

Developing Storyline for Role-Playing Games Based on Balinese Folklore for Preserving Local Wisdom and Character Education

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Abstract— The present study is focused on building the storyline for the game designed in a Role-Playing-Game that allows players to set the course of their quests. The steps of the research include identifying the Balinese folklore to be included; analyzing of the roles of these characters in the game by using Greimas' Actantial Scheme; and designing the quests. In the present study, only the pilot storyline was developed, with the tales of I Belog and The Legend of Bali Straight as the base of the story, I Belog as the subject, Tirta Kamandalu as the object, the villagers as the senders and the receivers, Bhagawan Siddhi Mantra as the helper, and Manik Angkeran as the opponent. The prototype storyline emphasizes the reiteration of good deeds and local values performed by the hero during his quest, thus promoting character education among the players intended by this game.

Keywords—*storyline role-playing game; Balinese folklore; local wisdom; character education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The debates around whether or not the growing use of gadgets in this digital era is beneficial for children's development has been going on without conclusive answers as experts see gadgets can bring positive and negative impacts simultaneously as in [16] and [20]. Negative impacts of gadgets identified so far, among others, are minimal children's physical activity, problems with their social skills and attention span, addiction to internet and technologies, language delay, learning problems, anxiety, childhood depression, and negative impact on character as in [2], [16], [19], and [20], while others recognize improved technological literacy, interesting learning media, facilitated communication between parents and children, improved social and cognitive skill, effective learning through ICT, better motoric skill, developed competitive skill, and great source of education for young kids as some of the positive impacts of gadgets for children as in [3, 5, 15, 16, 18]. However, despite these diverging opinions, most experts agree

that digitalization is inevitable as in [3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18] with some acknowledge gadgets in this ICT as an omnipresent element in children's life as in [4, 6, 7, 13, 17, 19, 21]. Thus, the concern about the relationship between children and gadgets is no longer whether children use them, but how they use them as in [3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17].

The present study responds to this situation by drawing the relevance between the presence of gadgets such as mobile phones among children, the decreasing interest in local wisdom, and the declining character building among children; and perceives developments of educative contents for children to access from their mobile phones an alternative to draw the positive impacts of ICT and gadgets for children's development. Thus, the present study proposes to develop a mobile application in the form of Role-Playing Games that incorporate the local wisdom from Balinese folklore, in a three-year project. In its first year, this study is aimed at producing a prototype, that starts with the identification of the folklores to be included in the game followed by the composing the storyline. It is the development of this storyline that is going to be elaborated in this present article, which covers the choosing of the Balinese folklores to be included, the employment of Greimas' Actantial scheme to build the structure of the story, and the building of the storyline.

II. CHARACTERS IN A STORY AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

A character is a personified being who inhabits a story. Character can be dead or living things which later are delivered to possess human traits as cited in [24]. Character in a story is presented through characterization whether it is directly or indirectly [24]. Readers can recognize the characterization through the writer's exposition which is known as direct presentation. Besides, indirect presentation reveals the characterization through the character's

appearance, acts, words, and mind. Reference [24] further adds that characterization works together with other narrative elements such as plot, setting, and theme. Plot is defined as a series of actions happening from the beginning until the story ends. The actions are intertwined in a causal effect relation. In the plot, the characters take place as the doer of the actions making it lifelike. The action needs space and time for it to happen. The setting provides a background for the reader to grab where and when the story happened. Setting also affects the mood of the story. Story also can not be separated from a theme, the general idea of the story which represents a piece of truth about life.

Character is closely related to morality. Character is universal human values. These values are reflected in the way of thinking, feeling, behaving, and acting as a person be it in the intra-relation of a person or the inter-relation of a person to his God, nature, and other people [22]. A character is also known as a behavior based on the norms, laws, customs, and culture. Reference [23] explains that a good character is mainly about three things, namely knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good.

According to [25], character is the set of psychological characteristics that motivate and enable the individual to function as a competent moral agent, that is, to do 'good' in the world. Character is a characteristic of a person or group of people who refers to a series of attitudes, behaviors, motivations, and skills as manifestations of value, ability, moral capacity, and determination in the face of difficulties and challenges [26]. In addition, [23] states that good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good. Schools must help children understand the core values, adopt or commit to them, and then act upon them in their own lives. The cognitive side of character includes at least six specific moral qualities: awareness of the moral dimensions of the situation at hand, knowing moral values and what they require of us in concrete cases, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, thoughtful decision making, and moral self-knowledge. All these powers of rational moral thought are required for full moral maturity and citizenship in a democratic society.

The Ministry of National Education [28] views character as personality resulting from the internalization of values, morals, and norms that are believed and used as a basis for acting and thinking in society. Although character is considered as a part of personal self, but character and interaction in the community affect each other [27]. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education views character education as a very important thing to do in an environment where children interact be it in the formal, informal, and informal fields.

The characters that are considered important to be instilled in children according to the Ministry of National Education [28] are the values of religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard-working, creative, autonomous, democratic, curiosity,

nationalism, patriotic, appreciative, friendly/ communicative, peace-loving, bibliophile, nature loving, social care, and responsibility. In 2017, the Ministry of National Education re-revitalized the concept of character education and focused character education on five axis values, namely religious, nationalist, independent, integrity, and mutual cooperation which will be expanded to 18 character education values mentioned before [26].

III. BALINESE FOLKLORES FOR CHOSEN THE STORYLINE

From the Balinese folklores, the Legend of Bali Straight is chosen as the main plot of the first batch of the game. Three more stories are incorporated to form a new storyline, namely I Belog, The Myth of Bukit Catu, and the Myth of Batur Lake.

I Belog is a very well-known anecdote in Balinese folktales that tells about a very stupid person name I Belog, which literally translated as "The Stupid." The story goes that I Belog, a son of simple farmers, was told to go to the market to buy a duck. His mother emphasized that I Belog should choose the fattest, heaviest duck in the market. When I Belog arrived in the market, he chose his duck meticulously like his mother had told him, drawing the attention of the other villagers. Knowing that I Belog was rather simple-minded, the villagers made fun of I Belog, by asking him whether I Belog had chosen the fattest and heaviest duck, to which I Belog replied that he had indeed. The villagers went on with their chides, asking to test the duck's weight by throwing it into the nearby river. As the duck flew and landed on the river and swam, I Belog gave away the duck and went home to his disappointed mother.

The Myth of Bukit Catu is a myth about how a very symmetrically hemisphere was formed in South Bali, Called Bukit Catu, where "bukit" means hill and "catu" means the tools for measuring rice to be cooked, usually made of coconut shell which is shaped in a hemisphere, which is also the shape of rice offering in Bali, which is usually called "tumpeng". The story went that a very ambitious farmer named Mr. Jurna pledged that if his harvest was successful, he would make an offering of tumpeng. After he pledged so, there was a hemispheric shape land was formed in his rice field, so Mr. Jurna pledged that his "tumpeng" offering would be as big as that land boulder. As the next harvest was successful, Mr. Jurna pledge a bigger offering, and a bigger boulder appeared on his land so at the harvest Mr. Jurna made a tumpeng the size of that boulder. That kept happening with the harvest more successful, and Mr. Jurna got greedy so he kept pledging bigger and bigger offerings, hence the boulder got bigger and bigger up to the point Mr. Jurna harvest could not keep up in making the rice offering. Thus Mr. Jurna had to sell his properties to keep his promises to God until he went bankrupt. Hence, the hill which was shaped like a "tumpeng" and hemispheric half coconut, stopped growing and now Bukit Catu stood in Karangasem Regency in East Bali.

The Myth of Lake Batur is a myth about the origin of Lake Batur. The story went that there was a couple who tried to have a child for so long that they vowed should Gods granted them a son, they would grant him anything that he wanted. After that, the wife got pregnant and delivered a very healthy and strong baby boy, whom they named Kebo Iwa, who ate a lot as his parents spoilt him. He grew up a very bad-tempered glutton although he was very helpful when he was contented. As the boy grew up and the parents got older, the villagers had to help feeding Kebo Iwa. Things got worse when the harvest failed, and the villagers ran out of food to feed Kebo Iwa. The villagers then designed a way to get rid of Kebo Iwa by asking him to help building a very deep well to water the rice fields, for which he would be rewarded with a lot of food. Kebo Iwa agreed and started to dig a very deep well until a robust water sprang. But the villagers asked Kebo Iwa to keep digging until Kebo Iwa was drowned in the well, and then the villagers threw back the stones from the digging. But the water kept flowing and started flooding the nearby lowlands and formed a lake that is now known as Lake Batur in Bangli Regency.

The Legend of Bali Straight involved the Holy Priest named Siddhi Mantra, which means Holy Chants, in the formation of Bali Straight that separates the islands of Bali and Java. The story goes that the Holy Priest had a very spoilt son named Manik Angkeran who liked to gamble. Once he used up his father's money, he started borrowing money for his gambling. When the time to pay the debts came, he came crying to his father to help him. Being a simple man with not much fortune and a boundless love for his son, he then traveled to Mount Besakih to ask his spirit animal, the Holy Dragon Basuki for help. When he arrived at the foot of Mount Besakih, he sounded his holy bell, and the dragon appeared. All the Holy Dragon had to do was to shake his tail and his golden scales would fall off. His priest friend would pick them up to pay his son's debt. But Manik Angkeran turned greedy and he followed his father to see from where he got the gold. So, he stole his father's Holly Bell and went to Mount Besakih. There he sounded the Bell and introduced himself. The dragon was annoyed, yet he granted his friend's son riches to pay his debts. And then he went back into his cave. It was then Manik Angkeran saw that at the end of Naga Basuki's tail, there was a huge diamond that could worth a lot more than the gold he could contain from the dragon's scales. He then cut the tail and ran away with the diamond. The Holy dragon was enraged, and he cursed Manik Angkeran to burn to the ground. Siddhi Mantra then appealed for his son to be brought back to life. The Holy Dragon agreed on one condition, that Manik Angkeran would be kept away from Mount Besakih. Siddhi Mantra agreed sent his son home to Java. With his Holly Staff, Siddhi Mantra drew a line that broke the land apart. Since then, it was said that the edge of Java island was separated to form the Island of Bali.

IV. GREIMAS' ACTANTIAL SCHEME IN THE PILOT STORYLINE

Reference [8] applied the term "actant" to determine the role of a certain character in a story, which further shapes the character's functions and actions in the development of the narrative. Actantial Scheme stands for six actants namely the subject, the object, the helper, the opponent, the sender, and the receiver as in [1], [9], and [12]. Reference [1], [9], and [12] explain the subject is the main character who tried to achieve the object which stands as the goal. A sender is the actant who sends and orders the subject delivering the object to the receiver as in [1], [9], and [12]. The receiver is an actant who gets the benefit from the object as in [1], [9], and [12]. Reference [1], [9], and [12] further adds that a subject typically undergone several quests in which the helper will facilitate the subject, or the opponent will hinder the subject to reach the goal. Reference [1] and [9] provide a diagram showing the relation of the six actants as the following.

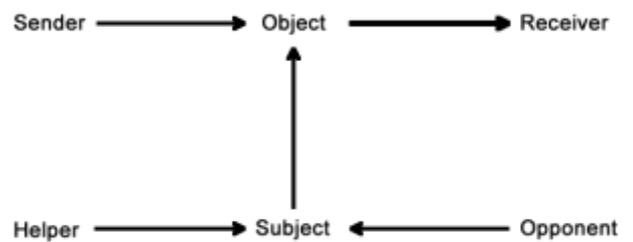


Fig. 1. Greima's Actantial Scheme

The figure from [1] and [9] above explains that the subject's goal is the object that is requested by the sender. The assignment usually takes place at the beginning of the story. The helper and the opponent have a direct relation to the subject as they act as the facilitator or the hinderer who will define the success of the subject in reaching the goal as in [1], [9], and [12]. The two actants typically appear after the beginning. The receiver who waits for the object delivered by the subject stands at the end of the narrative as in [1], [9], and [12]. Reference [1], [9], and [12] add that figure also implies that a narrative consists of a main character following a set of instruction and facing complications and resolutions who drives his actions to reach a specific goal for a greater purpose.

A. The Subject: The Stupid Villager from The Tale of I Belog

From the general storyline of the game, the subject or hero of the story is called I Belog. I Belog can be translated as 'the fool'. In the game storyline, the tale is deconstructed where I Belog was given a quest by the villagers to get the holy water to cure the plague. In his quest, Belog would be demanded to do smaller quests before he reached the end stage of the pilot storyline. The next development of the storyline will involve I Belog in more quests derived from other Balinese folklores, so

he gradually grew wiser and stronger, up to his graduation that awards him with a new name, the Learned One. After he was anointed, he would then face his final quest where he would face Manik Angkeran once and for all.

B. The Object: The Holy Water from The Holy Dragon Basuki from the Legend of Bali Straight

Although the main goal of this game is the spread of the teaching of Dharma as mandated by the Holy Dragon Basuki, in this pilot storyline, the object is set to be the Holy Water from the Holy Dragon to cleanse the plague in Belog's village. This holy water is a sacred object which is said to be "the healer of all sickness". I Belog is supposed to gain this holy water due to a mysterious disease that infected the villagers. The holy water is stored in the Mount Agung and guarded by the Basuki Dragon from the Legend of Bali Straight. It can only be reached after I Belog gains a certain level of experience and dexterity and equipped with certain artifacts. These can be gained by accomplishing small tasks in each of the quests.

C. The Senders: The Villagers

In this pilot storyline, the initial senders were the villagers from where the I Blog belong to. In this case, the villagers were the ones who send I Belog to fetch the Holy Water from the Holy Dragon for cleansing their village. However, along with the subplot, there are other senders from each of the folklore incorporated into the main storyline. For example, in the story of I Belog, the sender would be I Belog's mother, or commonly called Men Belog (which translates into I Belog's Mother). By the end of this pilot storyline, the main sender of the main storyline appears. The Holy Dragon sent I Belog to accompany The Holy Priest Siddhi mantra as his apprentice so that The Holy Priest can spread the teaching of Dharma throughout the Island of Bali and I Belog can learn to be a wiser person.

D. The Helpers: The Holy Hermit from the Legend of Bali Straight

In the main storyline, the ultimate helper for I Belog would be The Holy Dragon and through him, various Gods requested by I Belog depending on the skills and artifacts owned by I Belog, based on the type of the problems faced by I Belog. Along the little quests, there would be many local helpers available, either essential to the storyline or optional. In case optional help is available, these bits of help would also available to purchase either with coins or trade of artifacts. Coins would be awarded with missions' completions in each of the little quests. These little missions would be in various forms, designed to introduce Balinese folklores and the local wisdom in entertaining ways.

E. The Opponent: Manik Angkeran

In the main storyline, the main opponent would be Manik Angkeran, the son of the Holy Priest Siddhi Mantra. In the little quests, there would be various opponents, related to Manik Angkeran either directly or indirectly. However, by the end of each stage, there would be a 'boss fight' where I Belog has to face a strong opponent as a requirement to open a new map.

F. The Receiver: The Villager

In the pilot storyline, the receiver of the object would be the villagers from I Belog's village. There would be a specific receiver of each of the little quests in each of the stages, for example, in the story of Bukit Catu, the receiver is Mr. Jarnu, and in the story of Lake Batur, the receiver would be the villagers of Batur Village. With the Holy Water granted by the Holy Dragon to I Belog, the villagers then cleanse the village.

V. THE PROPOSED STORYLINE FOR THE PILOT GAME

From the four folklores above, a new storyline was formed to build the storyline for the pilot game in this research. The story of I Belog and The Legend of Bali Straight are combined to be the mainframe of the game, while the other two stories implanted to provide the adventures. The new storyline goes as follows.

It is started with the story of I Belog, to the point he came back home without his duck. Soon, the village was struck with a plague, as a curse for the villagers for having bullied I Belog. The only way to redeem the village was to sprinkle Holy Water from The Holy Dragon Basuki on the villagers and all over the village. But the villagers were too sick to go, so I Belog being a helpful person, he offered to go to fetch the Holy Water. On his way East to Mount Besakih, he came across Mr. Jurna's village, who was celebrating his harvest by sharing the rice offering with the other villagers. I Belog joined the festivities and overheard the story of how the size of the boulder hill corresponded positively with the success of Mr. Jurna's harvest. Being helpful, I Belog then added the size of the boulder, in the hope of increasing Mr. Jurna's harvest. Little did he knew that it would only trigger Mr. Jurna's greed. Thus, I Belog helped to make the hill bigger and bigger and putting end to Mr. Jurna's greed. After Mr. Jurna realized his mistakes, he repented and reformed himself. Knowing that it ended well despite his blunder, I Belog then continued his journey South, where he came across the villagers of Batur who held a meeting about how to handle Kebo Iwa. Being a positive-minded person, whose intelligence has developed during his journey, he asked the villagers to focus on Kebo Iwa's positive character and asked him to build a well to water the rice field and help fighting the draught. But the villagers were filled with contempt and misused I Belog's suggestions, resulting in the flooding of the whole village. I Belog was desperate and he strengthened his will to meet the Holy Dragon Basuki, not only

to ask for the Holy Water but also to learn wisdom. Upon arriving at the foot of the mountain, he accidentally saw how Holy Priest Siddhi Mantra sounded his Holy Bell to call the Holy Dragon. The following day, he met a very sad-faced Manik Angkeran who was desperate to call the Holy Dragon. Not suspecting Manik Angkeran's true intentions, I Belog thought they had the same purpose in meeting the Holy Dragon, I Belog told Manik Angkeran about the Holy Bell. Not long after, Manik Angkeran came with the Bell, and before I Belog stated his purpose, Manik Angkeran had cut the Dragon's tail, and Manik Angkeran was turned to ashes. I Belog was devastated with guilt toward the Dragon, even more so when the Holy Priest Siddhi Mantra came wailing over his son's ashes. Together, I Belog and the Priest prayed to be forgiven and to spare Manik Angkeran's life. The Holy Dragon agreed on the conditions that Manik Angkeran would be sent away and not to reach Mount Besakih anymore, that Siddhi Mantra would strive to teach the people the wise teachings, and that I Belog would follow the Holy Priest so he could learn and help the Priest in spreading the wise teaching.

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VI. CONCLUSION

The storyline built in this stage of research incorporates the stories from Balinese folklores in the effort to pass down the oral traditions along with the wisdom they contain. From the deconstruction of I Belog as the fool in the folklore, the game highlights the importance of education to build good characters through examples and experience that can open possibility for a naïve and foolish person like I Belog to change into a smarter, more skillful, and wiser person. The storyline also emphasizes the imperfections in every human being, so even the wisest like the Holy Priest Siddhi Mantra or the Mightiest like The Holy Dragon Basuki can make mistake. Thus, what is more important in character education is not how good a person is inherently, but how to maintain what is good in a person, while developing aspects which are still lacking. In later stages of the storyline, it is expected that more Balinese folklores are incorporated in order to include more wisdom to pass down through entertaining yet educating games.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The present study is made possible by the funding provided by Ganesha University of Education in the fiscal year of 2019.

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