



Character of Apai Saloi in Iban Folktales

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ABSTRACT

Apai Saloi is a comic hero in Iban folktales. Back in the old days, Apai Saloi folktales are often told to youngsters by an elderly caretaker at night. This kind of folktales contains lots of moral value in it. Based on the preliminary study done, Apai Saloi is famous with his foolish and stupid deeds. The objective of this paper is to investigate on the character of Apai Saloi in selected documented Iban folktales because the looks and characteristics of Apai Saloi was remained unknown. This paper explains in detail the analysis of Apai Saloi in 15 stories to measure what is major characteristic of Apai Saloi by using conceptual method in determining the highest ranking of Apai Saloi characteristic in the selected documented stories. Finding shows that Apai Saloi character is proven to have a significant characteristic that was able to pull the interest of the targeted members of the readers. The study will provide new possibilities to be further developed to form a character design of Apai Saloi to present Iban culture to a greater audience and most importantly to promote local culture as well as to educate people from in and out of Sarawak about the importance of preserving local content.

Keywords: *Iban literature, Iban folktales, folktales, Apai Saloi, character design, culture, moral value*

INTRODUCTION

Apai Saloi the Iban Comic Hero

According to Sather (2001) in *Apai Alui Becomes a Shaman and Other Iban Comic Tales*, Apai Saloi is variously known as Palui, Sali-ali, Pak Sali or Apai Alui. In addition, Untie (2009) further added that Apai Saloi is also known as Sebaginda Bujang. As quoted by Sather in *Ensera – Origin of Apai Alooi*, the terms Alooi, Saloi, Sali-ali, or Paloi were used to describe someone who is foolish, silly or stupid (Sather, 1978). Due to too many names, the researcher has decided to use only one name and will be addressing this Iban comic hero as Apai Saloi in this thesis. In addition, Mawar (2010) stated that Apai Saloi is a stupid and a funny man. He cheated his family and friends, but was easily cheated back by them. Moreover, according to Sather (2001), Apai Saloi's relation with his wife is not that good. He always deceived his wife, selfish and always keeping food for himself instead of sharing it with his family. However, at the end of the day, Apai Saloi is the one who is outsmarted by his wife. Mawar (2010) further added that Apai Saloi likes to fool around with people and ideas. Other people in other places can be cheated or fooled by him, but in his own community, people know that he is stupid and would not trust him. As quoted by Mawar (2010), Apai Saloi can hear and understand all the languages of any living things such as animals and human.