

Cultural Propaganda in the Language of Upin & Ipin Cartoon Series and Its Relevance to Learning

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this study are to (1) describe the language of cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin, (2) analyze the language of cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin, and (3) analyze the relevance of the language of cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin to learning. The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative, producing descriptive data, a description of an object, condition, or system of thought, and a flash of current events. The technique employed in analyzing the data was extra lingual equivalence. The main determinant in extra lingual equivalence is the extra lingual language elements, i.e., connecting problems between language and things outside the language such as data validation using theoretical triangulation, including the use of various expert perspectives to analyze a set of data or information resulting from research in testing its validity. The results of this study revealed a description of the language of cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin, an analysis of the language of cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin in the form of verbal and non-verbal forms found in daily activities and the culture displayed in the daily life of the characters, and the relationship of the language of cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin for learning activities in the form of courtesy, customs, culture, and knowledge.

Keywords: *Language, Cartoon, Propaganda, Upin and Ipin.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Upin, Ipin, and friends is an animated cartoon series from Malaysia. This cartoon series is about twins whose parents have died, namely Upin and Ipin, aged five to seven years. They have been raised by their grandmother and older sister, Kak Ros. Upin and Ipin attend kindergarten, so the cartoon series' storyline talks about their relations, with characteristics of being innocent, funny, intelligent, and adorable. This cartoon series tells of the life of the people in a village called Kampung Durian Runtuh with the background of Malaysian culture. This cartoon series is directed by M. Nizam Abdul Rozaq and produced by the production house Les Copaque.

The cartoon series Upin and Ipin was first aired on September 14, 2007, on a TV9 television station in Malaysia and MNC TV in Indonesia. The reason for making this cartoon series is because of the response to the failure of Malaysian cartoon production in the

previous period, which could not provide high quality, while the Upin and Ipin cartoon series is of high quality and targets children to the age of ten years. The age target is only a benchmark, and all people can enjoy it because the Upin and Ipin cartoon series has a good story and advice.

In *Media Text Analysis: An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, Semiotic Analysis, and Framing Analysis*, Sobur (2006: 307) illustrates that language has a function to convey the process of interaction of knowledge and truth between the speaker and the listener and so on. Language also has a close relationship with culture since it is unique and has an output in the form of culture and at the same time as a transmitter of culture from the community concerned [1]. Language is born from the culture that develops amid society. Every society has a different culture according to its geographical location, which then produces various languages.

Furthermore, Alkhajar (2011), in *Uncovering the Relationship of Patriotism, Revolution, and the State in Indonesian Films*, reveals that films or television shows are powerful media in conveying information or messages, intentionally embedded, implanted, and conveyed to the audience. Following this statement, the film is one of the effective transmitters of information because it conveys messages through language symbols in the form of verbal and non-verbal. By watching it, the audience can receive the message [2].

In *Learning Media*, Azhar (2014) explains that every film has a phenomenon displayed and then packaged and developed, which will affect the mindset, cognitive effect, and knowledge of the audience. In the cognitive domain, films provide an introduction and differentiation in relevant motion stimulation in films, teach principles and rules through verbal expressions, and provide an understanding of the conditions of relationships in society [3].

1.1 Understanding Language, Culture, and Expressions of Cultural Propaganda

Ritonga (2012: 1) distinguishes the meaning of language into two. (1) Language is a product of speech tools in the form of sounds that have the meaning contained in the sound stream; the sound is a vibrational wave that stimulates the ear as a means of hearing, especially by humans. (2) The understanding of language based on its meaning is the content in the sound stream, which results in response to what is heard, and then the sound flow is called speech [4].

In *General Linguistics*, Chaer (2003: 30) mentions the definition of language as a verbal tool for communication, in which language is a sound symbol with arbitrary nature used by a group of people to interact and identify with each other [5].

Furthermore, Nababan (1991: 1), in *Sociolinguistics; an Introduction*, defines language as one of the human characteristics that distinguishes humans from other creatures [6].

Tarigan (1989: 4), in *Methodology of Language Teaching*, also proposes two definitions of language. (1) Language is a generative and systematic system; generative is meant to have a structure, while systematic is that language is arranged according to a certain pattern consisting of sub-systems. (2) Language is a set of symbols that are arbitrary or at will by the speaker according to where the speaker comes from [7].

In the *Indonesian Language Studio*, Syamsyddin (1986: 2) divides the understanding of language also into two. (1) Language is a tool used to form thoughts, desires, feelings, and actions, utilized to influence the interlocutor or be influenced by the interlocutor. (2) Language is a sign whose existence is clear and divided into good and bad personalities, a clear sign that comes from the family, nation, and human culture [8].

Koentjaraningrat (1989: 186) in *Community Research Methods* describes culture as an ideal form with intangible and abstract properties, which are contained in human thought; culture can be in the form of ideas, norms, beliefs, ideas, and much more [9].

Moreover, Lebra (1976:42) in *Japanese Patterns of Behavior* provides a definition of culture as a series of conceptual or general, abstract, and behavioral symbols. The behavior here can be associated with culture since it is part of a cultural or cultural manifestation that can give meaning to humans [10].

On the other hand, propaganda is a communication activity closely related to persuasion. Ellul (in Nimmo, 2006) describes two types of propaganda. (1) Political propaganda has the characteristics of involving all means by groups, parties, or governments, which is influential in achieving tactical and strategic goals through appeals with the characteristic of being short in duration and usually carried out openly. (2) Sociological propaganda is vague (hidden) propaganda, and its duration is not short. Sociological propaganda instills a certain cultural way or lifestyle in a group of people [11].

Further, culture is formed from the Sanskrit language *buddhayah* (plural form of *buddhi*/mind or reason), meaning everything that has a relationship with human reason and mind. In English, culture is absorbed from the Latin *colere*, which means working or cultivating the land or farming. In the Indonesian language, culture can be interpreted as '*kultur*'.

In the *Inculturation Process of 'Snail House' as Colonial Cultural Propaganda in the Appearance of the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam*, Hanum (2004) gives the meaning of culture as a number of certain attitudes, thoughts or minds, beliefs, and feelings, which direct, underlie, and give meaning to certain behaviors and processes in a particular system that includes norms or ideals currently prevailing in a community group [12].

Meanwhile, Rokhmawan (2016), in *Familiarizing Oral Culture and Education Providers as an Effort to Revitalize Oral-Local Literature*, reveals that the word

propaganda implies an element of calculation, a specific purpose, and is applied in specific doctrines. In a broader sense, it includes all kinds of efforts carried out consciously or unconsciously to influence the reader to accept a certain attitude of life. Propaganda in this broad sense does not have a negative connotation [13].

In conclusion, the expression of cultural propaganda is an attitude and understanding in the realm of right or wrong, developed by a person or group of people, which are given the basis of reason to persuade and convince the communicant or group of listeners to adhere to the beliefs conveyed.

1.2 Functions of Expressions of Cultural Propaganda and Language in Culture

Halliday (1973), in his *Exploration in the Function of Language*, mentions seven functions of language as follows.

1. **The regulatory function** aims to control and supervise events and regulate others. This function depends on a person's language skills in communicating in the local realm and with many people.
2. **The instrumental function** aims to serve and control environmental management and describe current events. This function has an important role in communicating since language will be influential in speaking between humans and other humans in explaining the meaning being experienced.
3. **The function of description** in a language is to provide statements conveying facts and knowledge and describe messages, which are then used as reports, to provide reality and description of an event as someone sees it.
4. **The interaction function** aims to ensure and establish ongoing communication between individuals in the continuity of communication and social interaction. In an interaction, knowledge of linguistic accents, special accents (jargon), folklore and jokes, customs, local culture, ethics, and manners in a community association is required.
5. **The individual function** aims to allow speakers to express feelings, emotions, personalities, and reactions that arise in communication activities. Someone who has a personality, of course, has a personal language function in the language of communication with other people, which is already under the realm of consciousness, feelings, culture, and customs, participating in communicating and interacting with various steps.

6. **The heuristic function** involves the use of language to obtain knowledge and information in communicating activities between humans and studying characteristics in their environment [14].

Several theories uncover the relationship between language and culture. Masinambouw (1985) argues that language and culture are systems inherent in human life because culture is a system that regulates human interaction, while language or culture is a system that functions as a means of survival [15].

Furthermore, the relationship between language and culture can be classified into two. It is a coordinating relationship, which mentions two phenomena between language and culture. The first is the relationship which states that language and culture are two different things but have a close relationship, and the second is the hypothesis of linguists Edwar Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf (in Chaer, 1995: 219). They argue that language determines not only cultural motives but also the ways of human thought so that language will influence their actions. Thus, language becomes an essential part of culture since language is an important means; with language, humans can carry out activities as social beings. In the context of communication, language plays a role as a developer of culture in various and complex ways [16].

1.3 The Relevance of Cultural Propaganda to Learning

Persuasion has a wider scope than propaganda. Maulana and Gumelar (2013: 9) outline persuasion as a process to divert the attitudes and behavior of others in an idea, event, or other objects through verbal and non-verbal language that inserts information, reasoning, and feelings. Meanwhile, the scope of propaganda is narrower than persuasion. However, both have something in common, which is motivated by the interests of the messenger [17].

Specifically, cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin has seven elements of culture universally, according to B. Malinowski's theory. (1) Language can be in the form of spoken, written, body language or sign language. All three are human works that are indispensable in life. (2) The technological system arises because of the human ability to create new goods and things to meet the needs of human life so that it is easier and more efficient to do and differentiate humans from other living things. (3) The economic/livelihood system includes all human efforts in obtaining goods or services needed to meet the needs of life. (4) Social organization

is an anthropological effort to understand the formation of society through various social groups. (5) The knowledge system is a human work that includes knowledge of nature, flora, fauna, human anatomy, human behavior, equipment and technology, and many others, which humans utilize in living their lives. (6) Religion can be referred to as belief is a system related to forces that come from outside humans. (7) Art is an element of culture related to the beauty or aesthetics possessed by every human being [18].

In the seven universal cultural elements, several character education values can be applied in learning, such as being religious, being honest, tolerance, discipline, hard work, being creative, being independent, being democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love for the homeland, appreciate achievement, friendly/communicative, love peace, love to read, care for the environment, care about social, responsibility, and others [19].

2. METHOD

The research entitled "*Cultural Propaganda in the Language of Upin & Ipin Cartoon Series and its Relevance to Learning*" used a qualitative descriptive approach. It has been adjusted to the problems raised in this research. I Made Winartha (2006: 155) expresses the meaning of this method by illustrating and shortening various conditions and analyzing the situation from various data collected in the form of observations regarding the problems studied and occurring in the field [20]. In this study, the description included the manifestation of propaganda language displayed in the form of language and culture of Upin and Ipin in everyday life.

This research was carried out for four months, from September to December 2021. The data source in this study was the cartoon series Upin and Ipin on YouTube channel. This study's data collection techniques were recording, listening, and note-taking techniques. The recording technique is an activity to capture events using tools, such as cameras, voice recorders, and others, to obtain data. Sudaryanto (1993: 133) suggests the listening technique as the data collection done by listening to the data of language users [21]. Meanwhile, according to Mahsun (2012: 3), the note-taking technique is an advanced technique used when applying the listening method using the advanced technique above [22].

Then, the data analysis in this study applied extra lingual equivalence. Sudaryanto (1993: 13) recommends a definition of equivalent in data analysis as a method

whose determinants are outside, apart, and not part of the language in question or studied [21]. In addition, extra lingual equivalence is a method that connects language problems with things outside of language. Furthermore, the data validation used was theoretical triangulation, including various perspectives from experts.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Upin and Ipin is a cartoon series originating from Malaysia, which is in great demand by the international community. In this case, Indonesia is a country not far from Malaysia so that the community can enjoy the cartoon series. Several phenomena that emerged after the screening of Upin and Ipin, among others, were the high demand for the playtime for the cartoon series, both on television and YouTube social media. Then, many children imitated the iconic sentence of Ipin's character "*Betul... betul... betul...* [That is right... right... right...]" and character Jarjit's "Marvelous!". Another phenomenon that has emerged is the rampant sales of merchandise with the Upin and Ipin cartoon series theme. Some of these phenomena prove that Malaysia has succeeded in bringing its country's identity embedded in the digital creative industry in the form of a cartoon series to the international realm. The purpose of inserting the identity is to bring the country's national interest, namely, to introduce the country to the international world.

First, *Jalur Gemilang* [the Stripes of Glory] is the name for the Malaysian national flag. The Malaysian flag consists of red, white, blue, and yellow colors, with a yellow moon and star framed in blue. Then, there are alternating red and white lines.

One of the clips of Upin, Ipin, and friends in the episode "We are One Malaysia Part 1" at minutes 07.52 to 08.01 provides an overview of Malaysian propaganda. There is a symbol of the Malaysian flag in the animation, namely the house of Tok Dalang, which is painted with the theme of the Malaysian flag.



Figure 1. Tok Dalang's house in Upin Ipin and friends in the episode 'We are One Malaysia Part 1' at minute 07.52-08.01

Tok Dalang: *"Hah, Atok tengah cat rumah!"* ["Huh, Atok is painting the house!"]

Fizi: *"Wuih, cantiknya!"* ["Wow, it is beautiful!"]

Upin: *"Wuih, rumah bendera Malaysia!"* ["Wow, Malaysian flag house!"]

Mei-Mei: *"Bukan, Rumah Jalur Gemilang!"* ["No, Stripes of Glory House!"]

Ehsan: *"Huh, sama lah tu!"* ["Huh, it is the same!"]

The next propaganda phenomenon can be seen in the footage of Upin, Ipin, and friends in the episode 'We are One Malaysia Part 1' at 08.50-08.56 minutes, where Jarjit carries the Malaysian flag.



Figure 2. Jarjit carries the Malaysian flag in Upin Ipin and friends in the episode 'We are One Malaysia Part 1' at minutes 08.50-08.56

Jarjit: *"Saya anak Malaysia! Saya Anak Malaysia! Hahahaha!"* ["I am a Malaysian! I am a Malaysian! Hahahaha!"]

Both data indicate non-verbal propaganda in the form of depictions of the Stripes of Glory or the colors of the Malaysian flag elements or the flag itself. A method can be said to be propaganda for a country if it only owns the elements in its content, such as the Malaysian flag.

The element of Stripes of Glory is again shown in the clip for the Upin and Ipin Season 12 series in the episode 'For Achievement' at 22.55 minutes, in the form

of Upin and Ipin wearing blue nightgowns with decorations in the form of stars and moons, which is an image of the Malaysian flag.



Figure 3. Upin and Ipin in Upin and Ipin Season 12 on the episode 'For Achievement' at 22.55 minutes
Upin dan Ipin: *"Kakak!!"* ["Sister !!"]



Figure 4. Upin and Ipin in Upin and Ipin Season 12 on the episode 'For Achievement' at 22.55 minutes

Furthermore, some educational values in the seven cultural elements in the footages above can be implemented in learning, namely being democratic, national spirit, and love for the homeland. The figures indirectly introduce their country of origin through the state symbol.

In this regard, *bakiak* [clogs] is traditional footwear made of wood, made by carving. Different countries have different forms and names of clogs. In Indonesia, *bakiak* is the name of Central Java, *bangkiak* (East Java), and *tarompa galuak* (West Sumatra). Malaysia also has similar footwear and calls it *terompah*. In the footage of Upin and Ipin Season 2 on the episode 'Terompah Opah', the cartoon series tries to raise the audience's interest in *terompah* by showing the shape of the footwear and how it is made. The footage has also fulfilled the element of propaganda, namely attracting the audience's interest in traditional footwear.



Figure 5. Upin and Ipin Season 2 in the episode Terompah Opah Part 1 in the 04.17 minute



Figure 6. Upin and Ipin Season 2 in the episode Terompah Opah Part 1 at 04.34 minutes
Ipin: "Cantiknya terompah opah." ["What a beautiful Grandma's clogs are."]



Figure 7. Tok Dalang makes clogs.

The educational value in the seven cultural elements found in the above clips that can be implemented in learning is creative. Visualization of how to make clogs done by Upin and Ipin characters contains the value of hard work. Similarly, when Upin and Ipin helped Tok Dalang make clogs, it contained educational value and curiosity.

This research is relevant to the study of Prayitno et al. (2019) with the title *"The Politeness Comments on the Indonesian President Jokowi Instagram Official Account Viewed from Politico Pragmatics and the Character Education Orientation in the Disruption Era"* [23]. The similarity of their study with this current study is that they both discuss propaganda. The difference between their study and this study is that they discuss political propaganda, while this study discusses cultural propaganda.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results described, it can be concluded that the language of cultural propaganda in the cartoon series Upin and Ipin does not have a negative connotation. Cultural propaganda is all kinds of ways used by communicators, both in visual and verbal forms, to influence the attitudes and behavior of others to change the view of the life of those who receive it. In the cartoon series Upin and Ipin, cultural propaganda is referred to from the seven elements of culture universally, under B. Malinowski's theory. The relevance of cultural propaganda in the Upin and Ipin cartoon series in learning is that each clip containing propaganda was classified according to the seven elements of culture universally, and then character values were found in them, so those can be embedded in learning. In addition, the cartoon series Upin and Ipin is used by Malaysia as a propaganda tool since other countries do not own the cultural elements; thus, Malaysia can insert messages in it. This cultural element is inserted into the characters' daily activities in the cartoon series. Nowadays, inserting propaganda in the digital creative industry is an effective thing that can be done to convey the information that has been designed.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Tiara Surya Madani is a student of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program, batch 2018, who became the first author as a researcher and research implementer. The tasks of the first author are to carry out research as data collectors, analyzers, and writers of article output. Meanwhile, Agus Budi Wahyudi is the 2nd author, Atiqa Sabardilla is the 3rd author, and Markamah is the 4th author. The tasks of the second, third, and fourth writers are to provide suggestions and improvements to research writing with the title *"Cultural Propaganda in the Language of the Upin & Ipin Cartoon Series and Its Relevance to Learning."*

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