went to a sago hamlet (locative target) called Sapari (*setting*)
4. Sago Filling in Noken (Range/Localized Target)
putting sago into a noken (*locative target*)
5. depart for Sukoroti (range/localized target)
departed for Sukoroti (*locative target*)
6. The place is named: "MAYAWOR" (background)
That place was named: "MAYAWOR" (*setting*)

There are four place names in the Miyowor story—Windesi, Azas, Sapari, and Mayawor—which function as settings rather than ranges, as they describe the specific locations where the events take place. In addition, there are three locative targets (ranges) mentioned in the Miyowor story: the sago hamlet, noken, and Sukoroti. These are referred to as locative targets because they indicate the spatial range or direction of the characters' movements within the narrative:

- The phrase "*dusun sago*" (*sago hamlet*) is preceded by "*went to the sago hamlet*", meaning that the hamlet is the destination or target location where the sago is planted. The verb "*went*" indicates an event.
- The phrase "*in the noken*" indicates where the sago (a traditional Papuan food) is stored or placed.
- "*Sukoroti*" is a place name preceded by the verb "*departed*", which also indicates an event.

Time in the Story of *Miyowor*

The element of time, when expressed as part of the verb aspect or tense, does not function as setting, because it forms an essential part of the event itself.

Quotation:

1. When the sago tree was knocked down, the sun set, finally the work of smoking and squeezing the sago was not carried out.

When the sago tree was cut down, the sun began to set, and as a result, the activities of pounding and squeezing the sago were not carried out.

In this story, there is the phrase "*the sun began to set*", which can be interpreted as a time marker, since the setting sun indicates the late afternoon or evening.

Condition in the Story of *Miyowor*

The term condition in this context refers to manner-related information, which is typically closely connected to the main event and therefore does not function as setting information. In some cases, conditional information describes an event that occurs simultaneously with the main event. In the Miyowor story, there is one instance that can be categorized as a condition because two events take place concurrently within the same narrative moment.

Quotation:

1. The next day they went to the hamlet again and continued their respective work. Serawiri and Seramini so they didn't realize that the goti containing flour was full. When they saw the results, they were satisfied. But they wondered why the sun had not set as usual today. Masaraserani knew that, but he kept quiet and was satisfied with what he had done. But on the other hand, he thinks that with his actions Masarasetumi is now entangled. Therefore, he told his two children to fill the sago dinoken.

The next day, they went back to the hamlet and continued their respective tasks. Serawiri and Seramini were so focused that they didn't realize the container of sago flour was already full. When they saw the result, they were satisfied. However, they were puzzled as to why the sun hadn't set yet as it usually did. Masaraserani knew the reason, but he kept quiet and felt satisfied with what he had done. On the other hand, he thought that because of his actions, Masarasetumi was now trapped. Therefore, he told his two children to fill the sago into the noken.

The event that occurs is: "*The next day, they went back to the hamlet and continued their sago-processing work,*" and the simultaneous descriptive event is "*Masarasetumi is now trapped.*" Both of these are events that happen at the same time, and thus, one of them does not function as setting information.

Background in the Story of *Miyowor*

The term *background* here refers to information in the story that is not part of the main event, but serves to explain why the event occurs. In the *Miyowor* story, there are background elements that clarify the reasons behind certain events:

Quotation:

1. Because this has happened repeatedly, there was an intention from Masaraserani to meet Masarasetumi (the Sun).
Because this had happened repeatedly, Masaraserani began to have the desire to meet Masarasetumi (the Sun).
2. Therefore, he sought a reason to capture Masarasetumi.
Therefore, he devised a plan to catch Masarasetumi.
3. To realize his reason, he went to the place and set a snare.
To carry out his plan, he went to that place and set a trap.

These three sentences are examples of non-core events; they do not constitute the main events themselves but instead explain the reasons behind their occurrence. For instance, they clarify why Masarasetumi (the Sun) was trapped by Masaraserani. This type of background information is typically introduced through causal conjunctions such as *because*, *so that*, or *in order to*, which signal a cause-and-effect relationship within the narrative structure.

Evaluation in the Story of *Miyowor*

Evaluation draws the listener deeper into the story. In this tale, there are several examples where the narrator describes an event in a way that pulls the reader or listener further

into the narrative. Evaluation appears in the form of emotional comments or judgments about a situation. Consider the following examples:

1. His livelihood is to smoke sago. How to obtain it is very difficult, because the time it takes to get the flour is too short. This situation has been going on for quite a long time. As a result, Masaraserani's family suffered from hunger.

Their livelihood was pounding sago. Obtaining it was very difficult because the time available to produce the flour was too short. This situation had gone on for quite some time, resulting in Masaraserani's family suffering from hunger.

2. The closer he got to Masarasetumi, he heard a very sad poem.

As he got closer to Masarasetumi, he heard a song that was deeply sorrowful.

3. So with a happy heart Masaraserani told his wife about all his deeds towards Masarasetumi.

Then, with a joyful heart, Masaraserani told his wife everything he had done to Masarasetumi.

As explained above, *evaluation* not only draws the audience deeper into the story but also reveals the characters' emotions to the reader. Phrases such as *very difficult*, *suffering from hunger*, *deeply sorrowful*, and *with a joyful heart* are examples of how the narrator both explains the event and embeds emotional commentary. Thus, evaluation deepens the meaning of the story and reveals the emotional position of the narrator or characters in relation to the events.

Collateral Information in the Story of *Miyowor*

Collateral information refers to details about events that did not happen or that could have happened. An example from the story is:

1. But they wondered why the sun had not set as usual today. Masaraserani knew that, but he kept quiet and was satisfied with what he had done. But on the other hand, he thinks that with his actions Masarasetumi is now entangled

They were puzzled as to why the sun had not set as it usually did. Masaraserani knew the reason, but he kept it to himself and felt satisfied with what he had done. On the other hand, he thought that because of his actions, Masarasetumi was now trapped.

In this part of the story, there is an example of collateral information, seen in the question: "*They were puzzled as to why the sun had not set as it usually did.*" This question is not answered directly by any character's dialogue. Instead, the narration responds to it indirectly, which adds a dramatic effect and intensifies the mystery of the story.

Collateral information, as Grimes (1975) explains, expands the narrative universe by referencing potential or counterfactual events, thereby enriching the listener's interpretive experience. In this instance, the unanswered question creates narrative suspense and positions the audience as co-investigators alongside the characters. This technique is particularly effective in oral storytelling contexts, where audience engagement is sustained through anticipation and curiosity (Hymes, 2004). Moreover, the collateral element—the disruption of the natural order, represented by the sun failing to set—signals the intrusion of the extraordinary into the ordinary. This is a common feature of folktale logic, wherein cosmic rules may be bent or broken to reveal the fluid boundary between human and supernatural

realms in indigenous cosmologies (Rumata, 2016). The deliberate choice of Masaraserani to withhold the answer generates dramatic irony, positioning the audience as privileged observers who possess insight beyond that of the characters themselves—a narrative strategy that deepens engagement and fosters overall narrative cohesion (Van Dijk, 1997).

CONCLUSION

This paper examines the Miyowor folktale of the Wandamen people from Teluk Wondama, West Papua, through Joseph E. Grimes' discourse analysis framework, with a focus on non-event information. The analysis reveals that setting, background, evaluation, and collateral information all play significant roles in shaping the narrative. The setting situates the story within the cultural and spatial world of the Wandamen, where place names and natural phenomena provide both temporal and geographic grounding. Background information establishes causal relationships and character motivations, ensuring narrative coherence. Evaluation contributes emotional depth and moral interpretation, encouraging empathetic engagement from the audience. Collateral information, though used sparingly, introduces tension and implies symbolic or supernatural dimensions. Together, these elements illustrate that the Miyowor folktale operates as a culturally situated discourse reflecting intricate relationships among humans, nature, and the supernatural. This study underscores the importance of linguistic and discourse-based approaches in analyzing oral traditions, particularly in under-researched regions such as Papua, where such analysis serves both to preserve indigenous heritage and to advance interdisciplinary inquiry in linguistics, literary theory, and cultural studies. Future research could extend this approach to other Wandamen or Papuan folktales, conduct comparative analyses with other indigenous narrative traditions, or explore how non-event information shapes collective memory and identity across generations.

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