



A. J. Greimas' Narrative Structure in the Animated Film *Turning Red*

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Abstract. This study discusses the narrative structure in the animated film *Turning Red* using Algirdas Julius Greimas' narrative theory. The purpose of this study is to find the actantial form and functional model of the story in the animated film. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The data source used is the animated film *Turning Red*. Collecting data using the technique of listening and noting. Data analysis was carried out with three main steps, namely data reduction, data exposure, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that: (1) the actantial form in the animated film *Turning Red* contained three schemes, namely when Mei turns into a red panda, she and her friends want to attend the 4town concert, and how Ming educates Mei with various rules and prohibitions. Each schema has six functions: sender, receiver, subject, object, helper, and opposant; (2) The functional model in this film is divided into initial situation, transformation stage, and final situation. It moves forward and sequentially.

Keywords: Greimas · Narratology · Narrative Structure · Turning Red

1 Introduction

Narratology is a study that is basically concerned with the identification and theoretical description of the formal characteristics of narrative texts. Narratology A.J. Greimas pays more attention to the action or behavior of the character than the character itself. More important than that is the relationship between each character [1]. Based on this, Greimas builds an actant model theory which consists of six functions and the relation between functions. The six functions are subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opposant. With Greimas theory, it will be easier to analyze the function of characters and their involvement in a narrative [2]. In addition, Greimas also introduced the theory of the functional model, a story model defined as a plot [3]. The functional model is divided into three stages, namely the initial situation, the transformation stage (the skill test stage, the main stage, and the glorious stage), and the final situation.

Greimas's theory of narratology has been widely used to examine various objects of literary works. Among these studies is the structural analysis research of A.J. Greimas in the novel *Lelaki Harimau* by Eka Kurniawan [4], novel *Mencari Perempuan yang Hilang* by Imad Zaki [5], short story "Al-Imra'at Ghalabati As-Syaiton" by Taufiq El-Hakim [6], short story *Ahdu asy-Syaitan* by Taufiq Al-Hakim [7], and folktale *Benayuk*

in Sepala Dalung village [8]. More than that, this narratological theory is also used to analyze stories in the Qur'an, for example in the story of the preaching of the Prophet Salih in the Qur'an Surah As-Syu'ara verses 141–158. [9] and the story of Thalut [10].

In contrast to previous studies which tend to examine the narrative structure of literary works, this research uses film as the object of study. Film as a medium of social communication formed by combining the senses of hearing and sight, contains a story which is a picture of social reality [11]. Film is a form of narrative considering the definition of narrative itself has the scope of the relationship between several events, involving characters and settings over a certain period of time. Narrative plays a big role in films as a means of delivering messages in films [12]. The film also fulfills the requirements of the narrative presented, namely the existence of a series of events, in which these events are logically related, and do not just transfer events into the story text, but go through a process of selecting and eliminating certain parts.

The object of study in this research is the animated film *Turning Red*. This is the biggest movie with the biggest premiere on Disney + globally [13]. Disney is back in the animated film industry. This time the film production company Walt Disney Pictures collaborated with Pixar Animation Studios to release a new animated film entitled *Turning Red*. Like other Disney-produced films, *Turning Red* also immediately received a good response from animated film fans. The film officially premieres on the Disney + Hotstar platform on March 11, 2022.

The film *Turning Red* tells the story of a 13-year-old girl named Mei who is caught between the obligations of being her mother's obedient child and the hustle and bustle of the teenage world. Like teenagers in general, Mei is in a phase where there are changes in her body and emotions. However, when Mei gets too excited, she will turn into a red panda [14]. This change is said to be a hereditary inheritance from the ancestors of the Mei family who are known to have a spiritual connection with the red panda. Therefore, the storyline in this film is interesting to study because it focuses on the conflict of emotional relationships between each character.

2 Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative research method. The data source in this study is the animated film *Turning Red*, directed by Domee Shi and released in 2022. The data in this study are dialogues and monologues spoken by the characters of the *Turning Red* film. The data collection technique used is the listening technique by watching the *Turning Red* film from beginning to end, and the note-taking technique to record the structure of the actants identified in the film scene. Data analysis consists of three steps, namely (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, which begins with breaking the film into certain segments. After that, determine the actant structure of each segment by analyzing the actions of the characters in the film. The structure of the actant is subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opposant. The analysis is continued by compiling a functional model based on the plot of the story movement which is divided into three stages (initial situation, transformation, and final situation), (3) drawing conclusions.

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 Algirdas Julien Greimas Narratology

Narratology is a study that is basically concerned with the identification and theoretical description of the formal characteristics of narrative texts. Narratology aims to unravel the elements or narrative structures, in the form of characters, plots, and settings in the narrative text [15]. As for what is meant by narrative text is a representative form of a series of events [1].

Greimas's narratology developed from Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism theory and Vladimir Propp's narrative theory which developed 31 functions and seven actions in fairy tales [4]. Greimas argues that Propp's division of functions can still be simplified. In addition, Greimas is also very concerned about the relationship between characters which Propp does not see at all. Basically, Greimas theory is derived from Propp's theory which has been developed and refined [1].

Greimas introduces the actant model, which is the concept of the smallest narrative unit in the text which is formed by the configuration of discursive actions. Actant is something abstract, such as love, freedom, or a group of characters [16]. Actants function to run the plot in a story. Actants occupy six functions, namely subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opposant. The six functions form three oppositions, namely subject-object, sender-receiver, and helper-opposant.

The subject is the main role in a story. The subject generally has the largest portion in the story because he has a function to direct the story. The object is the goal to be achieved or owned by the subject. Objects can be objects, values, or aspired states. The sender is the driver of the story. He who pushes the subject to be able to get the object. The receiver is something or someone who receives the object from the sender. The helper acts as a supporter of the subject in his effort to get the object. The opponent is the opposite of supporter. Opponents act to hinder the subject's efforts to get the object [1].

In addition, Greimas also introduced a story model as a plot called the functional model, a theory about the occurrence of events. A functional model is a schema that shows the movement of the story from the beginning to the end. The functional model has a function to describe the role of the subject in carrying out the tasks specified by the sender [4]. Functional model structure is divided into three parts, the initial situation, the transformation stage, and the final situation.

The first part or the initial situation is a situation where a desire arises in the sender who then assigns the subject to get what he wants, or the object. The second part or transformation is further divided into three stages. First, the proficiency test stage, the stage where the subject begins to go to fulfill his task of getting the object. At this stage, supporters and barriers appear in the story. Second, the main stage, namely the stage where the subject managed to get the object after winning from the obstacle. Third, the glorious stage, the stage where the subject submits the object he gets to the sender.

The third part or the final situation is the return of the balance of the situation after the completion of all problems [4].

3.2 Actantial Schematics in the Animated Film *Turning Red*

The *Turning Red* film can be divided into three segments based on the conflicts that occur in the story. The first segment talks about Mei who turns into a red panda. The second segment is the story of Mei and her friends who want to attend a 4town concert in their city. While the third segment talks about how Ming educates Mei with various rules and prohibitions.

3.2.1 Segment 1

The first segment of this film talks about Mei's difficulty in controlling her emotions to stay calm so that she doesn't turn into a red panda. In this first segment, which occupies the sender function is the change of Mei into a red panda. It is said that this change has been passed down from generation to generation in the daughters of her family since their ancestors received help from the red panda god. The subject in this segment is Mei, the main character who underwent that change. Mei who found it difficult with the changes that occurred to her body wanted her body to stop changing. Mei's desire occupies the function of the object in this segment. While the receiver is Mei herself.

The helper in the first segment is Ming, who has experienced similar things and knows how to stop the change, namely by performing rituals. Other supporters are female members of Mei's family, namely her grandmother and aunts. They showed their support by coming and helping with the sealing ritual. As for the opponent in this segment, Mei's emotions are never calm so she keeps changing. It is said that before the ritual is performed, the way not to turn into a panda is to control the emotions to be as calm as possible. Another opponent is Mei's friends. They said that they liked Mei more after she could turn into a cute panda. Mei's friends are what help Mei control her transformation into a panda.

The scheme of this actant is as shown in Fig. 1.

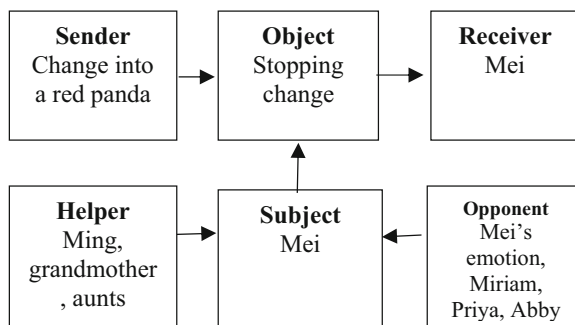


Fig. 1. Actant scheme when Mei turns into a red panda.

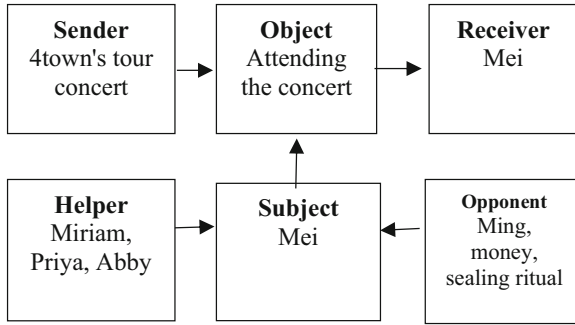


Fig. 2. Actant scheme when Mei and her friends want to attend the 4town concert

3.2.2 Segment 2

The second segment talks about the desire of Mei and her friends to watch the concert of their favorite boy band, 4town, which will be held in their city. The sender for this segment is boyband 4town’s North American tour concert. The object that was sent is the desire to attend a concert. The subject is Mei. The receiver in this segment is also Mei.

The helpers in this segment are Mei’s friends who also want to attend the concert, namely Miriam, Priya, and Abby. The ones that occupy the inhibiting function are Ming, money, and sealing rituals. Ming is told that he really doesn’t like boyband 4town and flatly refuses Mei’s request for permission to attend the concert. Because she did not get a permit, Mei also did not get money to buy concert tickets which were quite expensive for teenagers her age. The concert also turned out to take place on the same night as the night of the red moon, when the sealing ritual had to be performed so Mei had to choose between attending the concert or performing the sealing ritual.

The scheme of this actant is as shown in Fig. 2.

3.2.3 Segment 3

The third segment talks about Mei’s mother, Ming, who wants her child to grow up to be perfect and flawless. The sender in this last segment is an educational method used by Ming’s mother, or Mei’s grandmother. Ming has a strict educational pattern and is full of rules. It was then instinctively imitated by Ming in educating Mei. He wants perfection in Mei’s life, perfect grades, submissive and unrepentant behavior, and good friends. Such perfection occupies the function of objects in this segment. The subject is Ming and the recipient is Mei.

Ming’s mother and Ming’s husband or Mei’s father, Jin, play the supporting roles. Meanwhile, the opponents in this segment are Mei herself and her friends. As the story progresses, Mei begins to feel burdened by her mother’s expectations and begins to do things her mother doesn’t allow, such as lying and raising money for concert tickets by taking advantage of Mei’s transformation into a red panda. Mei’s friends supported Mei in the rebellion.

The scheme of this actant is as shown in Fig. 3.

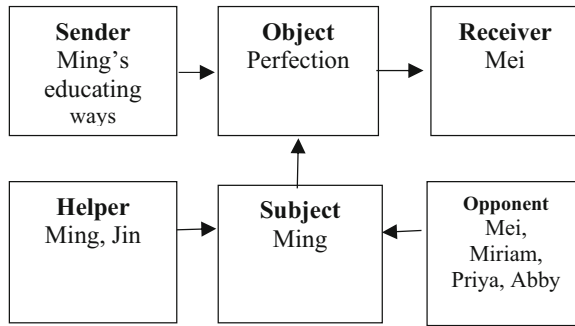


Fig. 3. Actant's scheme about Ming in educating Mei

3.3 Functional Model in the Animated Film *Turning Red*

After describing the functions of the actants in the *Turning Red* film, it can be seen that the storyline in this film is advanced and sequential. To understand the movement of the story line more clearly, the functional model is divided into three parts; 1) initial situation; 2) transformation stage; and 3) the final situation.

3.3.1 Initial Situation

The initial situation in this film is when Mei wakes up and finds herself turned into a panda. Then continued with the scene where Abby gave the news that 4town would be holding a concert in their city.

3.3.2 Transformation Stage

The transformation stage in the animated film *Turning Red* can be divided into three parts. First, the skill level. This proficiency stage takes place when Mei tries to control her emotions so she doesn't turn into a panda. Meanwhile, Mei's friends persuade Mei to use her cute panda figure to make money which will later be used to buy concert tickets. Second, the main stage. This stage occurred when Mei refused to seal her panda and fled to the stadium where the concert was taking place. In response to Mei's defiance, Ming turns into a red panda and chases after Mei. Third, the glorious stage. The glorious stage in this film is when all the characters help each other to seal the Ming red panda. As for Mei, she is determined to keep the red panda in her body.

3.3.3 Final Situation

In the final situation, everything returns to its original state. Mei remains a teenager with good grades and loyal friends. While Ming tries to understand Mei better and is no longer too strict in educating her.

4 Conclusion

Based on the structural analysis of the animated film *Turning Red* with the theory of A.J. Greimas, it can be seen that there are three models of actant in this film which are

taken from the main conflict in the storyline. The main story driver in this film is May. It can be seen from May which occupies most of the actant functions, Mei as the recipient in three segments, May as the subject in two segments, and May as inhibitor in one segment. Based on the arrangement of functional models, it is known that the storyline in the animated film *Turning Red* is a forward and sequential plot.

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