

FOLKTALE CONCEPTUAL MODEL BASED ON FOLKTALE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF TYPE, MOTIF, AND FUNCTION

Harryizman Harun¹ and Zulikha Jamaludin²

¹Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia, harry@uum.edu.my

²Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia, zulie@uum.edu.my

ABSTRACT. This paper elaborates a study conducted to propose a folktale conceptual model based on folktale classification systems of type, motif, and function. Globally, three distinguish folktale classification systems exist and have been used for many years nonetheless not actually converge and achieve agreement on classification issues. The study aims to develop a conceptual model that visually depicts the combination and connection of the three folktale classification systems. The method opted for the conceptual model development is pictorial representation. It is hoped that the conceptual model developed would be an early platform to subsequently catalyze more robust and cohesive folktale classification system.

Keywords: conceptual model, folktale classification system, pictorial representation method

INTRODUCTION

Every country in this world has its own cultural heritage and it is imperative for it carries the lineage of past generations to present. Previously, the term cultural heritage reflected closely to monuments and assortments of physical objects but the notion has changed and broadens through times. It does not merely cover tangible heritages anymore but also the equally important intangible heritage of the ancestors (UNESCO, n.d.). The intangible heritage represents diverse collections of traditions and living expressions of the past. One of the intangible inheritances is folklore and its art symbolizes cultural and social identity of a community (UNESCO, 1989). The customary practice of folklore reflects a tradition of a community such as music, popular credence, and also storytelling, which exists in a form of verbal expression known as folktale (Chee, 2005; Mohd Hussein, Mohd Nor, & Abdul Manap, 2001). In addition, Bascom (1965) expounded that folktale, alongside myth and legend forms three very basic terms of folklore. Folktale exists in a form of stories that carry meaningful message and embedded cultural identity. It is fabricated and altered by crowds of people across a timeline of different generations and carries a distinctive style which is applicable to present and future individuals and occurrences (Porter, 2004).

Cigay (2009) pointed that folktales, myths and legends need to be preserved in this digital age to avoid from extinction as an outcome of globalization and commercial entertainments. In relation to that, the necessity of folktale preservation does not only pertain to the sustenance of culture and heritage but it goes way beyond. Folktale scaffolds and nurtures so many other things if used prudently. Among many, it teaches morals, attitude transformation, instill self fortitude, good judgment, and depict distinctiveness of cultures, and also impart worth of kindness which leads to stimulation of a country with unsurpassed cultural standards (Babalola & Onanuga, 2012; Kirmani & Frieman, 1997).

In order to preserve folktale, there are six steps necessary to be taken and identification is one of them. Identifying folktales involves several efforts and one of them is classification. According to UNESCO 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (UNESCO, 1989), classification is considered as one of the endeavors towards folktale preservation. There exist many folktale classification systems but three stands out the most like a beacon namely Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk Literature, Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale, and also the updated and expanded ATU (Aarne/Thompson/Uther) Classification and Bibliography of International Folktale System (Md. Radzi, 2002).

FOLKTALE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Classification is scientifically essential in any domains that possesses an exceptional body of contents in order for it to be seriously embraced as an object of study (Propp, 1998; Thompson, 1951). In conformity with Propp (1998), this is also true to tale in general and folktale in particular because tale is known for its assortment and impossibility to be studied in its full form. Therefore, the content of tale must be dissected into smaller pieces and this act alone is known as classification. In addition, it is significant that classification of tale is correct since the accuracy and correctness of entailing studies down the line depend of it.

There are three prominent folktale classification systems created by Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson, and Vladimir Propp (Propp, 1998; Thompson, 1966). The classification systems classify folktale by type, motif, and function respectively. The first two classification indexes are known to be working in pair and complimenting but the third one is from a different school of thought. The first classification system is based on themes of folktale. The themes were called type index of folktale and it was invented by Antti Aarne on 1910 and later on revised by Stith Thompson on 1918 and 1961 (Jason, 2000; Thompson, 1951). Three main classes, which are animal tales, regular folktales, and humorous tales, erected the pristine type-index classification but a latest revision brought major wave of alterations. The latest edition of type-index classification with widespread additions and improvements was prepared by Hans-Jorg Uther meant to rectify the critiques and comments imposed on the original AaTh (Aarne/Thompson) type-index classification (Uther, 2011). This type-index classification that abbreviated as ATU (Aarne/Thompson/Uther) international tale type still uses some of the Thompson's motif-index considered as significant for supplementary arrangement toward folktale's classification structure. The foremost palpable change is the number of classes in the classification has been elevated from three to seven. The updated classes are animal tales, tales of magic, religious tales, realistic tales, tales of the stupid ogre, anecdotes and jokes, and formula tales.

Stith Thompson bases another classification of folktale on motif-index. The affiliation of motif and type index is close in various aspects and though estimated 60 classifications works are based on either indexes, the combination of both brings so much improvement to many facets of folktale classification (Thompson, 1951; Uther, 1996). The following definition shows the distinction and connection between type and motif in a folktale. A type is tale that able to exist independently or with another tale and it is constructed from a single motif or more. Tale type is also dynamic, adaptable, and able to be fused into new thematic piece and media (Thompson, 1951; Uther, 2011). According to Dundes (1997), tale type is a combination plot synopsis that bears precise details like no other version of a folktale although it does limitedly reflects the existing versions of the folktale. Opposing to that, motif is the tiniest odd and conspicuous element in a tale encompassed of three classes (the actors, items, and single incidents), which supports the tale type by providing extra arrangement of the folktales (Thompson, 1951; Uther, 2011). The third class of motif is the one that covers most of motifs and capable to exist independently in its own right as a tale. To that end, it is

regards as true tale type since its existence matches the definition of tale type provided (Thompson, 1951). Believing that sufficient classification of motif is momentous in the study of tales, 23 motif-index were introduced with equal purpose of type-index, which is to gather folk literatures, and also organized it in a logical manner (Georges, 1997). Among the motifs listed are mythological, animals, taboo, magic, the dead, marvels, and many more.

The third folktale classification system opted to be under the spotlight of this study relates to the structure of folktale (Propp, 1998). This classification system structurally analyse function and action of folktale's dramatis personae (actor). This is opposite to Aarne and Thompson's analysis and classification of folktale that were grounded on the content of folktale. There are 31 functions fashioned and all of them appear successively in a tale as an essential structure. In the case that certain functions are missing from the sequence, this does not affect the order of the rest of the sequence in a tale. Propp (1998) also specified that instead of using theme to create folktale type, which he claims to be unclear and verbose, functions perform the same job with precise and objective structural descriptions. Consequently, folktales that possess equal functions can be assembled under a same type. Building on this notion, the collection of tale types based on equality in folktales' functions would lead to a formation of type-index classification. Typically, a tale begins with a particular initial situation such as introduction of hero or family members. Though it is not considered as part of the functions, still it is one of crucial structures of a tale. The initial situation in this classification system is labeled using the α sign. After the initial situation, functions of dramatis personae follow beginning with absentation (β) followed by sequential assortment of functions and ended up with wedding (W). Table 1 below summarises the three classification systems.

Table 1. Operational definition of Type, Motif, and Functions in a folktale

Folktale's unit	Operational definition	Characteristics/Example
Type	A tale that can exist independently or with another tale. Constructed from a single motif or more. A combination of plot synopsis with precise details.	Dynamic Adaptable Can be fused into new thematic piece and media
Motif	Consist of actors, items, and incidents. Supports the tale type by providing extra arrangement of the folktales. Capable to exist independently in its own right as a tale.	Mythological, Animals, Taboo, Magic, The dead, Marvels
Function	Structurally analyse function and action of folktale's dramatis personae (actor). Missing function will not affect the sequence in a tale. Can be one of the units to create a tale's type. Provide precise structural descriptions. Need structure to support.	Focus on action Start with initial situation (α) Functions of dramatis personae beginning with absentation (β) Sequential assortment of functions Ended with wedding (W)

It can be comprehended that the first two folktale classification systems are capable to exist independently but most of the time they are used in pair. Nevertheless, the third one is clearly treading on a different path. Thus, the next section briefly deliberates on the necessity of integration of the three classification systems.

INTEGRATION OF THE THREE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

Tale type and motif-index are two folktale classification systems that operate better in duo. Both systems concentrate on contents of folktale whereas functions, plainly ignores the contents and focus on the action of dramatis personae in order to classify. Yet, it has been noted and made known that function is actually dependent on dramatis personae because the performance and role of dramatis personae dictates the essence and semantic of a folktale (Liberman, 1997; Louwrese, 1997). Besides, form (function) and content (type and motif) are of the similar kind for content is built with the support of its structure and structure is the frames that embrace the content (Levi-Strauss, 1997). In the end, story is just not a solid object but a peculiar description of experiences and events. Experiences and events are unique and individualistic content in nature, hence, obliterating the idea that function alone is sufficed to classify folktale (Georges, 1997). Solidifying the fact that form and content are inseparable, Kuehnel and Lencek (2012) too advocated the belief that study of motif grounded on structure of tale is not possible with the abandonment of semantic of the tale. Consequently, this study elected to use the essence of type, motif, and function to develop a conceptual model that envisions the connections of the three classification systems, which displays their cohesive nature to operate as one classification system. The last section succinctly explains the method used to develop the conceptual model.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL REPRESENTATION METHOD

In developing the conceptual model of folktale, this study adapted pictorial representation technique. Though the original domain of application is simulation, it is founded that pictorial representation technique is fitting with what the study aims to achieve with the conceptual model. The inaugural reason the method is adapted being its aptness to be used during the stage of conceptual model development and it clearly maintains the information regarding the configuration and association amid the factors of the issue represented (Larkin & Simon, 1987; Onggo, 2010). Having said that, since the technique communicates complex non-sequential information effectively via pictures, its adaptation in this study is astute because folktale classification is by no means simple and sequential. The classification by type, motif, and function and also the connections and relationship between the units of folktale exhibit a complex and entangled structure of narrative information. Via the use of shapes, symbols, and linkage in the technique adapted, the connection in the structure of the folktale classes could be lucidly envisaged. The succeeding section depicts and explains the conceptual model proposed.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF FOLKTALE

Establishing on the framework of the three folktale classification systems and the concept of integration of the three, the following Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of folktale proposed in the study. Based on the conceptual model depicted in Figure 1, it is apparent that the folktale classification system as this study perceived is established by three units namely type, motif, and function. The function is an action of dramatis personae and constituted of 31 sequential functions adopted from Propp (1998). The motif is the smallest unit that forms a folktale and it is comprised of three categories: actor, item, and incident. There are 23 motifs adopted from the motif-index classification (Thompson, 1966). Banking on the supra justification, motif and function representing content and form of a folktale

respectively are amalgamated in effort to create a new type of folktale. This purported new type of folktale in this study is of combination of content and form but it is still guided by the seven types of folktale updated in the ATU Classification and Bibliography of International Folktale System (Uther, 2011). It is hoped the blend of the three crucial units of folktale would produce a more complete and robust folktale classification system.

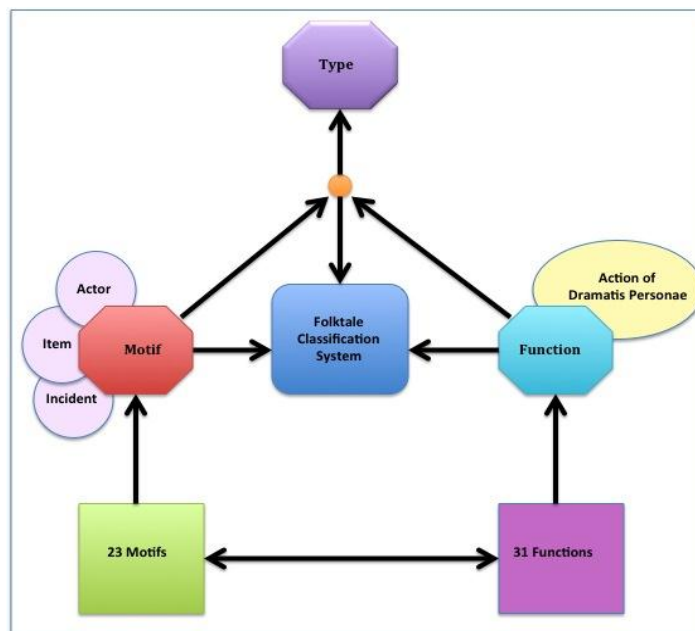


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Folktale

CONCLUSION

Folktale conceptual model proposed in this study is the pictorial integration result of three prominent folktale classification systems that individually classifies based on type, motif, and function. Type and motif are known to represent content of a folktale while function exemplifies form or structure. Building on the concept that form and content are indeed in need to be mutually supportive, the study proposed the combination of type, motif, and function in order to fabricate a more complete and robust folktale classification system. Future study would include element of culture by incorporating Malaysia folktale into the development of the conceptual model and entailing folktale classification system.

REFERENCES

- Babalola, E. T., & Onanuga, P. A. (2012). Atrophization of Minority Languages: Indigenous Folktales to the Rescue. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 4(1), pp. 158-173.
- Bascom, W. (1965). The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 78(307), 3-20.
- Chee Ying, K. (2005). Protection of Expressions of Folklore/Traditional Cultural Expressions: To What Extent is Copyright Law the Solution? *Journal of Malaysian and Comparative Law*, 32(1).
- Cigay Dorji, T. (2009). Preserving Our Folktales, Myths and Legends in the Digital Era. *Storytelling, Self, Society*, 6(1), 19-38.
- Dundes, A. (1997). The Motif-Index and the Tale Type Index: A Critique. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 34(3), 195-202.

- Georges, R. A. (1997). The Centrality in Folkloristics of Motif and Tale Type. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 34(3), 203-208.
- Jason, H. (2000). Motif, type, and genre: A manual for compilation of indices and a bibliography of indices and indexing. In H. Lauri (Ed.), *FF communications* (Vol. 273). Suomi, Finland: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Kirmani, M., & Frieman, B. (1997). Diversity in classrooms: Teaching kindness through folktales. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 29(2), 39-43.
- Kuehnel, R., & Lencek, R. (2012). *Introduction - What is a folklore motif?* Retrieved December 8, 2012, from <http://www.aktuellum.com/slavic/folklore-motif/>
- Larkin, J. H., & Simon, H. A. (1987). Why a Diagram is (Sometimes) Worth Ten Thousand Words. *Cognitive Science*, 11(1), 65-100. doi: 10.1111/j.1551-6708.1987.tb00863.x
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1997). Structure and form: Reflections on a work by Vladimir Propp. In A. Liberman (Ed.), *Theory and history of folklore* (4 ed., Vol. 5, pp. 167-188). Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press.
- Liberman, A. (1997). Introduction. In A. Liberman (Ed.), *Theory and History of Folklore* (4 ed., Vol. 5, pp. ix-lxxxi). Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press.
- Louwerse, M. (1997). Bits and Pieces: Toward an Interactive Classification of Folktales. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 34(3), 245-249.
- Md. Radzi, S. B. (2002). A classification of Malay humorous tales. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 30(87), 193-214.
- Mohd Hussein, S., Mohd Nor, M. Z., & Abdul Manap, N. (2001). Bringing Life to Folklore: Problem of Definition. *Malaysian Journal of Law and Society*, 15(2001), 163-168.
- Onggo, B. S. S. (2010). Methods for conceptual model representation. In S. Robinson, Brooks, R., Kotiadis, K., & Van Der Zee, D-J. (Ed.), *Conceptual modeling for discrete-event simulation* (pp. 337-354): CRC Press.
- Porter, B. (2004). *Digitales: The art of telling digital stories*. Sedalia, CO: bjpconsulting.
- Propp, V. (1998). *Morphology of the folktale* (4 ed.). Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Thompson, S. (1951). *The folktale* (2 ed.). New York, NY: Dryden.
- Thompson, S. (1966). *Motif-index of folk-literature* (Vol. 1-6). Morton St. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- UNESCO. (1989). *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore*. Retrieved 18 October, 2012, from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13141&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
- UNESCO. (n.d.). *What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?* Retrieved October 17, 2012, from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00002>
- Uther, H.-J. (2011). The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson Part I. *Animal Tales, Tales Of Magic, Religious Tales, and Realistic Tales, with an Introduction* (2 ed. Vol. 1). Finland: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Uther, H.-J. (1996). Type- and Motif-Indices 1980-1995: An Inventory. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 55(2), 299-317.