

Character Development in Reading Folktales: Literacy Learning Strategies Using Propp's Dramatis Personae and Narrative Functions in *Princess Hase*

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Abstract. This study intended to explore one of the literacy learning strategies namely character development in reading that can be used in the classroom by combining with Propp's dramatis personae framework to get the deeper understanding about the folktales. This study involved the Japanese Folktale entitled *Princess Hase* as this story contains moral value that can be obtained by students after reading the folktales. This study used qualitative descriptive method which emphasizes on dramatis personae that exist in the folktales to get the deeper understanding. This study found out that the application of Propp's dramatis personae in analyzing folktales can make the readers easier in understanding the folktales. Moreover, the combination of literacy learning strategies in this case character development in reading with Propp's dramatis personae is beneficial to be applied in the classroom.

Keywords: character development in reading, dramatis personae, folktales, literacy strategy, narrative function

1. INTRODUCTION

How is the best method in teaching sets of literacy skill has been debated for a long time (Kucer & Silva, 2006). Till nowadays, teachers and practitioners looking for model of teaching literacy that are applicable in classroom. However, the big mistake that often led to ineffective models is that the separation between language, literature, and literacy. In a discourse literacy the competence that have to be achieved is that the fluency and accuracy to read and write also the ability to reconstruct and deconstruct the text (Carter, 1997). Thus, involves the combination of language, literature, and discourse.

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Kucer and Silva convey the four dimensions of literacy. The cognitive is the state where generating meaning is happened, it is employed by the readers when reading the text (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999). The cognitive dimension surrounded by linguistic dimension as the vehicle to convey the meaning. The sociocultural dimension is seen literacy as social acts (Kucer & Silva, 2006). The developmental dimension is the fourth literacy dimension that encompass other dimensions, which in this state human experience situations that involve the use of literacy dimensions.

Kucer and Silva argued that literacy instruction should cover the four dimensions to obtain what they called as ‘movement from fine tale to wisdom’ (Kucer & Silva, 2006). Further in their book, they explained and explores the strategy that can be done by teachers in classroom to achieve the effective literacy. One of the strategies is the character development in reading (Kucer & Silva, 2006) which is the center of this study. Those strategy can be an attempt to achieve discourse literacy.

When we linked Carter’s discourse literacy and Kucer’s strategy of character development in reading, there is a red line between these two frameworks. To achieve discourse literacy the strategy of character development in reading could be applied. It is because the key factor in this strategy concerning about understanding the major character to understand the overall story (Kucer & Silva, 2006). In this study the character development in reading strategy is applied in analyzing Japanese Folklore entitled *Princess Hase* to prove that understanding major character will lead to understanding the overall story. It is also intended to prove that using this kind of literacy strategy could reveal the didactic value in the story.

This study combined character development in reading with Vladimir Propp’s dramatis personae to get the deeper understanding about the character. It is because Propp’s emphasize on the structure and everything within the text itself (Lahlou, 2017). Propp define at least eight types of dramatis personae which are the villain (marplot), the donor, the helper, the princess (the sought-for person) and her father, the dispatcher, the hero, and the false hero (Propp, 1984). Those eight types of character are the archetypal that always occur in narrative story. The character’s types have a role to “support” the functions which is the important part in narrative story.

Propp’s abstracts the structure and compositional pattern of fairy tales. The dramatis personae is only to ‘support’ the narrative function (Propp, 1968). In narrative story we are acquainted with the plot that form the story, the plot of the story is happened because of dramatis personae’s decisions and Propp call this as narrative function (Propp, 1984). Even though Propp study is limited mention folklore, in fact earlier study had shown that his theory is applicable in modern narrative story (Yulistya & Astuti, 2022), it is because some writers

intentionally include folktales elements in their works (Lahlou, 2017).

Both of *dramatis personae* and narrative function is used in determining and analyzing the structure of the narrative texts to figured out the pattern of the story. Thus, the pattern can be a vehicle to determine the relation between certain genres of the text with folktales. It is also important to noted that the pattern of folktales or narrative functions could reveal stories' modification (Putra, 2022) or we can say the creative process of the writer in producing their works. Narrative function also used to identify the structure of folklore to reveal social value (Khaerianti, 2009), social relevance with certain culture (Azis, Mahsun, & Mahyudi, 2022), moral and educational value (Hafsah, 2018). Further, it also used in comparing the folktales from different countries (Ajie & Mustofa, 2014) to pointing out the cultural background of each story.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research employed qualitative descriptive method which is inductive, means that besides collecting data to make preconceive models, hypotheses, or theories, it also develops concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in the data (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016) as it tried to reveal the possibility of using Propp's *dramatis personae* and narrative functions in classroom by analyzing the main source of data which is Japanese folklore. The data were collected from character's utterances and narrator's elaborations that contain Propp's *dramatis personae* and narrative functions. For narrative functions the data were taken based on below table

No	Narrative Functions	Definition	Designation
1	One of the members of a family absents himself from home	Absentation	β
2	An interdiction is addressed to the hero	Interdiction	γ
3	The interdiction is violated	Violation	δ
4	The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance	Reconnaissance	ϵ
5	The villain receives information about his victim	Delivery	ζ
6	The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings	Trickery	η
7	The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy	Complicity	θ
8	The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family	villainy	A

8a	One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something	lack	α
9	Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched	Mediation, the connective incident	B
10	The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction	Beginning counteraction	C
11	The hero leaves home	Departure	\uparrow
12	The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc. which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper	The first function of the donor	D
13	The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor	The hero's reaction	E
14	The hero acquires the use of a magical agent	Provision	F
15	The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search	Guidance	G
16	The hero and the villain join indirect combat	Struggle	H
17	The hero is branded	Branding	J
18	The villain is defeated	Victory	I
19	The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated		K
20	The hero returns	Return	\downarrow
21	The hero is pursued	Pursuit	Pr
22	Rescue of the hero from pursuit	Rescue	Rs
23	The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country	Unrecognized	o
24	A false hero presents unfounded claims	Unfounded claims	L
25	A difficult task is proposed to the hero	Difficult task	M
26	The task is resolved	Solution	N
27	The hero is recognized	Recognition	Q
28	The false hero or villain exposed	Exposure	Ex
29	The hero is given a new appearance	Transfiguration	T
30	The villain is punished	Punishment	U
31	The hero is married and ascends the throne	Wedding	W

Table 1. Propp's narrative function

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Dramatis Personae

In the story there are at least seven characters that play their own role

1. Princess Hase → Hero and sought-for person

Princess Hase is the main character in the story. She is described as a good, obedient, diligent young princess who then suffered misfortune after her mother died and her father remarried. Her step-mother is very cruel and willing to kill her because of the jealousy, either jealous of her abilities in arts (poetry, music) and jealous of the love of her father. Depend on the Propp, the morphological significance of the hero is very important as the hero create the center of the narrative. Besides, the hero in fairy tales is the character who suffers from the action of the villain (Propp, 1968). It can be inferred that Princess Hase even though she portrayed as innocent and sinless, yet her characteristics lead her into the plot that complicate her. It also made her becomes the center of the story, yet the hero of the story.

Further, the dramatis personae or character in the story could play a combination of two different role. The consideration of this combination come from the act that the characters done during the story. It is because the personage is not defined by their willingness, intention, or feeling but rather than their deeds that is viewed from the course of action (Propp, 1968). In this folklore, Hase-Hime also play role as a princess or sought-for person. Even though her action made her as a hero, but what happened to her unintentionally made her as a sought-for person. It is happened when she experienced assassination attempt from her step-mother, but then she is saved by her servant and moved to the most solitary place without single words to her father. Her step-mother play some intrigue by saying that Hase-Hime had run away and suddenly disappeared.

2. Prince Toyonari Fujiwara → Father & helper

The combination of characters also happened in Toyonari Fujiwara. His first role is a father of Hase-Hime and his other role is a helper. Toyonari as a father was absence about the misfortune that happened to his daughter. He never knew that his new wife, Terute disliked his daughter, moreover wanted to kill her. Even though when Terute said that Hase-Hime done something wrong and run away, he believed it. The second role as helper happened when Toyonari accidently found his daughter in the solitary place and took her home again.

3. Princess Murasaki → Dispatcher

The appearance of Murasaki in the story is initial but very important. Murasaki in the story play the role as a dispatcher who realize that something will happen and inform it to the hero, Propp also stated that the dispatcher is introduce into the initial situation (Propp, 1968). When Murasaki had terrible ill and before she died, she told Hase-Hime that she had to be a good girl and someday if her father remarried, she must look upon the step-mother as true mother. She also told Hase-Hime to be obedient, filial, submissive to everyone who were superior and kind to everyone under her. Hase-Hime remember and done everything that is said by her mother as a dispatcher. Thus, at the end will save her from the danger.

4. Princess Terute → Villain

The villain has a role to disturb the peace and cause a misfortune, damage, or harm. It may be a dragon, a devil, bandits, a witch or, a step-mother (Propp, 1968). The character who played this role is Terute, the step-mother. At the initial story, her first appearance was clearly portrayed that she had a cruel and bad heart. Since the beginning, she was unkind to her step-daughter. Her jealousy and greedy led her into uncontrol anger that made her committing to murder her step-daughter.

5. Emperor → Donor

The Emperor appears twice in the story, but his appearance gives a great impact to the plot of the narrative. The first appearance is when Hase-Hime and Terute summoned to perform koto (Japanese harp) before the Emperor. This plot gives an understanding that the role of Emperor is the donor who give a test to the hero before he gives magical agent, also the appearance of donor itself is accidentally (Propp, 1968). The first appearance above is the first test from the emperor to Hase-Hime and after the test, the Emperor gave a reward for her well playing. Even though the reward is not literally magical things, but it made Hase-Hime considered as gifted child.

Later on, the Emperor was given another test to Hase-Hime. He ordered Hase-Hime to write a poem and offer it as a prayer for removing the Imperial illness. At the end, after she wrote the poem and read it aloud with raising her heart to heaven, the Emperor soon recovered from the illness. At this second test, the Emperor gave the rank of *Chinjo* or lieutenant general to Hase-Hime. Thus, made her respected and loved by all.

6. Little brother → Helper

The helper personage occurs in at least five narrative functions such as the spatial transference of the hero, liquidation of misfortune or lack, rescue from pursuit, the solution of difficult tasks, transfiguration of the hero (Propp, 1968). There are possibilities that the helper did not occur in all five narrative functions. Therefore, Propp divided the helper into three which are universal helper who occur in all five narrative functions, partial helper who occur in several

but not all narrative functions and specific helper who fulfill only single narrative function (Propp, 1968).

In this story, besides Toyonari Fujiwara there are two other characters that play the role as a helper. The first one is the Little brother, the son of Terute. Actually, his role as a helper is accidentally. When Terute gave poisonous drink to Hase-Hime, the little brother incidentally drunk the poisonous drink. Thus, made the hero avoid from danger. It made him as specific helper, because he occurred only in one specific narrative function which is liquidation of misfortune or lack.

7. Katoda → Helper

The second helper is the servant of the Hase-Hime, Katoda. He is the one who was ordered to bring Hase-Hime into the Hibari Mountains, the wildest part of the country and killed her. But then, he realized that Hase-Hime was innocent and he decided to help her instead of harm her. Katoda as Little brother is specific helper as he occurred in one specific narrative function which is the solution of different task. It is because Katoda figured out the way to save Hase-Hime but Terute did not acknowledged it. Katoda pretend to obey Terute and brought Hase-Hime in the most solitary place. He and his wife take care of Hase-Hime.

Narrative Function

There are 16 narrative functions that exist in the text

1. Absentation (β^2) → represented by the death of the parents (Propp, 1968). This narrative function occurs when Princess Murasaki, mother of Hase-Hime is died

“When the little girl was five years old her mother fell dangerously ill and all the doctors and their medicines could not save her” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 75)

After the death of the mother the life of the main character had change in different way. once she was loved and cared by both of the parents then she was hated and had to experience things that endanger her life.

2. Interdiction (γ) → sometimes an interdictions is evidenced in a weak form such as advise or request (Propp, 1968). This narrative function happens when Murasaki dying, she gave advises to Hase-Hime as quoted below

“Hase-Hime, do you know that your mother cannot live any longer? though I die, you ‘must grow up a good girl. do your best not to give trouble to your nurse or any other of the family. perhaps your father will marry again and someone will fill my place as your mother. if so do not grieve for me, but look upon your father’s second wife as your true

mother, and be obedient and filial to both her and your father. remember when you are grown up to be submissive to those who are your superiors, and to be kind to all those who are under you. don't forget this. I die with the hope that you will grow up a model woman" (Ozaki, 1903, p. 75).

the interdiction that given by Murasaki or in this scene she is a dispatcher become a guidance for Hase-Hime and at the end, because of this interdiction, Hase-Hime could save from danger and indeed she gained honor from people around her.

3. Violation (δ) \rightarrow at this point a new character called villain enters the story. His role is to disturb peace of happy family (Propp, 1968). This point happened when Hase-Hime's father remarried after the death of Murasaki as stated below.

"Not long after the death of his first wife, Prince Toyonari married again, a lady of noble birth named Princess Terute. Very different in character, alas! to the good and wise Princess Murasaki, this woman had a cruel bad heart. She did not love her step-daughter at all, and was often very unkind to the little motherless girl." (Ozaki, 1903, p. 76)

the initial situation that explained above gives a clear understanding in the personage of the Terute as villain in the story that caused misfortune for Hase-Hime.

4. Trickery (η) \rightarrow this an attempt of villain to deceive his victim in order to possess the belongings (Propp, 1968). In the short story this narrative function happened when Terute attempted to poison Hase-Hime

"And never having learned to control herself, she allowed the wicked thought to grow into the awful desire of taking her step-daughter's life. So, one day she secretly ordered some poison and poisoned some sweet wine. This poisoned wine she put into a bottle" (Ozaki, 1903, p. 78)

This assassination attempt happened because Terute was jealous of Hase-Hime's achievement. She also wanted Toyonari only loved her little son, not spared with Hase-Hime.

5. Complicity (θ) \rightarrow this function makes the hero agrees upon the villain's persuasion (Propp, Morphology of the Folktale, 1968). In the text, this function happened when Hase-Hime drink the sweet wine that offered by Terute.

*"You are both so good and happy", said the wicked Princess Terute with smile, "that I have brought you some sweet wine as reward – and here are some nice cakes for my good children" and she filled two cups from the different bottles
Hase-Hime, never dreaming of the dreadful par her step-mother was acting, took one of the cups of wine... (Ozaki, 1903, p. 78)*

in this scene, the innocent Hase-Hime never thought that her step-mother had planned the wicked thing to murder her. So, she instantly took the poisoned sweet wine as her 'reward' without any hesitation.

6. Villainy (A) \rightarrow this function happened when villain commits murder, orders a murder to be committed, or expels someone (Propp, 1968). This function occurs when Terute accidentally murder his own son

“The wicked woman had carefully marked the poisoned bottle, but on coming into the room she had grown nervous, and pouring out the wine hurriedly had unconsciously given the poisoned cup to her own child... Suddenly the little boy screamed and threw himself on the floor, doubled up with pain... the attendants rushed for the doctor, but nothing could save the child – he died within the hour in his mother’s arms” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 79)

Terute’s assassination plan was misdirected as she unconsciously gave the poisonous sweet wine to her own son and made him die. This function includes in the villain’s causes injury to a member of the family.

7. The first function of the donor (D) → at this point the donor give tests to the hero (Propp, 1968). This function happened when the Emperor give a quest to Hase-Hime

“Great indeed was Hase-Hime’s fear and astonishment when her father sent for her what was required of her. Heavy, indeed, was the duty that was laid on her young shoulders – that of saving the Emperor’s life by the merit of her verse” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 80)

at this scene the Emperor was suffering the illness of nervous disorders that caused by roared of torrent of Tatsuta river which disturbed him day and night. Hase-Hime was receiving a duty to made a poem as prayers for Emperor recovery.

8. The hero’s reaction (E) → in this function, the reaction of the hero is either positive and negative. Hase-Hime in the story was accepted the quest that is given by the emperor

“With her father and attendants and some of the court officials, she proceed to the bank of the roaring torrent and raising up her heart to Heaven, she read the poem she had composed, aloud, lifting it heavenwards in her two hands.” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 80)

Hase-Hime answered the quest that is given by the Emperor. She written the poem as requested and read the poem near the river as prayers. Fortunately, God heard her prayers and the river was suddenly quiet and followed by the recovery of the Emperor.

9. The hero is branded (J) → at this point a hero receives a brand in his/her body (Propp, 1968). In the story after Hase-Hime succeed to finish the quest from the Emperor, she obtain a rank as reward.

“His Majesty was highly pleased, and sent for her to the Palace and rewarded her with the rank of Chinjo – that of Lieutenant-General – to distinguish her. from that time she was called Chinjo-Hime, or Lieutenant-General Princess, and respected and loved by all.” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 81)

it can be seen in quotation above that Hase-Hime was succeed in fulfilling her duty to saving Emperor’s life. To the extent of her merit, she was rewarded with the special rank that rarely given to the people of her age. Later, by this rank everyone respected and loved her. Thus, it is indirectly save her from danger

10. The hero is pursued (Pr) → in this function, the pursuer attempts to murder the hero (Propp, 1968). As there is no pursuer character in this short story, the character that involved in this function is Terute who once again plan to murder Hase-Hime by ordering to her servant, Katoda.

“At last the step-mother, seizing the opportunity of her husband’s absence, ordered one of her old servants to take the innocent girl to the Hibari Mountains, the wildest part of the country, and to kill her there. She invented a dreadful story about the little Princess, saying that this was the only way to prevent disgrace falling upon the family – by killing her” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 82)

in this scene, Katoda was ordered to bring and kill Hase-Hime in the wildest part of the country. but then Katoda recognized that Hase-Hime was innocent and she was only the victim of her cruel step-mother.

11. Rescue the hero from pursuit (Rs) → in this narrative function, the hero hide himself from danger (Propp, 1968). In the story, this function happen when Katoda saved Hase-Hime.

“But the old servant knew that the young Princess was quite innocent of all the things her step-mother had invented to him as reasons for her outrageous orders, and he determined to save her life.” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 82)

However instead of killed Hase-Hime, Katoda save her life by stay out in the wilderness. He built a little cottag and secretly called his wife to come and they take care of Hase-Hime.

12. The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country (o) → at this point of function, Hase-Hime lived in the wilderness with Katoda and his wife

“Unless he killed her, however, he could not return to his cruel task-mistress, so he decided to stay out in the wilderness. With the help of some peasants he soon built a little cottag, and having sent secretly for his wife to come, these two good old people did all in their power to take care of the now unfortunat Princess.” (Ozaki, 1903, pp. 82-83)

from the quotation above, it can be seen that Hase-Hime was living in the wilderness with two old people that take care of her. She was far from her home and started new life in the wilderness.

13. A false hero presents unfounded claims (L) → in this part of narrative function Terute gave untrue story about the sudden disappearance of Hase-Hime

“Prince Toyonari, after some weeks, came home, and was told by his wife that his daughter Hase-Hime had done something wrong and had run away for fear of being punished.” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 83)

Terute composed untrue story to Toyonari about the sudden disappearance of Hase-Hime. She said that Hase-Hime run away, but in fact she ordered someone to kill Hase-Hime.

14. The hero is recognized (Q) → n this part of narrative function, the hero is finally recognized by the brand or his accomplishment of a task after a long period of separation (Propp, 1968). In the story this happen when Toyonari Fujwara at last found Hase-Hime in the wilderness

“He noticed a tiny house on one of the hills quite near, and then he distinctly heard a beautiful clear voice reading aloud ... more and more curious he hurried on to the tiny gate and entered the little garden, and looking up beheld his lost daughter Hase-Hime.” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 84)

Toyonari Fujiwara found Hase-Hime in the wilderness of Hibari Mountains, and at first, he was attracted by the distinguish ability of Hase-Hime which is poem.

15. The false hero or villain exposed (Ex) → in this part of narrative function, Terute’s wicked plan was discovered

“...the step-mother hearing what had happened, and fearful of meeting her husband now that her wickedness was discovered, fled from the house and returned in disgrace to her father’s roof, and nothing more was heard of her.” (Ozaki, 1903, p. 85)

Terute cruelty revealed as soon as Toyonari Fujiwara found Hase-Hime in the wilderness under the care of Katoda and his wife. Then he ordered one of his people to inform to the household. Thus, when Terute heard the news, she immediately knew that her wicked plan already discovered.

16. The hero is married and ascends the throne (W) → this narrative function happened when Toyonari Fujiwara adopted younger son to be his heir and to marry Hase-Hime.

“As Prince Toyonari had no son, he adopted a younger son of one of the Court noble to be his heir, and to marry his daughter Hase-Hime, and in a few years the marriage took place.” (Ozaki, 1903, pp. 85-86)

as expected, the ending of the fairy tales is happy ending with the hero who known as the wisest, most devout, and beautiful.

Literacy Strategy in Classroom

Character development in reading (CDR) is one of literacy teaching that uses short story with well-defined and development characters. This way of teaching believes that understanding the major character in the story is the main key to understand the whole story (Kucer & Silva, 2006). This strategy engages students to get the deeper understanding about the story that they read by diving into the characters that involved in the story. The first step is teachers give short story to the students and ask them to focus on particular character. Second step, the students share their findings about the characters that they dive into. The last step students connected the characters that they have shared (Kucer & Silva, 2006). Those steps of employing CDR are best combine with Propp’s morphology of folktales.

With combining Propp’s morphology of folktales in CDR, the students will get the deeper understanding about the characters. Student can also observe and classify the patterns of characters that occur in the stories. For example, in *Princess Hase* story, they are not merely

focusing on particular character (Hase-Hime, Terute, Toyonari, etc) but they can also classify the characters that they focused on according to the dramatis personae (Hase-Hime as hero, Terute as villain, etc). Thus, character classification will engage students to dig more deeper into the characters' way of thinking, decisions, and things that they encounter according to the dramatis personae that that they are played.

The use of Propp's morphology of folktales in literacy strategies will enrich students' way of analyzing and recognizing the pattern of the story, as the narrative functions is focusing on the form of the story itself. So, the students will not only focus on the structure of the paragraphs (orientation, complication, resolution) but they also easily obtain the information that exist in the story according to the situation that happened events by events. Thus, lead the students into the deeper analysis and understanding. However, in conduct this narrative function strategy, the students may feel difficult, but the teacher can guide them by providing the tables of narrative functions like table 1 and ask them to find whether each of narrative functions is occur or not.

The combination of Propp's dramatis personae and narrative function with CDR make the steps adjusted. The initial step is giving the story to the students. The second step is classifying the character according to the dramatis personae, The third step is students focusing on particular character and they dive into the character chosen. The next step students share their findings with their pairs. The following step, the students identifying and searching the narrative functions depend on the given table. The last step is reflecting the story by pointing out the moral value and students' perception towards the story.

4. CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that in analyzing the *Princess Hase* using Propp's dramatis personae we can find seven characters such as hero, villain, helper, sought for person, donor, dispatcher, and father. For the narrative functions there are 16 function that occur in chronological order. Further, in relation with literacy strategies which is character development in reading is better to combine with dramatis personae and narrative function in classroom activities. It is because the students will engage more deeper in understanding the story by involving their critical analysis to figure out the pattern of the story.

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