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## Human Beings' Submissiveness to Supernatural Beings in Folktales from Central Sulawesi

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**Abstract** - Indonesia is an archipelagic nation of thousands of islands with vast and diverse cultures. Every inhabited island must have at least a culture comprising cultural products such as rites, tales, ceremonies, etc. However, some individual islands might also have more than one culture. The culture carries sets of beliefs that are worth examining to understand and cultivate the people's worldviews and perspectives. Those perspectives can be traced from folktales as cultural products. As the agent in the Anthropocene period, human beings are also observable in the generationally told folktales. This article explores the depictions and the roles of human characters and supernatural beings in two folktales from Sulawesi, one of the biggest islands in Indonesia. It problematizes the independency and power of human beings in the folktales. The research objects of this article are The Giant and the Orphan (Kalamboro Kaa Elu-elu) and People Who Descended (Miantii). By employing appraisal theory (Martin and White, 2005), this article identifies the attitudes towards both human and supernatural characters by the linguistic choices attached to them in the folktales. The choices of words and expressions depicting the characters are classified into affect, judgement, and appreciation. In conjunction with the folktales' plot, the linguistic analysis reveals that human characters in those two folktales are depicted as dependent on and powerless before supernatural characters. This article does not intend to draw any generalization toward any cultures from Sulawesi and Indonesia since it examines very limited objects.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Folktales, Island Studies, Sulawesi

### I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity and has immensely cultural products in arts and stories. Oral stories in the form of tales are commonly told in everyday social interactions to tell the customs of the people. The activities reinforce the customs (Forshee, 2006). Examining those stories would bring a deeper understanding of the society telling them.

Geographically, Indonesia is a vast archipelagic nation with thousands of inhabited and uninhabited islands. According to The Indonesian National Oceanographic Data Center

(NODC), Indonesia has 17.504 islands and 290.000 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean territory (The Indonesian National Oceanographic Data Center, n.d.). There is no single mainland in Indonesia, but Indonesia has some big islands. The biggest ones are Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua. There are islands such as *Kepulauan Seribu*, *Kepulauan Aru*, *Kepulauan Riau*, etc. Although the biggest islands are more populated than the smaller ones, they are not politically and economically similar. It centers the spotlight on growth and advancements on Java Island (Maulana & Benita, 2017). From a broader point

of view, the center of the development is mainly focused on the western part of Indonesia. Consequently, some extra efforts are needed to move the spotlight to expose other regions and islands in Indonesia since each island possesses cultural potential ready to explore.

The cultural prospects also need to adapt to survive. Arafah & Ma'aruf (2015) discusses forest conservation by adapting local wisdom on small islands in Celebes. The communities require adaptation to survive. They identify that communities may adapt in two sectors: farming and fishing. However, the research mentions that the adaptation goes beyond farming and fishing. The research indicates that the people have preserved beliefs and values, ready to adapt. It is considered cultural potential on the island. As a result, the community rearranges the role of the family members in their work, adds some new plants and produces, and adjusts the social institutions. Sulawesi or Celebes is also rich of folktales. Survival adaptation also happens in the tale-telling world.

Sulawesi, or Celebes, is one of the biggest islands in Indonesia. It also has considerable exposure potential, especially cultural potential in the form of tales. Telling them is urgent to preserve the cultures. Druce traces the historical contexts of a work titled *Hikajat Sawitto* from South Sulawesi (2016). In conclusion, the story presents traces from the past that are transmitted orally despite the development of writing modes. The research indicates the existence of oral stories from Sulawesi and delivery preferences. Oral stories from South Sulawesi have been adapted to drama scripts by Muliadi, Amin, & Mansyur (2020). The researchers introduce oral literature to school students to preserve the tales and their values and nourish the students' interest in local stories.

Folktales are a precious cultural product containing how people construct their identities. Research on folktales is also worth doing since folktales can reflect the culture of the people (Lwin & Marlina, 2018). It implies that they are valuable to be included in the education process. Further, since folktales can also preserve the values of the people, other attempts to preserve the folktales have been made by employing them in pedagogical settings (Small, 2019; Lwin & Marlina, 2018; Nnyagu & Umezina, 2018) and through activities of storytelling. By bringing folktales into pedagogical settings, the people transfer their values to their children (Lewin, 2020; Kim, Song, Lee, & Bach, 2018; Sone,

2018). Storytelling activities can also promote the culture (Bassano, et al., 2019; Ironside & Massie, 2020). However, folktale storytelling activities need to comprehend intensive readings on the folktales to capture various reading perspectives and interpretations.

Examining folktales should be done carefully. Even though some folktales successfully convey their intended moral lesson in the delivery, they frequently have hidden teachings. The values must be observed closely to reveal moral values. In other words, reading folktales demand careful close reading. The demand intensifies since the audience of the tales is children (Thompson, 2004; White, 1998; Zipes, 2006). The children are expected to comprehend the values and shape the community by reproducing the values. The examination can be initiated with linguistic observation. This research examines the use of language in presenting a particular ideology or values.

In sum, regarding the potential of folktales to contain values and ideologies in their production and delivery, this present research analyzes the choice of linguistic expressions in two selected folktales from central Sulawesi or Celebes to reveal a certain cultural perspective in those tales, i.e., the relation between supernatural characters and human beings. It seeks to answer the question of how human characters are depicted compared to supernatural characters. The prominent occurrences of supernatural beings in the folktales trigger the reason for exploring the relation. There is a giant in one of the folktales; in the other, there are people from the sky. The occurrences trigger the curiosity to reveal what the people think about supernatural beings and about how they position human beings and supernatural beings. Presumably, supernatural beings are depicted as more powerful than human characters. The human characters are portrayed as dependent and powerless before the supernatural characters.

Theoretically, this present research frames the discussion by the scope of stylistics. It aims at revealing the purpose of specific language use and the effects that it might bring. It applies the notion that stylistics is the analysis of language form, purpose, and effects (Verdonk, 2002). Since this research examines literary works, it also complies with what Stylistics covers. Simpson and Toolan mention that stylistics examines literature (Simpson, 1993; Toolan, 2013).

Table 1. The Types of Attitudes

Affect	Judgment	Appreciation
Un/happiness	Social esteem; normality	Reaction; Impact

In/security	Social esteem; capacity	Reaction; Quality
Dis/Satisfaction	Social esteem; tenacity	Composition; Balance
Inclination	Social sanction; veracity	Composition; Complexity
	Social sanction; propriety	Valuation

## II. METHODS

This research paper examines two selected folktales from Central Sulawesi. The folktales are taken from a collection compiled by researchers from Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia in collaboration with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Andersen, 1999). The collection was published as a book containing ten folktales from Central Sulawesi. The team attempts to approach the stories from a linguistic point of view. The stories are presented in three languages, i.e., the local language, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. The collection provides the English translation, making it possible to frame the present research using English linguistic theories.

Out of those ten folktales, the selected folktales for this present research are titled *Kalamboro kaa Elu-Elu* or The Giant and the Orphan (TGtO) (Sinampu, 1999) and *Mianti* or People who Descended (PwD) (Larobu, 1999). The two folktales are selected because of two reasons. First, they are from the same linguistic community. They are told in the Padoe language. They are expected to deliver similar values from the same linguistic community. Second, they present supernatural characters in the plots. However, the supernatural characters in the folktales are different. The supernatural character in TGtO is a giant, and the supernatural characters in PwD are people from the sky.

The research was conducted in five steps. The first step was identifying the characters in the folktales. The first step's result was identifying the characters' names or roles. This step is essential to locate the target of the evaluation. The result of this step was the identification of the characters in the folktales. The characters were also identified as being human or supernatural characters.

The second step was identifying the sentences containing the identified characters. Since this research focuses on evaluating the characters, irrelevant sentences are eliminated. Thus, this step eliminates the sentences in which the characters are not mentioned. This step resulted in the identification of relevant sentences.

The third step was listing the words and expressions depicting the characters. The words or expressions can be in any part of speech. The

result of this step was the identification of the characters' linguistic contexts. Next, in the fourth step, the words and the expressions were analyzed further based on the subcategories of the attitudes, namely affect, judgment, and appreciation.

The concepts of attitudes follow the explanation of attitudes by Martin & White (2005) and Martin & Rose (2007). For instance, in a folktale, the characters are depicted linguistically by attaching some characterizing words or expressions. Commonly, characters are portrayed as good and evil. Positive expressions depict good characters, and evil characters are by negative expressions. By attitude analysis, those good and bad expressions can be classified into several categories. There are three types of attitudes: Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. They evaluate different targets. Affect evaluates emotions and feelings. The judgment deals with people and their behaviors. Appreciation specifically evaluates things and phenomena. Those evaluation categories can have positive and negative values. They also can be further classified into subcategories, as seen in Table 1.

The last step is the interpretation of the findings. The lists of words and the classification are discussed to elaborate on the possible viewpoints in depicting the roles and authority of the characters. For example, negative affects might indicate feelings such as insecurity or unhappiness. Insecurity might, further, be an indication of the lack of power.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results meet the objectives of this present research by revealing the relationship between humans and supernatural characters. The analysis results show that the choice of linguistic items in the folktales shows the indication of human characters' submissiveness towards supernatural characters. The results present the various attitude categories.

The folktales present complex choices of attitudes and evaluation to characterize the human and supernatural characters. The complexity arises since positive and negative attitudes and evaluations depict human and supernatural characters. Therefore, there is no fixed formula in the characterization. However, the first story mostly portrays the human characters as insecure. The human character in

TGtO is an orphan, while the supernatural characters are giants. In PwD, the plot is dominated by the acts of supernatural characters, the people from the sky. The human characters are not mentioned often, but they are depicted as submissive before the people from the sky.

TGtO is about an orphan who lived with a family of giants. The giants kept the orphan as their food. The mother giant planned to kill the orphan and cook him. However, the orphan heard the plan and pushed the giants' child. The father and mother giant ate their child as they thought it was the orphan. The orphan fled, and the giant chased him. The orphan hid successfully, and the giant never found him anymore. The orphan was saved. PwD tells a story about a family of people who came from the sky. There are father and mother, but they stayed in the sky. Seven siblings from the sky came down to the earth. When they needed help, they sent a messenger to the sky to ask for help. The seven siblings appointed some human characters to become the leaders of human characters. Human characters should worship the people from the sky. The people from the sky helped the human characters solve their problems. When they faced difficulties, the messenger approached the sky and asked for help. One day, the messenger got angry and broke the ladder that connected the earth and the sky since somebody laughed at her. Since that day, there has been no way for people to ask for help directly from the people in the sky. That they could not go to the sky to ask for help was like a punishment for the human characters. They needed to work as farmers for their lives.

By the linguistic choices, the two stories take different perspectives in their narratives. TGtO centers its point of view on the human character's feelings. The word choices in TGtO dominantly indicate the negative feelings in the

forms of insecurity in characterizing the orphan and negative behaviors in characterizing the giants. On the other hand, PwD centers the perspective on supernatural characters. In the story, the supernatural characters are told as the ones to worship. They are capable of doing things and jobs that human characters cannot comprehend.

Specifically, regarding the number of appraised items, TGtO highlights the giants more than the human characters. There are 11 prominent appraised items describing the giants. Table 2 shows the appraisal items characterizing the giants in the story. Three appraised items indicate the negative propriety of the giants. They are evaluated as inappropriate by eating people, intending to push the orphan, and demolishing a fence. Their behaviors are not accepted socially. The giants are also depicted as a phenomenon by their abnormal physical appearance. They are depicted as having a negative composition compared to humanoid appearance. They are huge, and their teeth are like hoes. Their size is, of course, compared to normal human size. The giants are also characterized by negative propriety since they can eat human flesh. They even can eat their child.

Interestingly, unlike the older giants, the giant's child is described more by its incapability. The giant's child is depicted as incapable, as shown by the treatment given by the other characters. In the story, the giant's child did not respond to the actions directed at him. The orphan spoke to voice the giant's child's condition, and the linguistic choice shows negative satisfaction. Thus, the characteristics of the giants should also consider their age. The adult giants are depicted as inappropriate, while the young giant has limited voice and power.

Table 2. The Attitudes Characterizing the Giants in TGtO

Appraised	Appraisal	Affect; Happiness	Affect; Satisfaction	Judgment; Capability	Judgment; propriety	Appreciation; Complexity
giant	huge					(+)
giant	ate people				(-)	
giant's teeth	like hoes					(-)
the giants	pushed the orphan				(-)	
the giant' child	(Be) pushed			(-)		
the giant' child	fell down			(-)		
the giant's child	(Be) butchered			(-)		
the giant's child	(be) cooked			(-)		
giants	bored		(-)			
giants	demolished			(+)	(-)	



giant's child	weary	(-)
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The human character in TGtO, the orphan, is depicted as insecure. Most linguistic choices describing the orphan refer to negative security, as seen in Table 3. For instance, human characters' insecurity can be shown by two verbs, i.e., fled and hid. The verbs indicate the feeling of the human characters facing the giants. He felt that the presence of the giants threatens his life.

The only way to save his life is by fleeing and hiding. However, the orphan is depicted as a strong character. He is judged by a positive capacity since he can push the giants' child. To push the giant indeed requires an extreme physical power. Thus, human is depicted as insecure in the first story.

Table 3. The Attitudes Characterizing the Orphan in TGtO

Appraised	Appraisal	Affect; Happiness	Affect; Security	Judgment; Capacity
orphan	would be pushed		(-)	
orphan	butchered		(-)	
orphan	(be) eaten		(-)	
orphan	Found out that he would be pushed		(-)	
orphan	fled		(-)	
orphan	hid		(-)	
orphan	pushed			(+)

Like TGtO, the supernatural characters in PwD are more dominant than the human characters. PwD spotlights the authority of the supernatural characters. The supernatural characters appear dominantly in the story. Almost all the occurring appraisal items refer to supernatural characters. There are 17 items, and 9 of them evaluate supernatural characters. Seven items comment on the behaviors, and two evaluate the feelings. Table 4 presents the list of items appraising the supernatural characters. The supernatural characters are depicted as positive characters in terms of their capability. They are capable and authoritative in performing actions such as calling, ordering, and appointing others

to hold specific positions in society. They also become the ones that the people worship. They are depicted as possessing great physical power. By exercising their physical power, they become more capable. The supernatural characters are not depicted by their feelings. There are only two items evaluating their feelings. It signifies that feelings are not relevant in discussing supernatural powers. One occurrence may reflect the supernatural characters' feelings and capacity. One of them was sad, and she broke the important ladder connecting the sky and the earth. Thus, supernatural characters are prominent in their authority and physical capacity.

Table 4. The Attitudes Characterizing the Supernatural Characters in PwD

Appraised	Appraisal	Affect; Happiness	Judgment; Capacity
They	ordered		(+)
They	quickly climbed		(+)
They	called the leaders		(+)
They	built		(+)
Wembaine (she)	build		(+)
They	ordered		(+)
Ndalowulu	angry	(-)	
Ndalowulu	broke the boat ladder	(-)	(+)
Wembaine (she)	Working as a farmer		(-)

The human characters in PwD are not exposed. The story goes on to tell the supernatural characters' experiences. Human

characters are said as they are chosen and selected by supernatural beings. Specifically, the human characters are depicted as the ones

worshipping the supernatural characters. They are assigned specific roles, such as the leaders of Padoe, the high priest, the priest of farming, and the shaman. The roles have particular tasks. For

instance, the high priest is responsible for worshipping Lord Lahumoa, and the priest of farming worship Lord Alemba. Table 5 presents the evaluation towards the human characters.

Table 5. The Attitudes Characterizing the Human Characters in PwD

Appraised	Appraisal	Judgment; Tenacity	Judgment; Capacity
the leaders of Padoe	appointed		(-)
high priest	worshipped		(-)
the priest of farming	performed Melahumoa		(-)
shaman	worshipped		(-)
the high priest	worshipped		(-)
people	repeatedly applied medicine	(-)	

The evaluation shown in Table 5 indicates that human characters are less important than supernatural characters. They are depicted as having a negative capacity. They cannot choose their roles. One occurrence shows that human characters are not dependable when facing problems. In the appraisal system, they are evaluated as having negative tenacity. Thus, human characters in PwD are dependent on supernatural characters.

The linguistic analysis results depict the representation of human and supernatural characters in the two folktales. The findings can serve as clues for storytellers or educators to comprehend the folktales from linguistic perspectives. The linguistic clues found in this research can lead to further research to examine the discourse on the relation between human and supernatural beings in Central Sulawesi.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The linguistic choices in the selected folktales highlight the roles of human and supernatural characters. The supernatural characters are depicted as superior to human characters. Humans are embedded with negative feelings, i.e., insecurity and negative tenacity. Supernatural characters are powerful in terms of their physical strength and authority. Human characters are always depicted as powerless before supernatural characters. Human characters may face dangerous situations when opposed to supernatural characters, as in TGtO. They are forced to hide and flee to survive. In PwD, the human characters are portrayed as not dependable. They cannot solve problems. The supernatural characters become the source of solutions and serve as the authority in the plot. By the end of the story, the powerful supernatural characters are reduced to the mundane task of

farming, diminishing their authority.

The depiction of human and supernatural characters in the selected folktales examined in this research cannot generalize the beliefs of the people on the island. The observed tales are inadequate in number, and the examination is not rigorous enough to draw generalizations about the people. However, the language used in the tales can serve as traces of the people's belief system in society and islands. This research might also give a clue for activities involving folktales such as storytelling activities or classroom instructions. This research demands further thorough observation and analysis of the islands and their culture.

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