

## THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMAN CHARACTERS IN TWO FOLKTALES FROM SOUTH SUMATRA PROVINCE

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper aims at revealing the representation of two woman characters in two folktales from South Sumatra province. The folktales are Bunanta's Princess White Hair and Princess Pinang Masak (Bunanta, 2003). These folktales are categorized under the same theme in which the woman character in each folktale is independent (Bunanta, 2003). The independence is presented by the rejection to be married by the king. By the plot, the women as renowned characters in the society possess similar roles in the folktales. However, they are represented differently by the language choice. In literary works, language choice is motivated (Verdonk, 2002). In other words, the choice is not random. This paper exposes the use of language to represent the roles of the woman characters. The language of both folktales is scrutinized by two linguistic analyses. The first analysis employs the analysis of attitude (Martin and White, 2005). This analysis presents the evaluation toward the woman characters in terms of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. The result of the analysis on attitude also shows how the woman characters are recognized. The second linguistic analysis is the Transitivity analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The transitivity analysis results in the representation of the woman characters in terms of the processes in the clauses. The analysis selects the clauses in which the characters become the participants or the circumstances. The results of both analyses confirm that even though the woman characters serve as the main characters in both folktales, they are not represented in the same manner. Further, in terms of characterization, the results may present that a particular role in a society, a princess, might be characterized in diverse depictions. However, this paper does not aim at drawing any generalization from the folktales. In addition, though this paper deals with a particular role in a society, this paper does not want to describe a particular society or to highlight the moral teaching of the folktales.*

Keywords: appraisal, characterization, stylistics, transitivity

### INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on the stylistic analysis. This section will elaborate the nature and the objects of stylistic analysis. The nature of stylistic analysis enables this paper to examine works of literature. Stylistics observes literatures (Simpson, 1993; Toolan, 2013). This paper analyzes the style of the objects, folktales. By employing stylistic analysis, the style should refer to the use of language (Leech & Short, 2007). Generally, stylistic can cover all aspects of language, but this paper particularly focuses on the the words or expressions to express attitudes and feelings, and on the transitivity structures.

Stylistic analysis does not only provides the description of the language in use, it also explains the use of the language. In other words, it explains the style that is used in a text (Bussman, 1996). The style is often the repetitive use of language, and stylistic analysis commonly highlights the repetition (Toolan, 2013). This paper examines the tendency in depicting the particular characters in two folktales by the use of language. Repetition in the depiction and unorganized or unrepeated use of language will be elaborated after they are described.

The objects of this paper are two folktales. The selection of the genre is due to their common application. Folktales can be classified as children's literature. As a work of literature for children, the folktales function as didactic literature (Nodelman, 2008). Folktales are read to teach moral values and teaching to the children. In addition, the literature should satisfy and answer children's curiosity about their surrounding. Thus, the folktales should justify the phenomena in the children's surrounding (Lerer, 2008). Therefore, the selected folktales are observed due to their didactic potential as children's literature. When reading the selected folktales, the children might ask questions related to anything in the folktales and relate them to their real surrounding. However, this paper focuses only on the characterization of the princesses in the folktales.

This paper chooses the woman characters in the folktales since they are foregrounded and become central in the plot development. In the book in which the stories are collected, those stories are categorized under the same classification, namely "Stories of Independent Princesses" (Bunanta, 2003). Therefore, the readers would anchor their presupposition based on that classification. Children as the targeted readers might also wonder more about the princesses rather than other characters. The princesses in both folktales become the causes of the events in the plot development. The stories are begun by introducing the princess and ended by telling what happened to the princess.

Considering the previous discussion, this paper possesses a main objective. It intends to reveal the use of language to represent the woman character in the folktales. By the revelation of the language use, it might serve an evidence that observation on the language in a literary work can be applied to scrutinize the work of literature. Hopefully, by doing so, this paper can serve as a model to raise ideological awareness when reading folktales and children's literature.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper adheres to the characteristics and methodology of stylistic analysis. The underlying proposition that suggest the use stylistic analysis in this paper is that the selection of language is not random, but motivated (Simpson, 2004; Verdonk, 2002). Therefore, the examination on the language is central. Stylistic analysis focuses on the creative uses of language by employing "rigorous, retrievable, and replicable" methods (Carter & Simpson, 1989:12-13; Simpson, 2004:3-4;). In addition to the nature of stylistic analysis, this paper, therefore, focuses on the pattern and repetition of language use in the object of analysis. The observation on patterns and repetition is common in stylistic analysis (Toolan, 2013). In this part, the methods and steps in analyzing the texts by scrutinizing the language is elaborated. The objects of the analysis are introduced as well. This paper utilizes two linguistic toolkits in the analysis. First, it examines the language by the language evaluation analysis (Martin and White, 2005). Second, it deploys the transitivity analysis since it is considered as a significant tool in stylistics (Simpson, 2004). Both of the toolkits are elaborated to justify the use of the language components to assert particular characterization of the woman characters. This is feasible since stylistic analyzes the selected language components and comprehend the components when they are used together with other components (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998).

The first toolkit in the analysis observes the attitudes assigned to the woman characters in both folktales. The framework follows the description and explanation by (Martin & White, 2005). The observation covers the Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. The analysis was conducted in four steps. First, the linguistic items which are related to the woman characters in both folktales were distinguished. The linguistic items may be of various word classes and of linguistic ranks. Second, the linguistic items were classified into types of feelings, namely the affect, judgement, and appreciation. Third, the occurrence of each type of feelings were elaborated to classify them into more detail types. Affects are classified into un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction. Judgements are related to social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem deals with normality, capacity, and tenacity. Social sanction deals with veracity and propriety. Appreciation is realised into reaction, composition, and valuation. Fourth, the results of the rigorous classification were utilized to justify the depiction of the woman characters in both folktales.

The second linguistic toolkit is the Transitivity analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The transitivity analysis examines the processes employed in the folktales to depict the woman characters. The analysis was conducted in four steps. First, the story was broken down into clauses. Second, the clauses were selected based on the occurrences of the woman characters. Not all clauses in the stories were examined. The analysis only examines clauses in which the woman characters appear as the participants and the circumstances. Third, the processes were classified into their types, whether they were material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioral, or existential. Fourth, the woman characters were explained and elaborated based on their occurrences in the processes.

The objects of the analysis are two folktales taken from *Indonesian Folktales* (Bunanta, 2003). The first folktale is entitled *Princess White Hair* (from now on it is notated as PWH). This folktale tells about the legend of a particular phenomenon in South Sumatra Province. The woman character in this folktale is prominent by the mentioning in the title. By the plot development, in short, the woman character became the cause of the conflict in the story due to the king's intention to marry her and her refusal to the king's proposal. In the end of the story, the woman character remained unmarried. The second folktale is entitled *Princess Pinang Masak* (notated as PPM). The folktale is also from South Sumatra Province. The woman character in the folktale is also prominent because of the mentioning in the title. By the plot development, in short, the woman character refused the king's marriage proposal and attempted to escape. In the end, the woman character prayed to the God for a wish that none of her descendants should compare with her beauty.

## ANALYSIS

The presentation of the findings reports the analysis findings first and proceeds to the interpretation and discussion of findings. The two analyses are not presented at once. First, this paper presents the results of the analysis on the attitude. Second, the analysis discusses the transitivity analysis. Though the results are presented separately, they will be elaborated to support the hypothesis, i.e. the depiction of the woman characters from the two folktales employs different linguistic items and structures.

The analysis of the attitudes shows that the woman characters show and receive different attitude by the use of language. In the folktale telling about PWH, there are 14 occurrences of linguistic items to show attitudes. Most of the occurrences are to give appreciation to the woman character. The PWH employs seven words showing appreciation, five words shows judgment, and two words presents affect. The woman character receive positive reaction in the story by the words such as *beautiful*, *beauty*, and *young*. The princess is negatively appreciated by the word *strange*. All the judgments found in the story present negative judgment in the form of negative propriety. The princess is shown insecure by the words; *alone* and *unprotected*.

From the folktale, 17 occurrences describe the attitude towards the woman character. The woman character is presented by one linguistic item showing affect. The princess feels unhappy. Further, only one occurrence expresses the judgement. It present positive social esteem in terms of positive capacity. Most of the occurrences are to express appreciation. There are 16 occurrences show the appreciation towards the princess. The princess as the woman character in the story receives positive reaction by the words such as *beautiful*, *beauty*, and *lovely*. However, she also receives negative reaction by the words like *no beauty*, *dirty*, and *unsightly*. In one part of the story, the princess is depicted by the negative composition by having *disguised* and *ruined*. The woman character is valued positively by words like *young* and *ideal*.

From the results, PWH and PPM are depicted differently though both of them are the ones acknowledged as princesses. PWH is depicted as a person who is highly appreciated by the society, but she acts inappropriately. Thus, she has interpersonal issues with the society. By being depicted as *arrogant* and *conceited*, the princess acts against the society's appropriate conducts. However, the princess is being insecure in a part of the story, the princess is alone and unprotected. She was kidnapped by the king easily, then. In PPM, the princess is not depicted as secured nor insecure. The princess is depicted as having a capacity instead. She "could plait a basket so well" (Bunanta, 2003:49). The society gives positive appreciation to the princess. This can be interpreted that in society, the princess is prominent. By the plot, the negative appreciations appearing in the story do not the natural appreciation that the princess would receive. The negative composition and reaction are due to the princess effort to

The transitivity analysis of PWH shows that the folktale employs 49 clauses to represent the woman character in the folktale. Out of those 49 clauses, 35 clauses employ material processes, five clauses use mental processes, five clauses employs relational processes, two verbal clauses use verbal clauses, and one clause utilizes existential process. By the number of occurrences, the most dominant process is the material process. This can be interpreted that the woman character is depicted dominantly by the actions of the characters. In 19 clauses, the woman character appears as the Goal while only in six clauses the princess appears as the Actor. The other clauses put the princess in the circumstances. This represents the dominant role of the princess in the story. The woman character is depicted as the object that receives the impacts of the verb. Seldom the princess becomes the actor of the process.

The mental process presents the princess as the phenomenon. This can be interpreted that the woman character become the object of mental observation. Similarly, by the verbal processes, the princess becomes the objects of the processes as either the verbiage or the target. The mental and verbal processes highlights that the princess is a phenomenal one. People in the society notice the princess and talk about her. The relational processes support the finding of the analysis of the attitude. The five clause depicts the princess as the carriers of both positive and negative attributes. The existential process only introduces the princess in the beginning of the story.

The woman character in PPM is represented by 55 clauses. From those clauses, 30 clauses employs material processes, eight mental processes, six verbal processes, nine relational processes, and two existential processes. By the number, similar to the depiction of PWH, the dominant process is material process. This means that the woman character is represented mostly by the actions involving the princess. The princess appears as the Actor of the process in 12 clauses, and 12 clauses present the princess as the Goal. This indicates that equally the princess does the action and receive the impact of the verbs. Different from the occurrences in the PWH, the mental process in PPM assigns the princess mostly

as the sensors only in two clauses, the princess appears as the phenomenon. This means that the princess actively and mentally observes the world as the subject rather than as the object of attention. This finding rather contradicts the characterization in the beginning of the story that the princess is depicted as a well-known one.

The verbal processes in the folktale present the woman character as the sayer, the verbiage, and the target. The princess becomes the sayer when she utters the oath before she died nearly in the end of the story. Before that, the woman character is never depicted as the sayer. She always appears in the verbiage or the target. Similar to the results in PWH, the princess in PPM becomes the carriers of her attributes. The princess is identified twice in the story. Once the princess is identified as the ideal of young men in the society. Once, the prince is identified as a symbol of ideal woman in the society. Though the existential process occurs twice in the story, they signifies the similar role to the role of this process in PWH. The existential processes introduce the princess in the beginning of the story.

## CONCLUSION

The analyses on the language use shows the similarities and the differences in representing the woman characters in the two folktales. The PWH and PPM represent the woman characters, the princess, mostly by the appreciation. The princess in PWH is appreciated positively and negatively. The negative appreciation is related to the negative judgement by the society. She is considered as a person who act inappropriately in the society. However, she is feeling insecure because she cannot protect herself from the king. PPM presents the woman character by appreciation as well. The negative appreciations need to elaborate the plot as the context as well. The interpretation might need to consider the context. The contexts are, among others, the plot and the events in the folktales. Considering only the words and linguistic items without considering the context might lead to different interpretation. The PPM feels unhappy due to the king's intention to marry her. PWH feels insecure while PPM feels unhappy. Thus, security becomes the issue in PWH, while happiness of the woman character is highlighted in PPM.

The transitivity analysis shows results in the finding that the princesses are depicted mostly by material processes. The princesses are involved in the verbs of actions. The PWH mostly becomes the Goal. In other words, she becomes the objects of the verb. She mostly receives the impacts of the verbs. Differently, PPM assigns the princess equally as the Actor and the Goal. PWH becomes the object of mental and verbal activities, while PPM actively becomes the sayer and the sayer. It means that PPM is not as phenomenal as PWH. She observes the worlds, while PWH is being observed by the surrounding.

This present paper does not intend to draw any generalization towards any cultures and folktales. This paper only focuses on the limited and particular folktales. For further examination and studies, more folktales from more regions can be observed as the data. In terms of the methodology, for the tales containing dialogue, the modality analysis can be applied to remark the interpersonal realization by using language. To justify more the characteristics of the princesses, plot analysis might also be practical to reveal the underlying causal motives of the characters' actions. Further, the study on the language can be combined with field studies as well to check the textual finding with social realization in the society.

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