Cartoon Character in Animation Media for Preserving Folklore Traditional Art in Surakarta

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Abstract. This study aims to preserve spoken traditional art, especially folklore in Surakarta area and to use it as a character education media for young generation through cartoon character animation since folklore needs audiences' visualization. This study is an application research containing five stages, namely observation, collecting information and idea, elaboration for determining main idea through analysis, integration, abstraction, generalization, transmutation, synthesis to make the concept of artwork, realizing the concept in various art media, and finalization to complete the process in the form of artwork. The data were animation characters and folklores obtained by field observation and interview with some informants, namely cultural observer, historian, cartoonist, and expert in animation. Data validity test employed data triangulation techniques in terms of data source and theory triangulations. The result of this study is that cartoon characters as media for delivering folklore through animation are disseminated into some educational institutions, governmental institutions and communities in Surakarta. These animation media of folklore in terms of cartoon character are supposed to be used as a media to introduce and to preserve folklore tradition to society, especially young generation in Surakarta.

Keywords: *cartoon character, animation media, folklore, preserving traditional art.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Many young generations do not know about folklore that were born and developed in society before such as Jaka Tingkir, Tangkuban Perahu, Ajisaka and other folkstories in Indonesia. Many folklores contain philosophical meanings that are beneficial for daily life [1]. Considering the importance of spoken tradition in constructing young generation characters, we should preserve our culture. Hedonism and individualism attach community life, especially young generation [2]. Solution to avoid and to decrease them is by the employment of traditional culture art in terms of folklore. Folklores are one of indigenous culture expression in Indonesia. Indigenous languages that become media for spoken tradition is one of traditional culture. These languages are absolutely appropriate to express related indigenous cultures. Indonesian

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literature heritage is generally divided into three, namely spoken, written and modern literature [3]. The contents of traditional art existing and developing in Indonesia, such as folklore, dance, wayang, and others mostly contain character educations, a transformation of life values in one's personality realized into his/her attitude [4].

One effort to raise the existence of folklore is by using animation for young generation. Animation is one of the creative industry sub-sectors in which its business opportunity is promising and able to provide a huge number of job opportunities of creative job seekers [5]. Animation industry is not only targeted children, but also teenagers and adults. Animation industry market can extend to various fields, including architecture and interior design, archeology, serial film, advertisement, education, games, art and multimedia industry, such as web design [6]. Animation field cannot be separated from character as a media to convey the message of the story. The character development will become an interesting experience to create and develop an original cartoon character. Each character also must have particular appearance, personality, features, and behavior [7]. Some characters in animation are used cartoon, so cartoon and animation are related each other. Cartoons are created from an idea started from created reality. Cartoons are portrayed not only to give information, but also to give dimension so that created reality seems to be colorful and makes the audiences smile and laugh, or sometimes, sad.

In relation to general definition, cartoons are humorous pictures appearing in mass media, which only contain humor without social critics [8]. Another definition of culture refers to a representation or symbolic picture, containing satire, joke, or humor. Cartoons usually appear in publication periodically and mostly underline political or public problems. However, social problems also usually become targets, such as community's habits, sports, or one's life. Cartoons in printed media can be differentiated into three, namely editorial, gag and comic cartoons [9][10]. From its content, it is clearly known that humor cartoons or gag cartoons must provide humor. What is performed in those cartoons are intended to make audiences laugh or at least smile, not to insult or criticize. Cartoons are usually shown in a frame and have no continuous characters. However, there is character used more than once. Cartoons do not use "balloon" like comics, but usually employ caption below the frame to show the problems. Cartoons are pictures that have characteristics and function as humor or satire expressing fictive stories or actual problems. Pictures are created to make the audiences both laugh and think. As an object, pictures are actual events. Consequently, cartoons has to be understood as media used by cartoonist to catch and interpret thoughtfulness in community.

Media as a means of communication to make this study success and able to deliver the messages in folklores to wide-range community, especially young generation, are needed in terms of animation with cartoon characters [11]. Based on this background, an experiment is developed to find solution in terms of designing content of folklore with the employment of animation as media for delivering information that are beneficial, easy to access and fun, supported with interactive multimedia (audio-text, picture, animation, video), so audiences (community) become more interested in watching it [12]. Animation media in terms of cartoon characters are supposed to be appropriate with targeted segmentation, namely young generation in Surakarta, so educational aspect and preserving traditional art of folklore can be reached.

2. METHOD

This study was an application research containing five stages, namely observation, collecting information and idea, elaboration to determine main ideas through analysis, integration, abstraction, generalization and transmutation, synthesis to realize the concept of

artworks, realizing the concept into some art media, and finalization in terms of artworks. The aims of this study are to create applied art in relation to animation technology as alternative media of folklore development for young generation through studying cartoon characters, plots, messages, and settings that are appropriate with the concept of story. The data were cartoon character and folklore obtained with the employment of field observation and interview with reference to some informants, namely cultural observers, historians, cartoonists, and experts in animation. The analysis process from many source of data in terms of explanation, literature review, and interview was conducted by interactive model. Each analysis component contain some stages that are data collection, data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion. The mechanism of analysis process as proposed by Miles and Huberman [13] will be carried out continuously as those cycles interact with components until the information are complete [14]. Data validity test utilized data triangulation, namely data source and theory triangulation. As a consequence, animation media containing folklores that are interesting to be watch by young generation are obtained.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Folklore in Surakarta as Cultural Expression Media and Local Character Education

Folklores in Surakarta, where spoken culture are definitely in a great quantity, but most of them are not well-documented, need to be developed in terms of story, presentation, and animation media usage. In addition, to make young generation accept folklore, adjustment and innovation are needed. In relation to the fact that folklore is one of the spoken literature, it is indicated that through spoken literature, ancient community or ancestors express their feeling and thought about life. Love emotion is expressed through sentimental poetries, and wild animals are domesticated with using spell. The origin of area name, custom and other heritages are expressed through myths, tales, and stories [15]. In addition, based on the idea, tales are divided into six, namely traditional, futuristic or modern, education, fable, historical, and therapy tales. Traditional tales are tales with ideas originally from folklore or the origin of a place. Futuristic tales are tales with ideas originally from imagination about future. Educational tales are tales with ideas accidentally created to change one's behavior. Fable tales are tales with ideas originally from animal. Historical tales are tales with source of idea from the history of figures. Therapy tales are tales with ideas to help people with trauma [16].

3.2. Design Method

Animation technology is now not only used for entertainment but also used as media in educational field. According to Heinich, et. al., as a learning media, animations are definitely able to ease in delivering abstract concept and to substitute real experiences. Animation technology develops as the development of computer technology. Hence, traditional animation technique change into computer. Some software application are created to support 3 Dimension animation production, such as Alias Power Animator, Soft-Image, Maya, 3D Max, etc. Meanwhile, for a wide scale effect house like film, animation studio tends to be used software they develop, known as Propherty Software [17]. Designing animation with folklore contents can be considered as an effort to solve problems with clear targets as educational media and effort to preserve that traditional art. A design can be viewed as an effort to formulate the very objective physical elements and become an action and initiative to change human creation [18]. In general, designing animation through cartoon character with folklore contents includes five stages, as follows.

3.2.1. Preparation Stage in terms of Observation, Collecting Information and Idea

The application of purpose, benefits and scope of this design is determined in the writing form, in which it can utilize in the application of animation with cartoon character into folklore content, and then selecting the concept of scene is to make folklore perfect and appropriate to the purpose as the development of folklore in Surakarta.

3.2.2. Elaboration Stage to Determine Main Idea through Analysis, Integration, Abstraction, Generalization and Transmutation

Folklores as basic ideas in designing animation with cartoon character will be created through the stage of basic idea, designed and planned with the adjustment to purpose and benefit in draft. The stages begins from the idea of selecting the scene, character, setting, and background formulated in an animation prototype.

3.2.3. Synthesis Stage to Realize the Concept of Artworks

Designing animation through producing prototype of folklore animation serial is conducted by modelling cartoon character, in which stage of creating objects will be needed in the next stage [19]. The next stage is rendering as the last sage of the process of creating folklore with animation of cartoon character, in which rendering is a process of final calculation of all stages in making oicture in animation of wayang beber [20]. In rendering process, all data obtained in modelling process, animation, texturing and lighting will be translated into output.

3.2.4. Concept Realization Stage into Various Art Media

The product of animation design is tested in some condition to find its weaknesses. This stage will involve the role of community, government, artists, figure community, animation practitioners, academicians, and related party as feedback.

3.2.5. Finalization Stage in terms of Artworks

After conducted the test and considered to fulfill criteria and standards, prototype of cartoon character animation media with folklore content are spread to some educational institutions, governmental institutions, and communities in Surakarta to be used as media in introducing traditional art to communities and students [21][22].

4. CONCLUSION

Traditional arts as ancestors' heritage, are very valuable, especially folklore. Folklores can be used not only for cultural preservation and development but also for exploration in the development of folklore through animation media with cartoon character. As an effort to develop folklore as source of inspiration, folklores are important to be developed and preserved. The identification on folklore shows that this spoken culture can be collaborated with media in terms of cartoon character animation adjusted to young generations. The result of this research is animation in terms of cartoon characters with folklore contents aiming to develop and to be used as alternative media for preserving traditional art. The role of government, community and academicians is to collaborate in preserving and developing folklore in Surakarta. The development of this work can also be done by other media that are more varied and adjusted to technology development, so the existence of folklore can be maintained.

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