AN ANALYSIS OF BIDAYUH DONDAN

by

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Abstract

AN ANALYSIS OF BIDAYUH DONDAN

This study is on narrative analysis of the Bidayuh folktales or *dondan*. This study aims to analyse the narrative structure of *dondan* by using a structural analysis framework. This study also analyzes the figurative languages in these *dondan* and the common phrases used in folktales were also being analyzed. These *dondan* were audio-recorded from two elders in Kampung Sibang, Bau, a Bidayuh Jagoi area. The results showed that the *dondan* is portrayed on how the traditional Bidayuh people viewed their world and analysis the narrative structure of the *dondan* was rather straightforward with usage of culturally related figurative languages. The findings suggest that the *dondan* have their own unique characteristics, which are closely related to the lives of the Bidayuh.

Keywords: narrative analysis, folktales, Bidayuh, dondan, figurative language,

Abstrak

ANALISIS DONDAN BIDAYUH

Kajian ini adalah tentang analisis naratif cerita penglipur lara kaum Bidayuh dan dikenali sebagai dondan. Tujuan kajian ini ialah untuk membuat analisis naratif dengan menggunakan analisis berstruktur. Kajian juga dijalankan terhadap penggunaan bahasa perbandingan dan juga frasa yang selalu digunakan dalam cerita penglipur lara. Dondan ini telah dirakam daripada dua orang pencerita dari Kampung Skibang, Bau, kawasan penduduk Bidayuh Jagoi. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa orang Bidayuh secara trdisinya mengaplikasikan kehidupan di sekeliling mereka sebagai satu budaya dan hasil daripada analisis naratif mendapati struktur naratif dalam dondan agak senang dan terang dengan penggunaan bahasa perbandingan. Hasil kajian juga mencadangkan bahawa dondan juga mempunyai corak yang unik dan tersendiri serta berkait rapat dengan cara hidup komuniti Bidayuh.

Kata kunci: analisis naratif, cerita penglipur lara, Bidayuh, dondan, bahasa perbandingan

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter one gives explanation on the background of the research, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, significant of the research and the operational definition of the terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

For every culture in this world element of folktales lives in that culture, Carthy (1984) in her writing mentioned that in American culture it all depends in part of folklore for the maintenance for its continuity. This is evidenced by the fact that much of the communication is composed of repetition of familiar ideas expressed in a familiar form that is story telling or retelling the folktales. Folktales also work as ways

of expressing ideas which is call an artistic and structured form and it had been passed on from person to person and this may become types of folklore. Potter (1993) describes folklore or folktales are like an umbrella. The word folklore or folktales are just like a tree of the oral literature with fables, myths, legends, and fairytales are as its branches. Although folklore and folktales are different from each other but then due to part of modernization and the loss of the art of storytelling, the words are used interchangeably although originally, folktales were under the folklore. Meanwhile Carthy (1984) mentioned that folklore includes all the forms from major to minor such as epics, myths, legends, fables, folktales, proverbs, riddles, songs, jokes, insults, and toasts to nursery rhymes. Although from this two different scholars writes differently but in this research, the Bidayuh folktales often be part of the community itself so it is happen to see the folktales among the Bidayuh community to be understand and described as 'dondan' (Ridu, Jitab and Noeb 2001).

Carthy (1984) stated that the most function of folktales is for motivations in story telling. There are four functions apart from motivation and that are validation, maintaining conformity or control, escape, and education. These functions work as the explanatory tale or a moral animal tale, myth or legend to validate doubted pattern or to warn of subsequent consequences if necessary when accepted practices are violated. Apart from those folktales also provides rationalizations when institutions and conventions are challenged. Potter (1993) mentioned the oral tradition or art of storytelling is one that is almost lost in the society. This culture which has melted into the great American melting pot has oral traditions which are uniquely their own. This art of story telling is known as folktales. In order to survive these new eras of new technology world it is the need to keep, analyze and use these folktales in education (Nettleton, 2008). Both of these scholars also agree that as part of the American culture that might lost its originality so it is importance to keep this part of American past culture.

Lindahl (n.d) in his writing about Louisiana folktales mentioned that the broad-based collection of Louisiana tales belongs to a current surge of interest in the ageless art of storytelling. He mentioned that the interest of readers and listeners that make the American folktales famous and had them read and listen to folktales. African-American folktales that touched about the originality back in different time make the collectors of folktales publish the folktales in a book. In his writing the goals of compiling the folktales of Louisiana to keep the folktales from being "lost", and keep the story for the future use. Apart from those folktales has the cultural view for the society and as part of the culture in Louisiana and American it is reflects the life on that particular time.

El-Amin (2003) writes about African folktales, when the Africans were brought to America as slaves, through the Tran-Atlantic Slave Trade, almost everything was taken away from them yet one thing slave owners could not take away from their slaves was their rich tradition of storytelling or their imagination. So the slave community used the folktales to entertain and educate. As slaves were forbidden to speak and write in their native languages, but they continued their only tradition; tell stories. Some were based on memories, while others were based on new experiences and hope. It also mentioned that they tells stories that they known or based on the memories and improvised it with the new culture that they had around them. El-Amin also mentioned that being part of the new culture it is important for them to keep their tradition as in folktales and folk songs. This has become part of their culture and been produced from times to times (include the folk songs) for African-American. As some of the stories only based on memorization so sometimes their stories were told based on experiences and produce a story similar of what they think in their new life.

In BB Mandarin website, the Chinese folktales often have characters of Gods, ghosts, foxes and spirits, who have been portrayed as living things with human feelings and attributes. Writers who invented myths in China describe Gods equal to man, and treat them as human beings with human nature. The Chinese folktales are more on the spirits and ghosts or even Gods as their main characters. This is because the invisibility

of the past folktales had been vanishing by different Emperors in China. It is relate to the history of China itself. Every dynasty and Emperor has their concept of ruling and different from previous dynasty. The importance of folktales to Chinese community as most of the folktales were based on ghosts, Gods, myths and legends so it reflects the life of the Chinese community that has believe in that area. It also been mentioned that even Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism have been greatly influenced by Chinese folklores (or, folktales).

Malaysian folktales or folklores or better known as 'cerita penglipur lara' as defined by Mustafa Mohd. Isa (n.d) touches on the importance of the folktales in Malay life. Malay folktales gives four major aspects about Malays live in a community. The first one is on the language use by the story teller (penglipur lara) either it is on proverbs, traditional songs or even riddles. Then the community belief, drama, games and traditional values portray in the story. Thirdly, the instruments or tools that being used daily during those particular time or era and this including the musical instruments and the farming tools. Lastly, aspects of cultural value in the story or during produce the story. All of these conclude the importance of 'cerita penglipur lara' in Malay community.

This point is being support by Prof. Mohd Taib Osman in Mustafa Mohd. Isa (n.d) explains the importance of the folktales in the Malay community. He explains that not only traditional oral narratives such as myths, legend, folktales, dramatic repertoire of the traditional theatre and memorates are oral tradition, but also proverbs, riddles, oral sayings, oral law codes, dirges, magical spells, religious invocations, formulatic expressions in games and folksongs. These are why the folktales tradition is important to Malay community and cultural.

Lim Boon Liat (2004) in his book preview, *Kisah-Kisah Haiwan Orang Asli*, explains that this indigenous people of Malaysia (*Orang Asli*) are very creative as humans, being the most complex and difficult mammalian species to understand, may yet learn a thing or two from some of these animal folk tales. Each story is additionally

supported by solid scientific notes, showing how the keen observations of the Orang Asli highlight important anatomical or behavioural attributes of the animals, and this is the importance of the folktales in their community as part of their culture. Apart from that each of the stories also has a moral that is worth pondering upon.

Muhammad Haji Salleh in Mawar Shafei (2002) explained that each story teller (penglipur lara) learns the art of story telling and the stories from different teachers (Tok Guru) and even their teachers has their own teachers (Grand Master). Muhammad Haji Salleh explains that each student learn the stories and then improvised the stories to suit the times, era and the community changes. In other words Mawar Shafei explains that this story teller will improvise the stories that they had learned to suit the change and sometimes gives their own ideas in the stories that had been told. So the originality of the stories is not there any more as the story teller will tells the stories that the people (audiences) like to listen. Basically the story teller has the power to improvise to tell out what he thinks, likes and dislikes in a story to suit the community (Mawar Shafei, 2002).

Accoring Ridu, Jitab, and Noeb (2001) Bidayuh folktales are part of the Bidayuh community. Folk stories often are told at night either at the gallery of the longhouse, garden house, farm hut or ceremonial house. This is because the folk stories revive on the community itself. It portrays on how the community thinks, compromised with the environment (Lim Boon Liat, 2004). As for Bidayuh folktales it has been told from generation to another generation and the stories had been retold for many times by different story tellers. The story might have changed and might not be same as the origins of the story. It is important to see the introduction of the story, how the story evolved, conflicts between the characters in the story and to see the similarities and differences (Griffin, (n.d)) between the Bidayuh folktales and how it is presented to the audiences. This research demonstrates the value of analyzing narrative texts for world view and cultural understanding (Ashdown and Miss (n.d)). This can be done when

analyzing the narrative then a better understanding of the cultural in the Bidayuh community.

Therefore analyzing the narratives that was given orally is to see the point of view of Bidayuh community on their life in this world apart of to see the cultural of Bidayuh. This statement was supported by Berry (n.d) in her definition of folktale a folktale is a short story that comes from the oral tradition. This shows that to understand the folktales of the Bidayuh's then the cultural view of the Bidayuh's community will be understand. This is the relationship between the folktales between the community it self.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

As the folktales are a reflection of a particular culture so it is important to study their folktales (Bidayuh folktales). Apart from that these folktales also reflects on the people of the cultural. As mentioned by Mawar Shafei (2002) the folktales had been produced to portray a culture. This event also being supported by Porter (1993) that every community has their own folktales to reflects their culture. Lim Boon Liat (2004) also mentioned that these folktales will showed how the people live in their environment and compromise with the environment; this is being portrayed in their folktales. El-Amin (2003) also gives that folktales live in the culture itself. If there is no proper compilation on these folktales it will 'lost' (Lindahl (n.d)). This is the importance to study the Bidayuh folktales (dondan) as it is part of the culture (Ridu, Jitab, Noeb, 2001) and to lives in the people culture (Carthy, 1984).

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives are

- a) To analyze the narratives structure in the Bidayuh dondan.
- b) To analyze the phrase commonly used in the folktales in the Bidayuh dondan.

c) To analyze four figurative languages (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification) in the Bidayuh *folktales*.

1.4 Research Questions

These are the research questions that will be put together to meet the research objectives.

- a) What are the narratives structures?
- b) Can'it be found in the Bidayuh dondan?
- c) What are the phrases that commonly found in the folktales?
- d) Can it be found in the Bidayuh dondan?
- e) What is figurative language?
- f) What are the figurative languages that can be in Bidayuh folktales?
- g) Is it important to analyze the phrases commonly used and figurative language?
- h) What is the importance of the Bidayuh dondan?

1.5 Significant of the Research

It is important to maintain the cultural aspects of Bidayuh folk stories (dondan). Sather (2001) in his foreword in King Siliman and other Bidayuh folktales, by Robert Sulis Ridu, Ritikos Jitab and Jonas Noeb (2001) touches on the cultural aspects of oral literature. This oral literature if not be value properly the tendency of losing the cultural values and identities will be in danger. It is important to see the folk stories for Bidayuh as it touches together their cultural.

Carthy (1984) in her writing entitled 'Folklore in the Oral Tradition, Fairytales. Fables and Folk-legend' touches on the art of storytelling is one that is almost lost and every culture has oral traditions which are uniquely their own. The sense of afraid of losing their value and culture makes this research important. As stated in Ashdown and Miss (n.d), myths are also universal and therefore can be addressed in every culture.

Mythology is an important cultural medium which influences the formulation of self concept. The research of Bidayuh folktales will touch on this aspect. The mythology of the characters and also how the stories evolve from the beginning to the end will be studied. This is because they provide a culturally significant and coherent model of the self (Pandian, 1991 in Ashdown and Miss (n.d)). Myths provide cultural discourses on the nature of self identity within a particular culture. Myth cannot be separated from folktales and it is interesting to see the heroes or villains in the Bidayuh folktales. This is the cultural view that gives life in Bidayuh folktales to be discussed in this research.

Labov (1997) mentioned that the framework of narrative begins with these aspect of narrative, and then goes on to consider the further issues of reportability, credibility, objectivity, causality, and the assignment of praise and blame (this elements will be discuss on chapter 2 and 3 later). As the folktales often be heard and there are no appropriate studies on the Bidayuh folktales had been done. The issue by Labov that he mentioned will be interesting if they can be found in the Bidayuh folktales. This analysis done by Labov picks on the narrative structure in his study. The elements of narratives as the art of story telling should be known as an oral literature must be kept and be understand by the people for every culture as this oral literature represent their culture.

1.6 Operational Definition of the Terms

1.6.1 Narrative

Labov (1997) in his definition of narrative analysis defined it as the form of language first acquired, perfectly learned, and used only among speakers of the same vernacular. It is also the effort to observe how speakers talked when they were not being observed. The definition of Labov is more to sociolinguistic point of view. In his definition he touches more on the study of how people talk as in this research case to study on how a story is being told. Meanwhile Griffin (n.d) define narrative as it can be characterised by accounts which contain an element of transformation (change over time), accounts containing some kind of action and characters that are brought together

in a plot line. So narratives have a temporal dimension characters and actions can be imaginary/fantasy. It also has many disparate elements go together to make up one story and narratives must have a point which often takes the form of a moral message. This point of view by Griffin touches on how a story is being told and how the story works. It also shows on the elements of the narratives it self and can be seen once the story is told. So basically narrative analysis is done to see how a story is being told either it is a personal account or in any folktales.

1.6.2 Folktales

Berry (n.d) defines folktales as short story that comes from the oral tradition. Folktales often have to do with everyday life and frequently feature wily peasants getting the better of their superiors. The telling of stories appears to be a cultural universal, common to primitive and complex societies alike. This point of view also being shared the same by Emery (n.d) in definition of folktales a traditional narrative, usually anonymous, handed down orally. Potter (1993) defines the word folklore or folktales are like an umbrella. Then due in part to modernization and the loss of the art of storytelling, the words are used interchangeably although originally, folktales were covered under the umbrella of folklore. Meanwhile Carthy (1984) defines folktales as stories in the oral tradition are those which the people formulate, pick up, and carry along as part of their cultural freight. These stories are told habitually by the people. El-Amin (2002) defines folktales are stories that were originally passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Folktale characters are usually all good or all bad and end up getting the reward or punishment they deserve. From these definitions folktales and folklore are oral story that being produced from generations to generations. As for myths, legends, fables, riddles and so on are under the folktales and folklore.

Yet Ridu, Jitab, and Noeb (2001) the Bidayuh folktales or known as 'dondan' covers legends and fables. There are several categories of Bidayuh folklore as sasia (ethnohistrory), susud toga (genealogy) and dondan (legends and fables). This research only touches on dondan only and not other types of folktales or folklores. Although in

earliest definitions myths, legends, fables, fairytales and folktales are different but according to Ridu, Jitab, and Noeb, *dondan* covers legends and fables. So from the definitions given, this research is more on the story told by generations of the Bidayuh community as to study it using the narrative analysis.

1.6.3 Phrases that commonly use in folktales

Christiansen (n.d), gives seven characteristics of folktales. In those characteristics, the phrase commonly used is 'once upon a time' or something similar to it, the main characters always are describe good and evil while the ending will be happy. Apart from that folktales are for ordinary people and animals as their characters. In her characteristics of folktales, these common phrases usually repeated over and over in the whole story.

Apart from that Adams (n.d) also gives outline for common phrase in folktales that include the 'once upon a time' or something that similar, description of the heroes and villains to show which one is good and evil and also ending usually ends happy.

1.6.4 Figurative Language

Mohammad Quayum and Rosli Talif (1997) define figurative language as deviates from the standard and construction to achieve a special effect. They give out the examples of figurative language such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and irony. They even explained that figurative language can be divided into two categories that are tropes and rhetorical figures.

Barnet and Cain (2000) explain that figurative language as in words that not only have literal meaning but also can be used than the literal meaning itself. As addition the figurative language is not only about the literally incompatible terms that force the reader to attend to the connotations rather than to the denotations. They give examples of figurative language such as simile, metaphor, and personification. For this

research the figurative languages that will be analyze are simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification.

1.6.4.1 Simile

Mohammad Quayum and Rosli Talif (1997) describe simile as to compared connectives such as 'like, as, than, or and verb such as resembles' (pg. 71). It also mentioned that simile is when two unlike things are compared. Barnet and Cain (2000) defined simile is a kind of figurative language explicitly to make comparison from different classes by using the connective word as, like, or verb such as seems (pg 218).

1.6.4.2 Metaphor

Mohammad Quayum and Rosli Talif (1997) describe metaphor as a comparison of two objects or feelings without a connective such as 'like' or verb such as 'appears' (pg 44). Barnet and Cain (2000) defined metaphor as a kind of figurative language that asserts the identity, without a connective such as like or a verb such as appears, of terms that are literally incompatible and equating one thing with another (pg 218).

1.6.4.3 Hyperbole

Mohammad Quayum and Rosli Talif (1997) describe hyperbole as a figure of speech in which facts are exaggerated extravagantly for the sake of emphasis. It is used to create either a serious or comic effect without the intent of literal persuasion (pg 35). Barnet and Cain (2000) defined hyperbole as a figurative language using overstatement (pg 231).

1.6.4.4 Personification

Mohammad Quayum and Rosli Talif (1997) describe personification as a literally strategy that endows inanimate objects, animals or abstract ideas with human attributes, powers or feelings (pg 58). Barnet and Cain (2000) defined personification as a kind of figurative language that gives attribution of human feelings or characteristics

to abstraction or to inanimate object, animal, or other nonhuman is given human traits (pg 220).

1.7 Scope of Study

The scope of this study is on Bidayuh folktales or 'dondan' as in Ridu, Jitab, and Noeb (2001). There are several categories of Bidayuh folklore as *sasia* (ethnohistrory), *susud toga* (genealogy) and *dondan* (legends and fables). This research only touches on *dondan* only and not other types of folktales or folklores. Although in earliest definitions myths, legends, fables, fairytales and folktales are different but according to Ridu, Jitab, and Noeb, *dondan* covers legends and fables.

Apart from that the folktales chosen only from Bau-Jagoi language and community and this research will not goes beyond the Bau-Jagoi community. The use of narrative analysis in studying the elements and patterns of Bidayuh *dondan* will be use. The elements and patterns from scholars like Labov and Richmond (will be discuss in Chapter Two) will be used. This is the scope of this research. It is to see the elements and patterns only and will not look over than that.

Then the phrases that commonly use for describing characters, in the beginning and at the end of the folktales only be analyze. Apart from that the figurative languages that be chosen only four of it namely; simile, hyperbole, metaphor and personification will be analysed and other figurative of languages will not be discussed in this research.

1.8 Chapter Review

This chapter review on chapter one about the importance of using narrative analysis in analyze Bidayuh folktales. It is important to get the background of this research before proceed into next chapter. The elements in narrative analysis from scholars like Labov, Griffin, and Richmond will be discussed in Chapter Two. Each element for different scholars will be list out and either to use it or simplified it.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Preview

This chapter focuses on the related literature to this study. It will discuss on elements and patterns in narrative and also on folktales (oral literature). The main focus is to take scholars opinion on elements and patterns in narrative and choose the suitable elements and patterns that can be used in analyse the Bidayuh folktales (dondan).

2.1 Narrative

"A narrative of personal experience is a report of a sequence of events that have entered into the biography of the speaker by a sequence of clauses that correspond to the order of the original events" (Labov, 1997 para 8). This is his definition of narrative when he had done his research at a survey of the Lower East Side. This researched that he done was the continuity of his past researched also on narrative analysis. On his past researched Labov (1973 & 1977) gives out one framework that consider as the narrative

structural. These compromise setting or orientation. Setting and orientation discussed about the setting of the narratives that been told. Then abstract or the summary of story that cover on the summary of the story told by the story tellers. After that initiating event that occurred in the story that will evolved with the main characters and it will bring to complicating action that will make up the conflict and also bring up to the climax of the story. With the entire climax the plot of the story will continue to the resolution of the story or result of action by the main characters towards the end of the story. After resolution of the story then evaluation of the story should be explain to be the point of story. Finally the elements of coda or the speaker returns to present situation.

	Labov's (1973 & 1977) frame work on narratives
1	Setting/ orientation
2	Abstract/ summary of story
3	Initiating event
4	Complicating action
5	Resolution/ result of action
6	Evaluation/ point of story
7	Coda/ return speaker to present

Table 1

In his 1997 researched Labov mentioned that narrative is not about the data that had gathered on narrative from the observation of speech production or controlled experiments, but is from the reactions of audiences to the narratives as he had told them. Narratives are produce in the audience with such great concentration of attention that will create uninterrupted silence and immobility. This effect will continue as long as it

can until the ending is reached. It is also the effort to understand the narratives that brings an abstract of a more extended treatment of narratives of personal experience to follow. The narrative itself should be taken as a data. Labov had done an experiment when he told narrative to the people and sees how their reaction towards the narratives that he told them. Apart from that the narratives that he told must be in silence and with good concentration in order to make the narrative convey is understandable.

Due to continuity from his previous researched Labov mentioned that the additions to the old framework of narratives is to consider the further issues of reportability, credibility, objectivity, causality, and the assignment of praise and blame. This is the major framework that he mentioned in his writing. This entire framework is to be put in that ways to gain information of stories that are told (narratives). He mentioned that narrative analysis also being used in sociolinguistic study. The study of how people speak when they are not being observed. In this research the narrative analysis is use to study how the folktales is presented and to see the elements and patterns of folktales.

	Labov's (1997) additional frame work on narratives
1	Reportability
2	Credibility
3	Objectivity
4	Causality
5	Assignment of praise and blame

Table 2

Richmond (2002) mentioned that narratives that she used to gather data are about adult education programs from learners' perspectives of their literacy experiences

rely on case stories gathered and analysed it through narrative inquiry methods. The data that she collected were through observation at two adult education program sites, through focused group interviews, and in-depth individual interviews. The research that she approaches allowed learners to tell their own stories in a reasonable and recursive way. The case story approach that she used in her research provides descriptive knowledge which must be understood in context. She also mentioned that the narrative process that she used is to seek to collect data and to describe lives. In analysing narratives she works actively to find the voice of the participant in a particular time, place or setting. She even attempted to provide a description of the learners' literacy stories and experiences based upon their recollections and statements about their own feelings, and perspectives.

Richmond (2002) stated that there are four major aspects in narratives namely orientation that describes the setting and character. Secondly abstract that summarizes the events or incidents of the story. Third, the complicating actions in the narratives that offers evaluative commentary on events, conflicts and themes. Finally it is about the resolution of the narratives that describes the outcomes of the story or conflict. She stated that research uses a narrative framework that serves as a screen through which the story of the learner may be examined. This, also more importantly, becomes a way for a learner to critically reflect on earlier or current perspectives in order to construct or reconstruct meaning in one's life world. In this statement by Richmond to get appropriate outlines that use in the narratives analysis. The analysis is use to get the stories from the story tellers and to see the pattern of the stories (folktales). This as mentioned by Richmond will enhance better understanding of narrative analysis.

	Richmond's frame work on narratives
1	Orientation
2	Abstract

3	Complicating Actions
4	Resolution

Table 3

Griffin (n.d) says that a narrative analysis focuses on the ways in which people make and use stories to interpret the world but he does not treat narratives as stories that transmit a set of facts about the world, and is not primarily interested in whether stories are true or not. He also views narratives as social products that are produced by people in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations. Narratives are as interpretive devices through which people represent themselves and their worlds to themselves and to others. Here Griffin mentioned that narrative argues that people produce stories of themselves but the social world is itself storied. Narratives also link with the past to the present even though there is no unbiased account of the past.

According to Griffin (n.d) these are examples of structural analyses of narrative that can be used (from Stein, 1979 cited in Griffin) setting, initiating event, internal reaction or response of protagonist, action by protagonist to deal with situation, consequence of action and reaction to events or moral of the tale.

	Griffin's frame work on narratives
1	Setting
2	Initiating event
3	Internal reaction/response of protagonist
4	Action by protagonist to deal with situation
5	Consequence of action