THE ADAPTATION OF IBAN ORAL FOLK TALE “KELING”
IN A NARRATIVE ANIMATION

Keith Voon Lip Khiong

Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Department of Design Technology)
2010
THE ADAPTATION OF IBAN ORAL FOLK TALE
“KELING” IN A NARRATIVE ANIMATION

KEITH VOON LIP KHIONG

This project is submitted in partial fullfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Department of Design Technology)

Faculty of Applied & Creative Arts
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2010
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

THESIS STATUS ENDORSEMENT FORM

TITLE: THE ADAPTATION OF IBAN ORAL FOLK TALE “KELING” IN A NARRATIVE ANIMATION

ACADEMIC SESSION : 2009 / 2010

1 KEITH VOON LIP KHIONG

hereby agree that this Thesis* shall be kept at the Centre for Academic Information Services, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, subject to following terms and conditions:

1. This Thesis is solely owned by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
2. The Centre for Academic Information Services is given full rights to produce copies for educational purpose only
3. The Centre for Academic Information Services is given full rights to do digitization in order to develop local content database
4. The Centre for Academic Information Services is given full rights to produce copies of this Thesis as part of its exchange item program between Higher Learning Institutions [or for the purpose of interlibrary loan between HLI]
5. ** Please tick (✓)

☐ CONFIDENTIAL (Contains classified information bounded by the OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT 1972)
☐ RESTRICTED (Contains restricted information as dictated by the body or organization where the research was conducted)
☐ UNRESTRICTED

Validated by

(AUTHOR’S SIGNATURE) (SUPERVISOR’S SIGNATURE)
Permanent Address
1800, Lorong F6,
Taman Satria Jaya BDC,
93350 Kuching,
Sarawak.
Date: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Notes
* Thesis refers to PhD, Master and Bachelor Degree
** For Confidential or Restricted materials please attach relevant documents from relevant organizations/authorities
DECLARATION

The project entitled ‘The Adaptation of Iban Oral Folk Tale “Keling” in a Narrative Animation’ is prepared by Keith Voon Lip Khiong and submitted to the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours (Department of Design Technology)

To be examined by :

.................................................................................................

(Ahmad Azaini Bin Abdul Manaf)

Supervisor

Department of Design Technology

Date: ..............................................
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to a great number of people who has been assiting me in completing my research on ‘The Adaptation of Iban Oral Folk Tale “Keling” in a Narrative Animation’.

I would begin by thanking the Almighty one, for blessing me with supportive lecturers who had endlessly giving me tremendous support and guidance. They are Mr. Ahmad Azaini bin Abdul Manaf and Ms. Salmiah binti Abdul Hamid who has shared their wisdom, talents and time.

Not forgeting my parents Mr Voon Chee Foh and Mdm Frances Nigelina for your support. A special note of thanks to my dearest siblings for their support, encouragement, care and motivation which I truly appreciate.

Last but not least, this research could not have been completed without the help of everyone here in Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts. Much appreciation also goes to all my friends who had contributed towards the success of this dissertation.
CONTENT

List of content i – ii

Content

Abstract iii

Abstrak iv

CHAPTER 1: 1 – 10

1.0 Research Title

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Background of Research

1.3 Definition of Terms

1.4 Problem Statement

1.5 Research Objectives

1.6 Research Hypothesis

1.7 Research Scope

1.8 Research Limitation

1.9 Conclusion
CHAPTER 2: 11 – 15
2.0 Introduction
2.1 Literature Review

CHAPTER 3: 16 – 18
Research Methodology

CHAPTER 4: 19 – 52
Research Findings

CHAPTER 5: 53 – 65
Recommendation

CHAPTER 6: 66 – 67
Claim

CHAPTER 7: 68
Conclusion

REFERENCES 69 – 70
APPENDIX 71 – 76
ABSTRACT

The Iban is oral folk tale closely related to the Iban spiritual and conception of the mythological world. The objectives of this research are to identify the folk tales among Iban society, to analyze the Iban folk tales, to produce a narrative animation based on Iban folk tale, and lastly to validate the outcome of the animation. Based on the research, a short animation will be produced and adapted from one of the most ancient Iban tale in the oral tradition, ‘Keling the Great Warrior of Panggau Libau’. The animation captures both the richness of the Iban folklore as well as the idiom of the Iban language.
ABSTRAK

CHAPTER 1

1.0 RESEARCH TITLE

The Adaptation of Iban Oral Folk Tale “Keling” in a Narrative Animation.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a research study on the Iban oral folk tale in Sarawak. The study focuses on indentifying the categories of the folk tale group among Iban society. Based on this research, a short animation will be produced and adapted from the oral folk tale which captures both the richness of the Iban folklore as well as the idiom of the Iban language.

This chapter will also focus on the background of the research, problem statement, research objectives, limitations, definition of key terms and conclusion.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

Iban is the largest race population in Malaysia after the Malays. The Iban is also one of the local native group in Sarawak which is known as the Dayaks (largest Dayak population, about 459,700 or 29.6% estimated in the 1987 statistic). In 1838, under the rulings of the White Rajahs, the Iban were then referred as Sea Dayaks. However today, the term Iban is officially used and referred to as a name to acknowledge its race. The Iban language is uniform throughout Sarawak, although its
pronunciation varies. These variations help to indentify the speaker’s region.

From the Iban social organization aspect, the smallest unit in the Iban organizational structure is the ‘bilik’. One ‘bilik’ in the ‘rumah panjai’ consist of one family which includes a couple of married husband and wife and their children. Every ‘rumah panjai’ has a chief called ‘tuai rumah’. A ‘tuai rumah’ acts as a spokes person and a representative for his ‘rumah panjai’ society. Other then that, a ‘tuai rumah’ is also believed to ensure a good relationship between longhouse members and the spirit known as ‘roh’ or ‘semangat’.

From the Iban cultural aspects and belief, they were traditionally animist believers. Traditional Ibans believes in ‘roh’ and ‘semangat’. The ‘tuai burung’, ‘tuai rumah’, ‘lemambang’ and ‘manang’ plays a vital role in the Iban ancient beliefs. Today, the majority of Iban are Christian and some of them are Muslim. Both Christian and traditional practises is continued and is observe in ceremonies such as marriage, funeral and festivals. It is also customary for Iban young man to set on a journey or ‘be ja lai’ during their young ages. ‘Be ja lai’ means set on a long journey to prove that one is independent and to bring back trophies which is normally the human skull.

In the arts and heritage aspects, Iban were warriors and head-hunters. Much of their traditional art is connected with these activities. Ibans are also famous for their beads making and most well-known for
their ‘Pua Kumbu’ weaving. During Gawai festival, the Iban traditional dance, the ‘ngajat’ is performed as an entertainment and will be accompanied by musical instruments such as ‘engkerumungs’ and ‘sapek’. Apart from that, tattooing is done extensively by men only to cover and to glorify ones body. Iban folklore on the other hand covers folk tales, music, dance, and jokes. These folklore helps to preserve the Iban cultural heritage.

The Iban folk tale comes under the oral tradition, it is closely related to Iban mythology and conception of the spirit world. ‘Jerita Tuai’ and ‘Ensera’ are the tales usually told. Both of these tales are handed from generation to generation. These tales were usually recited or chanted for entertainment in the longhouses back then where the men, women and children will sit and listen.

There is no rigid difference between “jerita” and “ensera”, folk tales are almost exclusively for entertainment. On the other hand, folk tales are being told with ethical purposes of explaining Iban behaviour and the potential consequences of wrong behaviour. However, tales which has major mythical attributes culminate in a description of one or more aspects of Iban social, religious and cult practice.

Folk tale has a well-built link with the mythological and spiritual world. Folk tale may have possible facts of certain legends or history of the past. It is also a possible act for a tale to comprehend the origins of Iban religious belief, ritual and social code. For example, “Keling” the
legendary Iban hero, is believed to represent human-like behaviour of the Iban. He owned both spirit properties and human qualities. Therefore, Iban folk tale indirectly do convey the lifestyle of Iban people.
1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.3.1 DEFINITION OF FOLK TALE

Folk tale (noun) a very old traditional story from a particular place that was originally passed on to people in spoken form.


“Folk tale is a narrative fiction prose of a story which has or never happened…profiling time and space…free from space and time limits…involve mythical creatures and magical transformations.”

(W.R Boscom 1965)

1.3.2 DEFINITION OF NARRATIVE

Narrative - 1. A description of events, especially in a novel.

2. The act process or skill of telling a story.

Narrative (noun) a story or account of events, experiences, or the like, whether true or fictitious, a book, literary work, etc., containing such a story, the art, technique, or process of narrating.


Narrative is generally accepted as possessing two components: the story presented and the process of its telling, or narration, often referred to
as narrative discourse. Story is a series of represented events, characters (or agents for some), and actions out of which the audience constructs a fictional time, place, and cause–effect world, or diegesis. In the Lumière short, the material elements include the arrival of the train, the scurrying of rushed passengers, the gestures of the railway workers, the steam emitted from the engine, even the moving shadows beneath people's feet.

(www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Independent-Film-Road-Movies/Narrative-DEFINING-FILM-NARRATIVE.html , 2009)
A story that is created in a constructive format (as a work of writing, speech, poetry, prose, pictures, song, motion pictures, video games, theatre or dance)

It describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events

Can also be told by a character within a larger narrative

Types of Narrative
- Stories (emotional; “Literary”)
- Conventional Stories (everyday narratives)
- ‘Great’ Narratives - Myths (nations, organizations, institutions, social groups; religion)

Functions of Narrative
- Cogni-emotional roller coaster; entertainment
- Create individual & social identity
- Education
- Propaganda
- Collective knowledge

Studies of Narratives
- Psychology (coherence making, children’s stories as sense-making activities)
- Cultural Studies (narratives structures & propagates knowledge within a society)
- Historiography (eg. ‘great men’ history)
- Narratology - (structure of narratives)
- Art, Literary & Cinema studies (how narrative structures manifest themselves in different media)
- Medicine
- Law

Characteristics of Narratives
- Temporal: series of events / situation
- Form of coherence between events (primary causality)
- Character centered (situations)
- Theme; plot; point; moral

Figure 1.3.2.1 Understanding Narrative

A Story / Film

PLOT DIAGRAM

*This PLOT DIAGRAM shows how the main events in a story / film are organized into a plot

Diagram 1.3.2.2 Plot Diagram
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today, due to rapid modernization, the Iban oral tradition especially its folk tale faces problem in surviving today’s world. With the coming of education, technology and growing economy, the modern society find it difficult to learn and to know more about the Iban folk tale. Besides that, Iban folk tales are mostly found in both verbal and written form. Therefore, this precious art of folk tale telling is significantly becoming extinct among today’s generation.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the folk tales that is prominent among Iban society.

2. To analyze the Iban folk tales comprising of narrative component and storytelling.

3. To produce a narrative animation based on Iban folk tale.

4. To validate the outcome of the animation based on narrative component.
1.6  RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The Iban cultural heritage is very important and is slowly dying due to the rapid globalization. Efforts must be made in order to preserve the Iban’s cultural heritage. With this research, the Iban cultural heritage especially its oral folk tales can be preserved, revitalized and promoted to our modern generation. Through the adaptation of Iban folk tale in this narrative animation, it can easily generate interest among modern generation. Effort such as this can also help in global expansion of the Iban community. This will indirectly help the Ibans to attract foreign audience to know more about their culture. With the coming of technology, modern generation especially young people, they prefer technology related form of entertainment. Therefore, animation is a form best to illustrate the concept and idea of the Iban oral folk tale. Other than that, animation with such local content enables modern generation to appreciate and to learn about the Iban culture.

1.7  RESEARCH SCOPE

The research focuses on the Iban society located in Sibu, the third division of Sarawak. The research area consist of Rumah Panjang Philip Kayak, Rumah Panjang Aup and Rumah Panjang Rantau Panjang. It was selected because of demography factor. Sibu is the third division of Sarawak. It has one of the largest Iban population in Sarawak. An open
interview on Iban folk tale will be carried out on influential individuals which are the heads of the longhouse. They are Tuai Rumah Philip Kayak and Tuai Rumah Jonathan Juna. The reason for this interview is to indentify the categories of Iban oral folk tale.

1.8 RESEARCH LIMITATION

The Iban folk tales are familiar among the older generation. Therefore, some difficulties to gather information may occur. Besides that, there are a large number of oral folk tale which differs in different area. Since it was oral based, it is difficult for the researcher to preserve the story telling in its original form.

1.9 CONCLUSION

As an early conclusion, this is a research on the Iban folk tale, emphasizing on the Iban oral folk tales. Based on this research a short animation will be produced. The short animation will be adapted from one of the selected tale of the Iban ethnic. The animation in translation captures both the richness of the Iban folklore as well as the idiom of the Iban language.

Animation can be the best form to illustrate the concept and idea of the Iban oral folk tale. Other than that, animation with such local content enables modern generation to appreciate and to learn about the Iban culture.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consist of earlier researches done by other researchers. The information gathered through this chapter are references for the researcher to gain more knowledge throughout the research period.

2.1 Zaini Ozea (1997)

According to Zaini Ozea, the exact number of Sarawak’s folk tale is yet to be known. Until now the exact number of the local tales remains unknown. Folk tales are only collected from certain ethnic groups. This proves that there are still a large number of Sarawak’s folk tale which are yet to be collected and documented. Most folk tales are published in English, Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Iban, Bahasa Bidayuh and Kenyah through journals such as The Sarawak Museum Journal, The Sarawak Gazette & Biro Kesusasteraan Borneo. In this article, it is also stated that there are a list of folk tale categories which are made as perusal material. The categories are Cerita Penglipur Lara, Cerita Binatang, Cerita Jenaka and Cerita Asal Usul.

2.2 Folk literature

Folk tale has its specialty where it can travel with great ease from one storyteller to another. Folk tale is characterized by its basic pattern and by narrative motifs, it passes language boundaries without difficulty. Folk tale presupposes a background of belief about tribal origins and the relation of men and gods.


Figure 2.2.1 Samples of folk tales
2.3 Defining Film Adaptation

“Adaptation introduces complications in audience perception and aesthetics. The most obvious and common form of film adaptation is the use of a novel as the basis of a film, but film adaptation includes the use of non-fiction (including journalism), autobiography, comic book, scripture, plays, and even other films. From the earliest days of cinema, adaptation has been nearly as common as the development of original screenplays.”


Based on the article, adaptation in film gives the audience the sense of aesthetics. Most adaptation are being adapted from non fiction materials, comic books, novel, scriptures and also from other film. It shows that adaptation can help generate new ideas, improving ones story telling and also to be a guideline of reference in making a story.

2.4 Comics and Film: A Narrative Perspective

“The narrator may also be a character in the story…A non-character narrator is the anonymous “voice of God.” This type is a matter of fact commentator who may be objective or subjective…Sometimes the narrator is not revealed until the end.”
Based on the description, a narrator can be a character in a story. For example: in a story he/she can be child, but in the actual life he or she is actually a grown up person. A non-character narrator is refer to as the a narrator which is not seen throughout the entire film.

2.5 The Narratives

“ The Narratives are of different kinds, recognisable by the dramatics personae that they feature, the function that they play in the life of the society, the meanings attached to them and the stylistic features in them. Six type of narratives can be identified: the folk tale or the marchen, the myth, the epic, the legend, the ballad and the memorate.”


According to statement, there are six type of narratives which has there own dramatic value, role of play in today’s society and also stylistic features.

2.6 Narration by Catherine Levison

“...Narration is assimilating information and retelling it. Anyone would listen closely if they knew they were going to retell what they had
heard. Just like when you've seen a documentary and tell your friend all about it the next day, you will remember it better...”

_Narration, Narrating For a Better Communication. 25/3(65)._  

According to Catherine Levison, narration can help in audience’s understanding. Good narrating skills enable listeners to remember the information better. Therefore, animation with a narrator and narrative plot will give a huge impact in audience understanding. This will help them to understand, remember and to retell the tale later on.

2.7 _Walt Disney Quoted_

“Animation offers a medium of story telling and visual entertainment which can bring pleasure and information to people of all ages everywhere in the world.”  

(Walt Disney)

According to Walt Disney, animation can be a medium for effective story telling, not only for entertainment purposes only. Animation brings information to the audience of all ages.

Hence, the researcher find it rational in a way that animation can be used as a medium to tell a tale with the adaptation of the local Iban content.