

# ESTABLISHING THE GENERIC STRUCTURE POTENTIAL OF BIDAYUH BAU-JAGOI ORAL FOLK NARRATIVES, *DONDAN*

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to establish the genre status of the Bidayuh oral folk narrative, known as *dondan*, with a focus on the Bau-Jagoi Bidayuh group. In order to analyse the genre status of the *dondan*, the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) is used. The analyses revealed that the *dondan* has a similar GSP to English Fairy Tales but differs in terms of one of the elements, the Placement, which is an obligatory element in the *dondan*. The study also revealed that the Semantic Attributes which realises these GSP elements are more culturally based. Although the GSP of the *dondan* is similar to English Fairy Tales, it is the optional elements that reflect the culturally related elements of the *dondan* especially the communicative purpose to educate and disseminate cultural knowledge. Future work on oral folk narrative should include in-depth analysis of lexicogrammatical items.

**Keywords:** oral folk narrative, *dondan*, Bidayuh, genre, Generic Structure Potential

## Introduction

The Bidayuh is one of the many ethnic groups residing in Sarawak, Malaysia, the eastern Malaysian state on the south-western of Borneo Island. Believed to have originated from the Sungkung area of West Kalimantan, Bidayuh groups consist of the three major groups, namely, the Bukar-Sadong, Bau-Jagoi and Biatah group

(Rensch, Rensch, Noeb, & Ridu, 2012). This study focuses on the Bau-Jagoi group whose villages could be found in the Bau District in Sarawak.

Traditionally, the Bidayuh Bau-Jagoi community held strongly to the traditional religion or *odat oma*. *Odat oma* was a very important entity within the Bidayuh community, consisting of rules established by the priest and priestess to ensure a balance between the people, nature and spiritual world as the beliefs of the Bidayuh revolved mostly around nature and the spiritual world. The traditional Bidayuh community is an animistic community due to their beliefs in the existence of spirits around them. They are often referred to as the “pagan” Bidayuh, to differentiate them from the Christian and Muslim Bidayuh.

### **Bidayuh Dondan**

Bidayuh oral folk narratives or *dondan*, was one of the means for the traditional Bidayuh to disseminate important values, beliefs and customs (Ridu, Jitab, & Noeb 2001). They relied solely on oral means to pass down their cultural heritage and knowledge to each other, especially their children (Ridu et al., 2001). *Dondan* is an emic term used by the Bidayuh to refer to a large number of oral tales, in the form of narratives, which would be classified by most non-Bidayuh scholars as ancient stories, myths, legends and fables. Those responsible in disseminating the *dondan* were usually elderly folks who were regarded as knowledgeable by the people. According to Ridu et al. (2001), *dondan* were usually told at night either in the longhouse gallery (*plaman botang romin*) to a large and varied audience, or in the *bori umoh* or garden house by an elder woman to her children and grandchildren or in the *Baruk*, (the ceremonial house) to teenage boys and men (Ridu et al., 2001).

*Dondan* was regarded as a tool for educating the youngsters to help them learn important moral values as well as a way to understand the Bidayuh cultural identity and way of life. However, due to modern advancement, the practice of storytelling and the *dondan* itself is losing its place in the Bidayuh community. It is often regarded as irrelevant by the younger generations of Bidayuh, in fact most Bidayuh children are more familiar with Western folk stories (Campbell, Ting & Chuah, 2012). Besides that, most Bidayuh nowadays are either Christians or Muslims and have moved away from their ancestors’ animistic beliefs. The younger generations of Bidayuh do not know what a *dondan* is or have never heard of any *dondan* (Campbell, et al., 2012). This is a sad loss for the Bidayuh community because the *dondan* could be a rich source of cultural knowledge. The loss of it would result in the loss of valuable knowledge which may be exclusive to the Bidayuh.

This study, therefore, examined the Generic Structure Potential or GSP of the *dondan* together with the Semantic Attributes which realises the elements of the GSP. The analysis of the GSP would provide insight not only on the structure of the *dondan* as a genre but also provide a more systematic analysis of the content of the *dondan* as an important carrier of lesson, moral values and cultural heritage of the Bidayuh.

## Folklore Theory on Oral Narrative

Oral folk narratives are stories which are usually passed down from one generation to the next through oral communication and are typically simple in structure, language and theme (Lwin, 2009). They are generally associated with stories that explained the phenomenon of the world and are created by a particular community in an attempt to understand the world around them, especially those related to the natural and spiritual world (Lynch-Brown & Tomlison, 1993).

In the olden days, before the advancement of modern technology, oral folk narrative was one of the media to entertain and educate the people. It was a tool used to transfer knowledge especially cultural knowledge such as the customs, beliefs, morals and values which were deemed important by the people. This was especially common in societies which did not have any formal writing or education system (Babalola & Onanuga, 2012; Reese, 2007). Therefore, oral folk narratives serve to communicate to members of a community the cultural knowledge and to teach moral values.

Oral folk narratives consist of other types of narratives, namely, myths, legends, folktales and fairy tales. Studies and theories surrounding oral folk narrative claimed that many elements in oral folk narratives are symbolic. They are known and understood only by the people of the community. Jung (1970) believed that the symbols within these oral folk narratives expressed the ancient models of the human soul and spirits. In other words, oral folk narratives are rich in symbols and metaphors which are exclusive to the people.

Oral folk narrative is also seen as a reflection of the community's life and customs. As stated by Holbek (1987), "every element [in a fairy tale] may be read as pertaining to real life" (p. 409). By analysing the GSP and Semantic Attributes of Bidayuh *dondan*, this reflection of the Bidayuh community's life and customs can be explored systematically to provide a better understanding of the Bidayuh community as well as the function of *dondan* as a tool to disseminate culture and moral values.

## Methodology

Before this study was conducted, permission was obtained from the relevant authorities including the *Penghulu* or leader of the Bau-Jagoi area and the *ketua kampung* or headman of the villages of Kampung Stass and Kampung Skibang, Bau.

It was crucial to identify storytellers whom the villagers regarded as prolific since this study focused on the oral folk narratives of the Bau-Jagoi Bidayuh. This was done by conducting informal interviews with the villagers including the headmen of the two villages. Based on the suggestion of the people, two storytellers were identified, one from Kampung Skibang and one from Kampung Stass. Both gentlemen were in their late 80s during the time of this study. The times and dates for the storytelling sessions were agreed upon. The storytellers preferred evening time, after dinner because it was the time when everyone was resting and needed some form of entertainment, a habit which went back to the olden days when there were no technologies to entertain them.

Altogether 12 *dondan* were recorded in this study. The *dondan* were then transcribed and later translated into both Bahasa Melayu and English. Bahasa Melayu because it is the closest language in terms of structure and vocabulary to Bidayuh, and English, for the purpose of discussion. The *dondan* were then analysed using the GSP framework as proposed by Hasan (1984) to identify the structure of the *dondan* as a genre as well as Bhatia's (1993) concept of communicative purposes to determine the communicative purposes of this particular genre within the Bidayuh community.

The next section explains the GSP framework, followed by a general discussion of GSP of the Bidayuh *dondan* and a detailed discussion on the different elements of the GSP.

### **Generic Structure Potential: Establishing a Genre**

A genre is defined as having a goal or a purpose that needs to be disseminated and transferred to members of a community, and in the context of this study, a cultural community. According to Martin (1984) a genre is "a staged goal-oriented purposeful activity in which speakers engages as members of our culture" (p. 25) accomplished or realised through the language of the text (Martin, 1984). Hyland (2002) reiterates that genres "are abstract, socially recognized ways of using language."

Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) recognise genre as "communicative events" having some forms of "communicative purposes":

Genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. (Bhatia, 1993, p. 13)

By studying genre, the roles and functions of the texts would also be looked into with regards to their social and cultural context. Both Bhatia (1993) and Swales (1990) highlight the importance of achieving or realising the communicative purpose(s) of the text through the use of patterned structures or moves which in turn is realised through the language. Bhatia (1993) argues that genre analysis allows one to "understand how a particular genre defines, organizes and finally construct social reality" (p. 8) and that genre analysis attempts to explain language in use and the communicative purposes by looking at language above the clause level and taking into account the social and cultural context of the text.

Genre, according to Halliday (1978), needs to be analysed by taking into account the concept of generic structure, which is common to the texts that belong to the same genre. The concept of generic structure could be located within the concept of register. Halliday (1985) explained that Generic Structure Potential (GSP) was developed by Hasan (1984) to explain how the structural unity of a text is accomplished. It covers both syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis looking at the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical patterns within a text and how these accomplish the communicative purpose of the text.

Hasan (1984) developed the GSP model in the light of Systemic Functional Linguistic based on Halliday’s (1985) notion of register. According to Hasan (1984), all genres have a generic structure potential that is a linear combination of three types of elements: obligatory, optional and recursive in a certain order. The obligatory elements and their sequence determined the genre of the text, while the optional elements, which may or may not appear in the text, adds variation to the texts in the same genre. Recursive refers to the ordering of these elements including iteration of these two elements.

Hasan (1984) analysed English nursery tales as a genre by analysing the GSP of these tales. Hasan (1989) identified the moves within these nursery tales and how these moves were structured to create a genre which was uniquely a nursery tale. The obligatory elements in the nursery tales were Initiating Events, Sequent Events and Final Events. These events were obtained by analysing the recurrent patterns of these elements. The optional elements in the nursery tales were the Placement, Finale and Moral.

Based on her analysis of classic English nursery tales, Hasan (1984) proposed the GSP of nursery tales as follows:

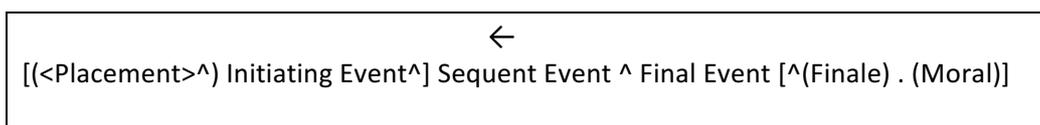


Figure 1. Proposed GSP of nursery tales (Hasan, 1984)

Table 1  
The symbols and notions of the GSP

Symbol	Meaning
No round bracket	Obligatory elements
( )	Optional elements
<>	Elements whose lexicogrammatical realization may be included or interspersed with the lexicogrammatical realization of some other element(s)
[ ]	Boundaries of a limitation of sequence.
^	Relative sequence; cannot precede the other
.	The placing of the element can be reversed
←	Possibility of iteration of the element

Hasan (1984) stated that the GSP of a text was realised by the Semantic Attribute or meaning within the Events. This referred to what the different Event contained and what they talked about.

Tan (2009) analysed the Semantic Attributes and lexicogrammatical items of the Event sections of Grimm’s fairy tales, stating that these Semantic Attributes realises the elements of GSP, particularly the obligatory elements. Tan (2009) also analysed the lexicogrammatical items which realise the Semantic Attributes. However, for the purpose of this paper, only the GSP and Semantic Attributes are focussed on. This paper also examines the optional elements.

**Establishing the Generic Structure Potential of the Bidayuh *Dondan***

The analysis of the 12 *dondan* revealed that the GSP for these *dondan* are similar to Hasan’s (1984) findings on the GSP of nursery tales. The GSP of the 12 *dondan* are shown in Table 2.

Table 2  
The GSP for all 12 *dondan*

Folk narratives ( <i>Dondan</i> )	GSP
1. <i>Lomow</i>	P^ IE ^SE^ E^FE
2. <i>Pironuk Odi Nuboh</i>	P ^ IE ^SE^FE
3. <i>Manuk Ruwui</i>	P^ IE ^SE^FE^B
4. <i>Oyung duwoh Diyak</i>	P^ IE ^SE^ FE^B
5. <i>Ronai</i>	P^ E^ IE ^SE^ FE^B
6. <i>Pironuk Jaji Raja</i>	P ^ IE ^SE^FE
7. <i>Sikau Bungak</i>	P^ IE ^SE ^FE^M
8. <i>Siak Bigimang duwoh Asang Bigana</i>	P^IE^SE^FE^F^IE^SE^FE
9. <i>Sibunyuah</i>	P^IE^SE^FE^F^IE^SE^FE
10. <i>Do’ot</i>	P^IE ^SE^ FE^B
11. <i>Ayang</i>	P^IE ^SE^ FE^B
12. <i>Tiburit</i>	P^IE ^SE^ FE^B

P = Placement, IE = Initiating Event, SE = Sequent Event, FE= Final Event, E = Explanation, M= Moral, B = Belief, F = Finale

Based on the pattern in Table 2, the GSP of the Bidayuh Bau-Jagoi *dondan* can generally be summarised as shown in Figure 2.

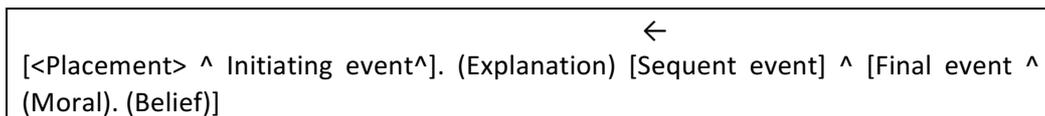


Figure 2. The proposed GSP for the *dondan*

The obligatory elements of these *dondan* are Placement, Initiating Events, Sequent Event and Final Event. In Hasan’s (1984) study, Placement is an optional element; however, this is not the case for the Bidayuh *dondan*. Placement is an obligatory element in the *dondan* studied.

Two of the *dondan*, *Dondan Siak Bigimang duwoh Asang Bigana* and *Dondan Sibunyuah* however, showed a different structure (Figure 3):

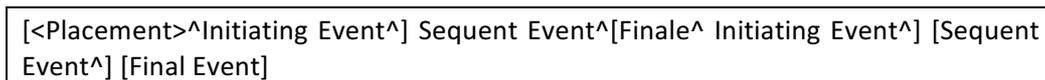


Figure 3. GSP of *Dondan Siak Bigimang duwoh Asang Bigana* and *Dondan Sibunyuah*

The two *dondan* are part of a longer narrative and are considered as legend by the Bidayuh Bau-Jagoi community. They are stories of Bidayuh warriors. In fact,

*Dondan Sibunyuah* is a continuation of *Dondan Siak Bigimang duwoh Asang Bigana*. A closer analysis of these *dondan* revealed that they both consisted of a number of short related stories within them, unlike the other eight *dondan* which consist of one complete story on their own.

### Elements of the *Dondan Gsp* and Their Semantic Attributes

As stated in the earlier section, the obligatory elements of the *dondan GSP* are Placement, Initiating Event, Sequent Event and Final Event while the optional elements are Beliefs, Explanation and Moral. The following discussion will focus on the obligatory elements first followed by the optional elements.

#### *The Obligatory Elements of the Dondan GSP*

##### **Placement.**

The Placement element of the GSP relates to the part where the characters are introduced, as well as the spatial and temporal elements of the story (Patpong, 2011). Within Placement, there is Person Particularisation, which introduces the protagonist and Framing, which describes the temporal and spatial frame of the tale (Hasan 1984).

Placement in the *dondan* consist of the Semantic Attribute of Person Particularisation. This is where the storyteller introduces the characters and provides some background information on the main characters. For example, in *Dondan Lomow*, a brief introduction of Lomow as an orphan with a deformed appearance is given.

*Lomow noh tie eh neh, wat itih yoh noh tie eh neh. Sinok eh ogik pak eh samak eh doik, onak tumang, onak patu. Lomow noh tie eh neh, dah lah butak, yoh bikuku, ro'o da'ang bori sadik-sadik eh, doik ro'o duwoh nya'a. Sinok eh ga bikutuak tiban nya'a. Onak miskin, onak butak.*

Lomow is an orphan. Lomow is blind, disfigured and stays alone in his house. His mother does not open the door for anyone.

*(Dondan Lomow)*

In *Dondan Manuk Ruwui*, the storyteller relates the story of how a human Princess becomes a half human half pheasant being while in *Dondan Ronai*, the storyteller provides a description of who Ronai is and how she became pregnant by drinking the magical water from the yam leaf. Another example is in *Dondan Sikau Bungak* whereby the main character, Sikau Bungak is introduced as the son of a farmer. The births of the main characters are explained in both *Dondan Siak Bigimang duwoh Asang Bigana* and *Dondan Sibunyuah*.

In three of the *dondan*, *Dondan Pironuk Jaji Raja*, *Dondan Pironuk Odi Nuboh* and *Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak*, the introduction of the characters is very brief. For example, in *Dondan Pironuk Jaji Raja* and *Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak*, only the

different types of animals are mentioned to show that they are the characters in the *dondan*:

*Singa, rimoung, gajah, yoh mok do'ot, rusa, pironuk*

Lion, tiger, elephant and also wild boar, deer, mousedeer

(*Dondan Pironuk Jaji Raja*)

*Sikali ogik oyung duwoh diyak mok tu'i bidingan*

Once monkey and tortoise have been friends for long

(*Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak*)

The same can also be seen in *Dondan Pironuk Odi Nuboh* and *Dondan Do'ot*, where only a brief statement is given in introducing the main character in the *dondan*.

*Dek diok with wat eh neh, pironuk noh bikayuh olud eh, sadik-sadik eh diok neh, yoh nang eh.*

This is how it was, mouse deer sailed its boat, all alone, singing

(*Dondan Pironuk Odi Nuboh*)

*dondan do'ot noh tie eh neh, pabila do'ot noh motak odi man dek umoh eh. man dek umoh samak eh.*

The story of wild boar is when wild boar goes and eats at someone's paddy field.

(*Dondan Do'ot*)

The Semantic Attribute of Framing, which according to Hasan (1984, 1996) specifies the temporal and spatial description of a story, is not explicitly mentioned within the Placement element. The audience can assume that the setting is in the jungle or in the village (at home), based on what happened in the *dondan*:

*Duwoh na'an tuan puteri odi nyukuop ikien.*

Two Princesses went to catch fish

(*Dondan Manuk Ruwui*)

For instance, in the phrase *odi nyukuop ikien* in the excerpt above, means "to catch fish using a tool known as *sukuop*". It is a type of triangular basket used to catch fish in a river or stream in the jungle, usually not far from the village. It is not a fishing tool for catching fish at sea. This indicates that the event happened near a stream, not far from the village, most probably in the jungle.

There are also other evidences in the *dondan* which showed that the events happened in the jungle:

*limoung butak, komin modon, ba tian eh limoung butak, koming mok bulah tonga topat eh ponu. nyoh mok kayak toban limoung noh ponu. tu'ui-tu'ui eh yoh moh nog tolun, samah bitoban odop eh duwoh ponu, samah bilabu dek aluang banir.*

Blind tiger, *modon* goat, they left their home town. Not long after that, they reached the jungle, together they walk, together they sat by the roots of a banyan tree.

(*Dondan Siak Bigimang duwoh Asang Bigana*)

*dondan do'ot noh tie eh neh, pabila do'ot noh motak odi man dek umoh eh. man dek umoh samak eh.*

The story of wild boar is when wild boar goes and eats at someone's paddy field.

(*Dondan Do'ot*)

*Banir* refers to the huge roots of the banyan tree which could only be found in the jungle while *umoh* refers to the rice field which are also usually situated near jungle.

The analysis of the Placement element indicates that the Semantic Attributes of Person Particularisation and Framing exist in Bidayuh *dondan*. Both Semantic Attributes are brief and simple. The spatial frame can be a place or places familiar to the Bidayuh community; either in their own villages or in the jungle near their villages. This shows that the spatial frame has to be a location known to the community to enable them to relate to it. The temporal frame on the other hand, is not explicitly stated.

### ***Initiating events.***

One of the obligatory elements in fairy tales is Initiating Event (Hasan, 1984). The analysis of the *dondan*, based on Hasan (1984) and Tan (2009), reveals that *dondan*'s GSP are realised by Semantic Attributes that are similar to Tan's (2009) with some variation. Figure 4 shows the Initiating Event that gives rise to the beginning of the *dondan*.

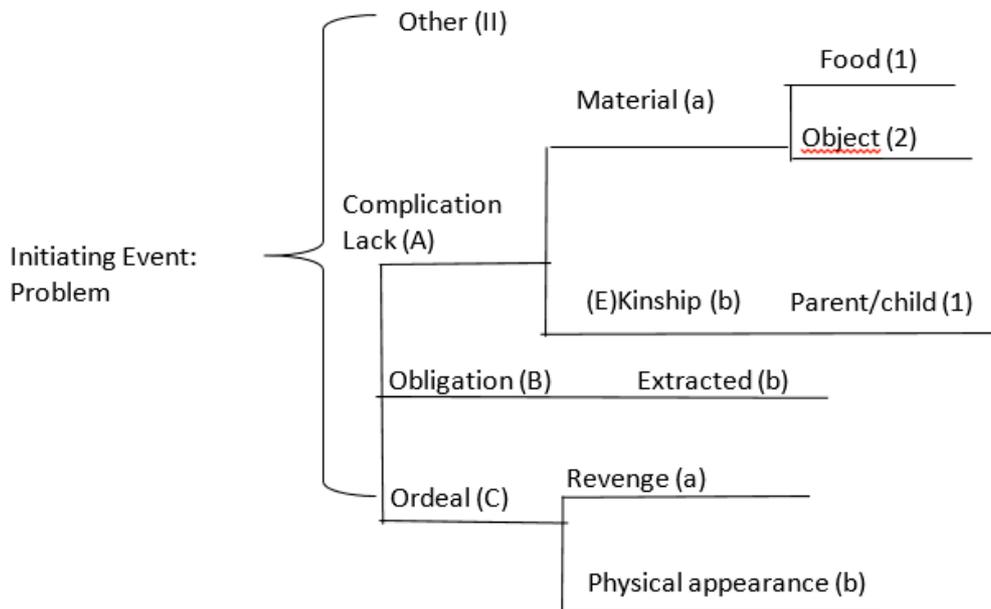


Figure 4. Semantic Attributes of Initiating Events in the *dondan*

Each of the Initiating Event begins with a situation that triggers a Problem indicating that the focal point of the *dondan* is a problem. Based on the analysis of the Initiating Events in the *dondan*, these problems arise due to the needs of the main characters. The Problems in the *dondan* are due to (A) Lack, (B) Obligation and (C) Ordeal.

The most common problem found in the *dondan* is (A) Lack. There are two types of Lacks (A) in the *dondan*: the lack of material things (a) and kinship (b). Lack of food (1) is the commonest form of problem. The following excerpts from the *dondan* indicates the Lack of food:

*Tibulit tukiak tanak, yoh man tanak. Maad ke rongit kanih, yoh man tubik. Yoh suak man tubik. Tibulit mo' mu'un ka'ang tanak. Oni kowo' de man pak eh pe nyam paguh ngan to' man danih, doik nak de nyam to' man tanak datik, modud nyam otin nyek dak eh, ponai bijak nyam bobak nye dak eh. Pitar nyam nyek dak eh in neh.*

House lizard look around the dirt; it eats the dirt. Go up to the sky and they are eating rice. It took eats rice; House lizard then went down to Earth. Wondering what is the food eaten by the people up there, as it seems so good. Unlike what we eat here on earth. The heart becomes wise because of it, the mouth is wise because of it. It makes one feel clever, it said

(*Dondan Tiburit*)

*bila yoh biumbuh noh tiyak neh, yoh mok dusah man bisowak-sowak. yoh mok, 'nok, oku nyak man, ' in eh. 'mak diyok man, samak mu' gituang eh nuok, ' in sinok eh.*

When they are farming, they do not bother to eat for years. The son said, 'mother, I want to eat,' he said. 'Do not eat first, your father has not finished planting,' said the mother.

(*Dondan Sikau Bungak*)

*Sikali oyung nang, "idoh" in eh, 'barak-barak mun otok odi karik pinguman," in eh.*

Then monkey said, 'no', it said. 'there will be a lot for us to look food.'

(*Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak*)

The Lack of food is evident in *Dondan Pironuk Odi Nuboh*, *Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak*, *Dondan Tiburit* and *Dondan Sikau Bungak*. The Lack of food is caused by the need for it. In *Dondan Pironuk Odi Nuboh*, the need for food made the group of animals vigilantly guard their food from being stolen by the Tiger, whereas in *Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak*, the need for food has led to Tortoise and Monkey stealing from the human farm and the same is told in *Dondan Tiburit*, whereby House lizard stole rice grains from the Stars in sky.

In *dondan Sikau Bungak* his need for food led to him asking his parents for food, but because they were too busy farming, this need was not met, resulting in also in the Lack for food. This could also be related to another form of lack which is Lack of Kinship, that is, the lack of attention given to Sikau Bungak by his parents. Lack of Kinship is also indicated in *Dondan Sibunyuah*, whereby Sibunyuah lost his father who was killed by the evil monster Kutang-katung.

The other Lack found in the analysis is Lack of Object. In the case of Ronai's son in *Dondan Ronai*, he wanted a spinning top. This Lack could also be related to Lack of Kinship once again. Since he was born, Ronai's son has never met his father. As indicated in the excerpt above, this has led to him needing a spinning top.

Problems in the *dondan* may also arise due to Obligation (B) which is described in *Dondan Sikau Bungak*. In the *dondan*, the mother promised to give Sikau Bungak food as soon as his father finished working, but this promise was never met:

*'mak diyok man, samak mu' gituang eh nuok, ' in sinok eh. aluak-aluak samak eh nuok, 'nok, oku nyak man,' in eh. idoh di' man adon pu'un eh neh. pak eh itiak Sikau Bungak. 'mak diyok man, ' in eh, 'samak mu' aluok sak obuak nuok, ' in eh.*

'Do not eat first, your father has not finished planting,' said the mother. And yet the father is still working. Again and again he asked for food, 'don not eat yet, your father has not finished planting.'

(*Dondan Sikau Bungak*)

As for the attribute of Ordeal (C), this is found in *Dondan Ayang* whereby the main character had to overcome the obstacles of the big flood and how to survive after the flood.

Another attribute of Ordeal found is in the problem of physical appearance. This is evident in *Dondan Manuk Ruoi* and *Dondan Lomow* whereby both main characters were pictured as being defected in their physical appearance. Lomow was described as imperfect, deformed, blind and deaf while in *Dondan Manuk Ruwui* the princess is described as half human and half pheasant and missing a finger.

Based on the analysis of the Semantic Attributes in the Initiating Event, the focus of these *dondan* are problems which arises due to the different Lacks of the main characters. These Lacks are related to the need for food and survival. Besides that, Lack of kinship is also discovered, which is again based on the need for parental attention and love. This may have led to the Problem of Obligation which is extracted from the parents. Ordeal is another Semantic Attribute found and this is basically due to the force of others such as the need to revenge and the need to look physically attractive or normal.

This study indicates similarities with Tan’s (2009) Semantic Attribute of Initiating Event but with additional ones such as Revenge and Physical Appearance within the Ordeal Semantic Attribute. Lack of Kinship arise only because of parental/child relationship.

**Sequent events.**

Sequent Events is the unfolding of the plot of the oral folk narratives and cover a large portion of the *dondan*. According to Tan (2009), in Sequent Events, the problem which was found in the Initiating Event is handled and this is known as Complication. Based on the *dondan* studied, there are two areas in which Complications occur, that is Test and Solution. Tan (2009) stated that in Grimm’s Fairy Tales, these two are not mutually exclusive. A Test would be followed by a Solution but not vice versa. The same is also discovered in the analysis of the *dondan*. The Semantic Attributes for the Sequent Event of the *dondan* could be summarised in Figure 5.

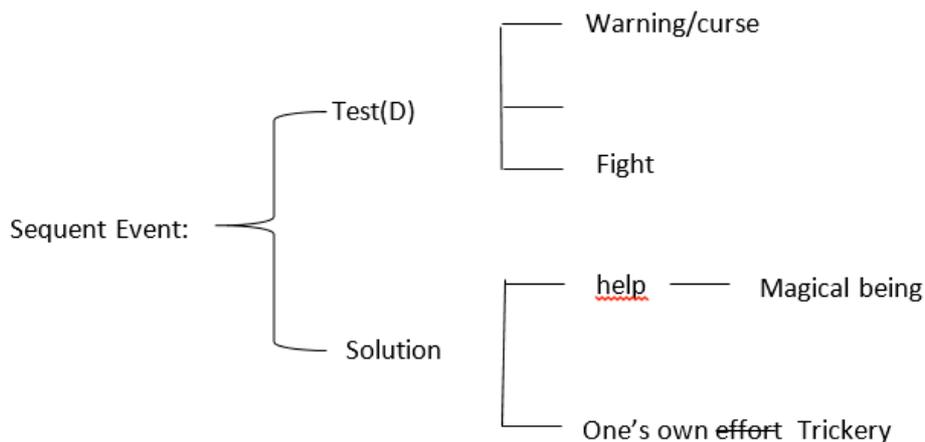


Figure 5. Semantic Attributes of Sequent Events of the *dondan*

Out of the 12 *dondan*, only one did not have the Semantic Attribute (D) Test and that is *Dondan Lomow*. In the *dondan*, the Problem in the Initiating Event is

solved immediately. Lomow was asked to kill and eat the bird Konang. He did so and instantly changed. In the other *dondan*, the Test is followed by Solution. These Test comes in the form of obstacles that may hinder the main characters from reaching their goals. The semantic attributes for Test are a warning or a curse and a fight or a battle. The Warning/Curse attribute could be found in *Dondan Manuk Ruwui* and *Dondan Ronai* as in both stories there is the element of warning from magical beings, whereas the Fight/Battle attribute could be found in *Dondan Sibunyuah*.

*Yoh mok mu'un ligang kulit kosad labuk tiyak, Sibunyuah notok bah eh. Obuak. Yoh mok kobos eh tiyak neh.*

He goes to see the skin of the head and Sibunyuah cuts the head off.

*(Dondan Sibunyuah)*

The Solution in the *dondan* comes in the form of Trickery or Help from an Agent with Magical abilities. Three of the *dondan's* Solution is in the form of Trickery – *Dondan Pironuk Odi Nuboh*, *Oyung duwoh Diyak* and *Pironuk Jaji Raja*, while the rest of the *dondan's* Solution were due to Magical Intervention or help from an Agent with Magical powers. In the case of *Sikau Bungak*, he was helped by his deceased grandfather who is living in the sky. The same is true for *Ronai* who obtained his spinning brass top from his father who is believed to be a celestial being residing in the sky. Lomow is helped by Konang, a magic bird sends by *Topa*, a God while both *Sibunyuah*; *Sibunyuah* was helped by his uncle.

### **Final events.**

The Final Events of the *dondan* is an Evaluation of the Complications. Based on the *dondan* analysed, there are two semantic attributes realised by Evaluation, that is, Punishment (F) and Victory (G) which are at opposite ends. However, in some of the *dondan*, some Punishment are followed by Victory. Figure 6 illustrates the Final Event found in the *dondan*.

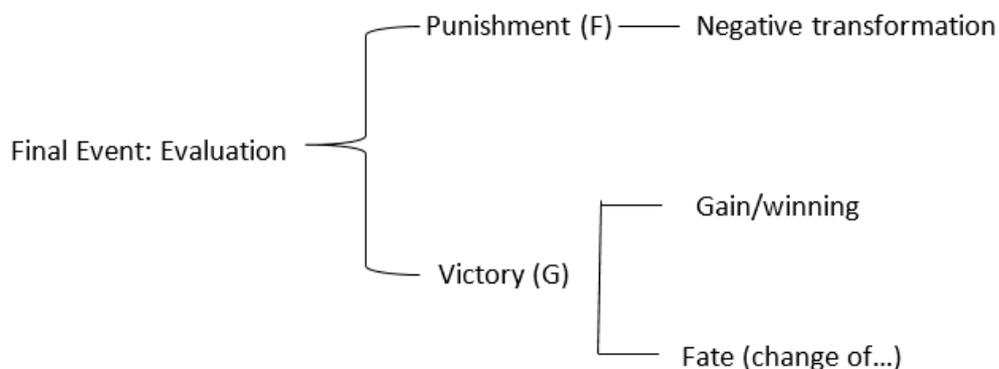


Figure 6. Semantic Attributes of Final Event in the *dondan*

The Semantic Attribute of Punishment comes in the form of transformation, usually a negative one. In the *dondan*, Punishment is the consequence of doing something which is forbidden. For example, in both *Dondan Manuk Ruwui* and *Dondan Si Ronai*, the main characters were transformed into birds because they did not heed the warning set by the spirits, in this case, the Spirit of the Pheasant and Spirit of the Moon (Moon King), respectively. In *Dondan Ayang*, the Semantic Attribute of Punishment is revealed whereby the main character's children die because he did not heed the warning of the omen birds. This indicates that Punishment in the *dondan* comes in the form of negative consequences due to ignoring or violating the customs and taboos.

The Semantic Attributes of Victory can be said to reflect positive gains in the *dondan*. In the *dondan* studied, Victory comes in the form of winning something; it can be a fight or a contest such as in *Dondan Pironuk Jaji Raja* and *Dondan Sibunyuah* whereby the mouse deer in *Dondan Pironuk Jaji Raja* became king and in *Dondan Sibunyuah*, Sibunyuah managed to kill the monster Kutang-Kating and avenge his father's death.

Victory is also found in the form of gaining an object such as in *Dondan Pironuk Odi Nuboh* whose main character, mousedeer eventually gets all the fish. This is also seen in *Dondan Tiburit* where house lizard managed to steal the rice grains from the Stars in the sky and give to the people on Earth for them to eat.

Victory is described as getting out of a bad situation and obtaining freedom such as in *Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak* when the tortoise stuck in the mud hole managed to trick the wild boar to push him out of the mud hole. The Semantic Attribute of Victory is also reflected in the positive outcome of change of fate such as in *Dondan Lomow* and *Dondan Sikau Bungak*. Lomow changed into perfect human beings while Sikau Bungak revived his dead parents.

### **The Optional Elements of the *Dondan* GSP**

The three optional elements as stated earlier are Belief, Explanation and Moral. The following discussion will follow this particular order; starting from the most number of occurrences to the least number of occurrences.

#### **Belief**

Four of the *dondan* has the optional element of Belief at the end of the *dondan*. Belief is defined as the mental representation or knowledge that becomes a source and influences the behaviour of a person. It is also an idea that people think is true and did happen at some point of time in the past and is the reason why things are as such nowadays (Sigel & Kim, 1996). As the *dondan* function as a source of explanation to the beliefs of the people and to the phenomenon of the world, they contain explanations for their beliefs. *Dondan Ronai* for example, explains a belief among the Bidayuh that a bird would cry out during a full moon:

*Ngan nya'a nyagu duwoh upih neh nya'a bikiyak duwoh bisuom neh, 'kiyak, suom, kayak suom'. Onak en duwoh buran noh ney, kiyak duwoh suom.*

When people go to take sago, the birds would make the sound 'kiyak' and 'suom', calling to the moon.

(Dondan Ronai)

Another belief is found in *dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak*, where it is believed that in order to catch a wild boar; one must dig a hole because wild boars are known to dig holes in the ground to look for *otin tanah*, the heart of the Earth.

*Ngan nya'a dek no'uh eh, nai rubang pakai takap do'ot, ra'an eh noyu da'ang eh.*

People in the olden days, make a hole to catch wild boar, because they like to dig inside the hole.

(Dondan Oyung duwoh Diyak)

In *Dondan Manuk Ruwui*, the belief is that pheasants could only be found in the mountains and human beings cannot hunt and eat these pheasants because they were once believed to be human and have human spirits.

*Ngan eh adin, manuk ruwui nya'a ogik dapod dek dorod jak eh meh. Ngan ogik nya'a dek nouh eh idoh dik ngabosh ruwui tiyak neh. Nai oni man ruwui, binatang dek bokon aluak agik geh. In eh sobab asal eh ruwui noh ogik sok manusia, mokuok noh ponai jaji ieng tiyak.*

Until now, pheasants could only be found in the mountains. People in the olden days do not kill the pheasant. Why kill pheasants when there are other animals. That is why the origin of pheasant is from human, who turned into a spirit.

(Dondan Manuk Ruwui)

Another belief of the Bidayuh that is found in *Dondan Ayang* whereby it stated the reason the Bidayuh believe in the omen birds.

*Noh ngan otto' Kutieg Briang toga koyuh de adoh-adoh de munoh neh. So itih so to ngan to' nai adat to' ulih-ulih to' dik togan de munok neh*

That is why for us, the birds Kutieg and Briang are the real thing. That is where our customs come from. And we cannot leave our customs.

(Dondan Ayang)

### **Explanation**

Explanation is a minor element found in two of these *dondan*: *Dondan Lomow* and *Dondan Ronai*. It is not part of the *dondan* and it could occur anywhere in the story, especially when it is considered necessary to explain some of the terms related to the story, such as cultural elements and terms.

*Yoh mok kobos gan galuak eh kanok gan da'ang sigalung eh. Sigalung noh nouh eh neh, topat nya'a nyoma gan supit, nyikon sonuk, yoh mok sa'at danok.*

It then died; he put salt on it and put it in the *sigalung*. A *sigalung* is a place where people in the olden days keep their blowpipe, keep their ladle, he left it there.

(*Dondan Lomow*)

It can also be used to provide an explanation regarding the character in the *dondan*.

*Dayung noh tie eh neh, onak kopang. Doik samah eh, ro'o duwoh sinok eh geh, moh tong nyoma geh.*

The girl is an orphan. She has no father; she stays with her mother until she grows up.

(*Dondan Ronai*)

### **Moral**

Only one *dondan* had a Moral element incorporated into it. This Moral element is stated explicitly and is found at the end of *Dondan Sikau Bungak*.

*Ngan eh nyaa doik so'on bila onak mitiak man, mak dusah ngin man dek onak nyeh nek. Porih.*

That is why, when your child ask for food, you must give food.

(*Dondan Sikau Bungak*)

### **Communicative Purpose of *Dondan***

Based on the GSP analysis of these *dondan*, it is clear that the communicative purpose of these *dondan*, which is to disseminate cultural knowledge and moral values is achieved through the obligatory elements as well as the inclusion of the optional elements. The obligatory elements especially the Sequence Event generally present ways to handle difficult situations in the form of Test and Solution. The Test is presented in the form of Warning or Curse as well as Fight and Battles. This is then followed by the Final Events which reveals that there are some consequences for every action taken either in the form of Victory or Punishment. For instance, in Animal Tales where the Problem is Lack of something, the Solution is through Trickery and the main characters managed to get themselves out of difficult situations and get the material they wanted.

The optional elements, however, reveal a lot more on the communicative goal. The belief, explanation and moral in the *dondan* revealed the purpose of the story being told and this is often told directly to the audience. For example, in

stories whereby the main characters ignore or violate taboos and warning, they were transformed into animals or someone in their family dies. This shows that the consequences of violating and ignoring the customs would result in bad luck. This emphasises the importance of customs and traditions within the Bidayuh community.

This study shows that the *dondan* achieved its communicative goal which is to disseminate cultural knowledge and to teach the values deemed important by the Bidayuh Bau-Jagoi based on the GSP of the *dondan*.

### **Conclusion**

This study implies that the *dondan* achieved its communicative purpose which is to provide moral values and cultural knowledge to members of its community and especially the younger generations. The GSP of the *dondan* is similar to that of English Fairy Tales in terms of the obligatory elements but differs in terms of the optional elements. Although Hasan (1984) stressed that what makes a particular genre is the obligatory elements, this study discovered that the optional elements play a role in the cultural aspects whereby moral values, beliefs and customs are explained in these elements. This is where the communicative purpose of the *dondan* is established and reflected.

The Semantic Attributes also share similarities with English Fairy tales, however, some variation is found especially in the Sequent and Final Events. Based on the analysis, these Semantic Attributes are more culturally related thus the differences. The communicative goal of the Bidayuh *dondan* is to educate the younger generations by providing cultural values to them. Besides that, it is also to teach them the important cultural knowledge which may be lost. From the data analysis, this communicative goal is achieved in and through the *dondan*.

For future research, it is recommended that more research be done on this and with emphasis on the lexicogrammatical items are analysed to gain a better understanding of the Semantic Attributes of the *dondan*.

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