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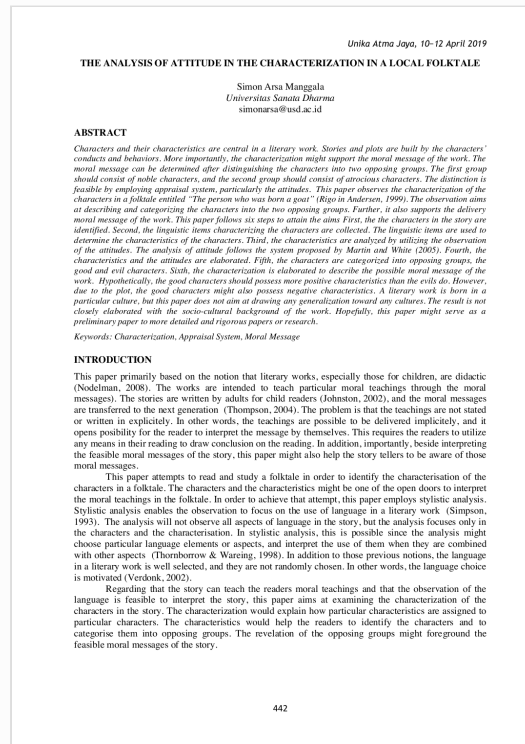
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**THE ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDE IN THE CHARACTERIZATION IN A LOCAL FOLKTALE**

Simon Arsa Manggala
*Universitas Sanata Dharma*
simonarsa@usd.ac.id

**ABSTRACT**

*Characters and their characteristics are central in a literary work. Stories and plots are built by the characters' conducts and behaviors. More importantly, the characterization might support the moral message of the work. The moral message can be determined after distinguishing the characters into two opposing groups. The first group should consist of noble characters, and the second group should consist of atrocious characters. The distinction is feasible by employing appraisal system, particularly the attitudes. This paper observes the characterization of the characters in a folktale entitled "The person who was born a goat" (Rigo in Andersen, 1999). The observation aims at describing and categorizing the characters into the two opposing groups. Further, it also supports the delivery moral message of the work. This paper follows six steps to attain the aims First, the the characters in the story are identified. Second, the linguistic items characterizing the characters are collected. The linguistic items are used to determine the characteristics of the characters. Third, the characteristics are analyzed by utilizing the observation of the attitudes. The analysis of attitude follows the system proposed by Martin and White (2005). Fourth, the characteristics and the attitudes are elaborated. Fifth, the characters are categorized into opposing groups, the good and evil characters. Sixth, the characterization is elaborated to describe the possible moral message of the work. Hypothetically, the good characters should possess more positive characteristics than the evils do. However, due to the plot, the good characters might also possess negative characteristics. A literary work is born in a particular culture, but this paper does not aim at drawing any generalization toward any cultures. The result is not closely elaborated with the socio-cultural background of the work. Hopefully, this paper might serve as a preliminary paper to more detailed and rigorous papers or research.*

*Keywords: Characterization, Appraisal System, Moral Message*

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper primarily based on the notion that literary works, especially those for children, are didactic (Nodelman, 2008). The works are intended to teach particular moral teachings through the moral messages). The stories are written by adults for child readers (Johnston, 2002), and the moral messages are transferred to the next generation (Thompson, 2004). The problem is that the teachings are not stated or written in explicitly. In other words, the teachings are possible to be delivered implicitly, and it opens possibility for the reader to interpret the message by themselves. This requires the readers to utilize any means in their reading to draw conclusion on the reading. In addition, importantly, beside interpreting the feasible moral messages of the story, this paper might also help the story tellers to be aware of those moral messages.

This paper attempts to read and study a folktale in order to identify the characterisation of the characters in a folktale. The characters and the characteristics might be one of the open doors to interpret the moral teachings in the folktale. In order to achieve that attempt, this paper employs stylistic analysis. Stylistic analysis enables the observation to focus on the use of language in a literary work (Simpson, 1993). The analysis will not observe all aspects of language in the story, but the analysis focuses only in the characters and the characterisation. In stylistic analysis, this is possible since the analysis might choose particular language elements or aspects, and interpret the use of them when they are combined with other aspects (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998). In addition to those previous notions, the language in a literary work is well selected, and they are not randomly chosen. In other words, the language choice is motivated (Verdonk, 2002).

Regarding that the story can teach the readers moral teachings and that the observation of language is feasible to interpret the story, this paper aims at examining the characterization of the characters in the story. The characterization would explain how particular characteristics are assigned to particular characters. The characteristics would help the readers to identify the characters and to categorise them into opposing groups. The revelation of the opposing groups might foreground the feasible moral messages of the story.

442

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## INTRODUCTION

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This paper attempts to read and study a folktale in order to identify the characterisation of the characters in a folktale. The characters and the characteristics might be one of the open doors to interpret the moral teachings in the folktale. In order to achieve that attempt, this paper employs stylistic analysis. Stylistic analysis enables the observation to focus on the use of language in a literary work (Simpson, 1993). The analysis will not observe all aspects of language in the story, but the analysis focuses only in the characters and the characterisation. In stylistic analysis, this is possible since the analysis might choose particular language elements or aspects, and interpret the use of them when they are combined with other aspects (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998). In addition to those previous notions, the language in a literary work is well selected, and they are not randomly chosen. In other words, the language choice is motivated (Verdonk, 2002).

Regarding that the story can teach the readers moral teachings and that the observation of the language is feasible to interpret the story, this paper aims at examining the characterization of the characters in the story. The characterization would explain how particular characteristics are assigned to particular characters. The characteristics would help the readers to identify the characters and to categorise them into opposing groups. The revelation of the opposing groups might foreground the feasible moral messages of the story.

**METHODOLOGY**

In this section, the object of the analysis, the methods, and the procedure of the analysis are mentioned. The object of the analysis is a story entitled *"The person who was born a goat" (Rigo in Andersen, 1999).* The story tells about the protagonist who was born a goat. It was born because of its parents wish. The parents are barren and they would want to have a baby even if the baby was a goat. The story continues by the pursuit of the goat to get married. The goat sent a marriage proposal to a nobleman having seven daughters. Six of the daughters rejected the proposal due to the fact that the goat was an animal. However, the youngest daughter accepted the proposal. This acceptance got rejections and mockery from the other six daughters. The couple were excluded from the family. The goat transformed into a handsome man. Because of that, the six daughters were ashamed and got jealous. They wanted to marry the handsome man. They set a plan to murder their youngest sister. They were successful in murdering their sister, but she was resurrected. The six daughters lived miserably and finally died.

This paper analyses the story based on the notion in stylistics that linguistic items might be utilized to interpret meanings from literary works (Barry, 2009; Simpson, 1993). That notion triggers the analysis that the choice of linguistics items and their arrangement are significant in depicting the characters. The characters would be depicted well if the story choose and assign appropriate linguistic in characterizing the characters. Stylistic analysis should be systematic in that the procedure can be traced and repeated (Carter & Simpson, 2005; Simpson, Stylistics, 2004). Therefore, the procedure in this paper is possible to be repeated for any other similar analysis. First, the the characters in the story are identified. Second, the linguistic items characterizing the characters are collected. The linguistic items are used to determine the characteristics of the characters. Third, the characteristics are analyzed by utilizing the observation of the attitudes. The analysis of attitude follows the system proposed by Martin and White (2005). Fourth, the characteristics and the attitudes are elaborated. Fifth, the characters are categorized into opposing groups, the good and evil characters. Sixth, the characterization is elaborated to describe the possible moral message of the work. This paper does not intend to prescribe any fixed moral messages. This paper will only present feasible moral message based on the characterissation and the elaboration of the plot.

**ANALYSIS**

The plot is developed by the conducts and interaction of eight characters. The characters are the husband, wife, the goat, the nobleman, the nobleman's daughters (group of six persons), the nobleman's eldest daughter, the nobleman's youngest daughter, and the human husband (the goat). Each character has particular characteristics. In sum, the characters and the characteristics are presented in the following table:

The characteristics are attached to the characters by the assignments of various linguistic elements. However, most of the characteristics are identified by the lexical choice. There are 40 linguistic items, and some items are repeated. From those 40 data, there are eight adjectives, two adverbs, four modals, six nouns, one preposition, two conjunctions, one clause, and 16 verbs. The one of most frequent linguistic item is in a form of verb. This prominent occurences signifies the characterization by processes. The next prominent characterization is by nouns. This characterization focuses on the occurences of entities in the story. The characters are characterized by entities. Other linguistic elements and their traditional classes signifies other ways of characterizations, for example: adjectives which represent qualities.

To observe further, the analysis on the characterization should scrutinize the *hard* data extracted from the story as the linguistic evidence. The result is presented by discussing the characters in details. First, the elaboration combines two characters, namely the *father* and *mother*. They are the main character's parents. They can be discussed once since they share similar characteristics. They are caring, loving, and non-resistant (accepting). The mother has more characteristics, which are realistic and hopeful (wishful). Second, the nobleman is characterized as wise and non authoritative. He neither asked nor forced his daughters to marry the goat. He let the daughters to decide by themselves. Third, the story depicts the six persons took part as one character since they perform the same actions collectively. They are the nobleman's six daughters. They are characterized as persistently exclusive toward the goat and their youngest sister. They maintained the characteristic until at that time when the goat transformed into a handsome young man. After the goat transformation, the nobleman's six daughter became kind and friendly to the young man. However, they are ashamed and jealous of their youngest sister. They are

scheming in a way that they set a plan to put their sister in danger. They are also afraid for what they had done toward their sister.

Table 1. The Characterization of the Characters

| No. | Characters | Characteristics | Characterization |
|-----|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. | Father and mother (parents) | Caring | • They **TOOK CARE (Verb)** of their child just like other people took care of their children. |
| | | Loving, non-resistant (accepting) | • Perhaps one of them will like **OUR SON, THE GOAT (Noun).** |
| 2. | Mother (parent) | Realistic | • BUT you, son, **ARE (Verb) a** goat (comparison) |
| | | hopeful (wishful) | • **BECAUSE (Conjunction)** they were barren, the wife made **A WISH (Noun)** |
| | | | • Not long after that **WISH (Noun)** |
| 3. | The Goat | Confident, hopeful, optimistic | • "…**EVEN THOUGH (Conjunction) I** am a goat, just maybe there will be someone who will like me" "**PERHAPS (adverb),** she **WILL like (Modal)** me" He was still **NOT SATISFIED (Adjective).** But since he was still **NOT SATISFIED (Adjective)** |
| | | Polite | • "**FATHER, MOTHER (Noun), ..PLEASE (adverb)** go take a betrothal gift for me.." |
| 4. | The Nobleman | Wise, non-authoritative | • "What can we parents say? We **WILL HAVE TO ASK (Modal)** the person in question." |
| | | | • They **DIDN'T SAY (Verb)** a thing. |
| 5. | The Nobleman's daughters (six people as a group) | Persistently exclusive | • The older sisters **KEPT (Verb)** saying, "Father, don't allow them to stay here" |
| | | | • "Make **THEM GO STAY IN THE GARDEN HUT (verb)**" |
| | | (Development after the goat changed into human) | • They **GOT (Verb)** a reed mat with a bird design on it. |
| | | | • "**COME SIT (Verb)** on the mat!" |
| | | kind and friendly | • They **COOKED (verb)** some rice and **BOILED (Verb)** them some eggs. |
| | | Ashamed | • But even though they were **ASHAMED (Adjective),** |
| | | Jealous | • … they were also **JEALOUS (adjective)** of their little sisters.. |
| | | Scheming | • They **HUNTED FOR A SCHEME (Verb)** that would result in their little sister dying. |
| | | Afraid | • But the six sisters not a word, for they **WERE AFRAID (Adjective).** |
| 6. | The Nobleman's eldest daughter | Deflating | • "Who **IN THE WORLD WOULD LIKE (Adverb/preposition)** A goat!" |
| | | | • "**DOESN'T HE KNOW (Verb)** he's an animal?" |
| | | | • "Are you kidding? What in the world do you **SEE IN A GOAT (Verb)**?" |
| | | | • "What **CAN** he **DO**?" **(Modal)** |
| | | Exclusive | • "you **CAN'T LIVE WITH US (Modal)** here any longer" |
| 7. | The Nobleman's youngest daughter | Patient (not reactive) | • The youngest daughter **DID NOT REPLY (Verb)** to her sisters' words. |
| | | | • They **didn't say (Verb)** anything. |
| | | Shy | • She **HARDLY DARED (Verb)** to look at him out of **SHYNESS (Noun).** |
| 8. | The human husband | Handsome | • "Could that be her husband the goat, who looks **SO HANDSOME (Adjective),** like a young man going to a party. |
| | | Sarcastic | • "Goats do not eat rice and eggs. Grass on the edge of the rice paddy is their food" **(Sentence)** |

Fourth, excluded from the group, the nobleman's eldest daughter should be treated as one character since she took part individually in the story, even though she might amplify the perspective of the other daughters. In amplying her sisters voice, she is exclusive. She did not accept her youngest to live with the family. She is also deflating. She mocked her youngest sister for marrying a goat. Fifth, the

444

nobleman's youngest daughter should be accounted. She was the one who accepted the goat to be her husband. Though she was threatened by her sisters, she remained patient. She did not reply any of her sisters' accusation. She is a shy person. She did not dare to look at her husband.

Sixth, the goat needs to be elaborated since he is the main character in the story. The story is about him. When he was a goat, he was characterized as confident, hopeful, and optimistic. He thought and acted as if he was a human. He had desire and feelings, shown by his desire to marry. He is also depicted as a polite character since he paid respect to his parents. He delivered his desire to his parents politely. However, as an animal, he was excluded by the other characters, especially by the nobleman's daughters. In addition, the narrator contrasted him as different from human being by the lexical choice 'just like ordinary people'. His parents also acknowledged him as different from normal human being.

Nearly to the end of the story, the goat transformed into a man. In this new form, the main character is depicted as a handsome man. His beauty is able to transform the nobleman's daughters' perceptions as well. The handsome man is also sarcastic. He uttered sarcastic utterances as if he revenged on his sister-in-law's deed.

The next step in the analysis is the categorization of the characteristics by the analysis of attitudes. As characteristics of the characters, the qualities should be analyzed as *Judgement* according. The linguistic items construing the characteristics are put into judgement categories, whether they belong to social esteem or social sanction. Table 2 presents the categorization:

Table 2. The Judgement toward the Characters

| No. | Types of Judgement | Positive | Negative |
|-----|--------------------|----------|----------|
| *Social Esteem* | | | |
| | Normality | Patient, realistic, confident, hopeful, optimistic, handsome | |
| | Capacity | Confident, | Shy |
| | Tenacity | Loving, non resistant | Hopeful (wishful) |
| *Social Sanction* | | | |
| | Veracity | Kind and friendly, politer | Exclusive, scheming, deflating, sarcastic |
| | Propriety | Caring, wise, non-authoritative | Jealous |
| *The Characters possessing the characteristics* | | • The nobleman's youngest daughter<br>• Mother<br>• Father<br>• The goat<br>• The husband<br>• The nobleman<br>• Nobleman's six daughters | • The nobleman's youngest daughter<br>• Mother<br>• Nobleman's six daughters<br>• Husband<br>• The nobleman's eldest daughter |

From the categorization presented in table 2, therefore, the characters might be grouped into two groups based on the judgement. There are characters which are positively and negatively judged. However, in this case, the characters are not easily dichotomized. Particular characters might be evaluated both positively and negatively. The characters who are positively evaluated are the goat, father, and the nobleman. The characters who is negatively evaluated is the nobleman's eldest daughter. The characters who are judged both positively and negatively are the nobleman's youngest daughter, mother, and the nobleman's six daughters.

To figure out the possible moral of the story, the analysis needs to group the characters into two opposing groups, namely the good and the evil characters becomes uneasy now. The positively evaluated characters might belong to the good, while the one which is negatively evaluated might be grouped into the evil. By following that procedure, therefore the goat, father, and nobleman are the good characters, while the only evil character is the nobleman's eldest daughter. The remaining characters falls in between good and evil. To solve the confusion, describing the judgements, counting the characteristics, and considering the characters possessing them might help.

The nobleman's youngest daughter evaluated negatively once for being shy. The judgement belongs to negative capacity. The mother is evaluated negatively by being hopeful (wishful). This evaluation is actually close to her positive evaluation, i.e.: being realistic. She could not depend on her own effort to become pregnant. Thus, she prayed that *hopefully* she could be pregnant. She had low esteem that she was able to be pregnant. The husband broke the social saction by being sarcastic. It seems that his being sarcastic is a response to the treatment that he received in the past. Then, after he had positive social esteem, i.e. being a *normal* being, he took a revenge to his sisters in law. The nobleman's

six daughters receive the most negative judgements. They violate the social sanctions by being exclusive, scheming, and jealous. They show positive evaluation only after the transformation of the main character into human being. This evaluation, therefore, might lead to another conclusive characteristic which is unfaithful. Being unfaithful belongs to negative evaluation.

In addition to the evaluated characteristics, the linguistic items in the story might support the evaluation, even though not all might fit into the analysis of attitude. The characterization is also carried out by other attitude. By the appreciation, the husband is evaluated positively as seen in excerpt 1.

| | |
|---|---|
| Excerpt 1: …who look so handsome … | [appreciation: +reaction] |
| Excerpt 2: "… she will like me …" | [affect: happiness] |
| Excerpt 3: …He (the goat) is not satisfied… | [affect: dissatisfaction] |
| Excerpt 4: They are ashamed | [affect: unhappiness] |
| Excerpt 5: "…you can't live with us here any longer" | [judgement: -capability] |

The exceprts are other linguistic items employed to characterize the characters in the story. Excerpt 2 shows the optimism of the goat about the affect that it will get from one of the daughters. Excerpt 3 also supports the optimistic characteristics of the goat for it kept trying though he felt dissatisfied. In the plot, this negative feeling is the trigger for the goat to proceed and continue seeking for a wife. Excerpt 4 presents the unhappiness of the six daughters when the handsome man responded to them sarcastically. Excerpt 5 shows the exclusion done by the eldest sister toward the newly wed couple. The modal *can* and the negative polarity shows negative capability of the verb *live*. It underlines the idea of exclusion.

By the characterization analysis and the plot, the feasible expected moral messsages of the story are probably one of these imperatives; (a) Do not underestimate/look down on somebody, (b) be nice to everyone since God has a mysterious plan and ways, (c) Do not judge a book from its cover, or (d) Do not be mean and arrogant or else you will get bad luck. The moral message (a) is a general teaching without mentioning any consequences. Moral message (b) is suitable if the readers focus on the transformation of the protagonist from being an animal into being a human character. Moral message (c) focuses on the successful protagonist. However, it neglects the fact that transformation is significant in the story. Moral message (d) is the strongest since it mentions the consequence if the readers do not obey the message.

## CONCLUSION

Characterization can be observed by the choice of linguistic items in a story. This paper shows the example on how the characteristics of the characters in a story is possibly determined by studying the choice of linguistic items. After determining the characteristics, the characteristics might be analysed by categorizing them based on the attitude analysis. Because characteristics give qualities to the characters, most of the characteristics are in a form of Judgement. The results shows that there are three groups of characters based on the judgment, namely; the characters showing positive evaluation, characters showing negative evaluation, and the characters who are evaluated by both positive and negative judgments. These finding brings about a problem in determining the good and the evil characters. The dichotomy of good and evil characters is helpful in interpreting the moral message of the story considering that the story is intended to teach particular moral teaching. To solve the problem, the analysis should consider the plot as well. By considering the plot, the intention or the motivation of the characters can be revealed. Other linguistic items might also support the characterization.

This paper can be elaborated more by utilizing more linguistic tools such as transitivity, modality, or mood analysis. This paper does not attempt to draw any generalization toward any particular culture. In addition, this paper does not prescribe any fixed moral messages, but this paper tries to draw feasible moral message based on the analysis.

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**CURRICULUM VITAE**

Complete Name    : Simon Arsa Manggala
Institution          : Universitas Sanata Dharma
Education           : Magister (S2)
Research Interests : Critical Discourse Analysis, Stylistics, Syntax, Semantics.

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