

Anthropomorphism in *Upin dan Ipin*: A Study of Children's Literature

Qori Islami Aris¹, Essy Syam²

^{1,2}Faculty of Humanities, Univesity of Lancang Kuning

Email: ¹ qoriislamibintiaris@unilak.ac.id, ²essysyam@unilak.ac.id

Article Info

Article history:

Received May 16, 2023

Revised June 20, 2023

Accepted June 21, 2023

Keywords:

Anthropomorphism,
Upin and Ipin,
Children's Literature

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the use of anthropomorphism in two episodes of Upin and Ipin entitled *Aku Sebatang Pensel* and *Aku Sebuah Jam*. Through observation and note-taking techniques, data were obtained to analyze how the two episodes humanize pencils and clocks. The results of the analysis show the presence of anthropomorphic elements in both episodes, including human characters, emotions, and human behavior given to pencils and clocks. The pencils in the episode *Aku Sebatang Pensel* behave like humans with the ability to speak, interact, and show emotions such as worry, anger, pride, sadness, and joy. Meanwhile, the clock characters in the episode *Aku Sebuah Jam* also show human behavior with the ability to speak, share experiences, show concern, and dance. Sad emotions are also displayed by the clock characters. The characteristics of pencil and clock characters include helpful, encouraging, caring, argumentative, passionate, optimistic, cheerful, curious, obedient, and expressive. This study uncovers the use of anthropomorphism in Upin and Ipin animations, shedding light on its contribution to children's imagination, understanding of complex issues, and story appeal. Through this technique, young audiences can connect with the characters and develop empathy. The findings are relevant for the development of children's films and learning media, as an effective strategy to convey moral values. The study also encourages animation and creative producers to produce creative and diverse content, in line with the demands of complex audiences.

This is an open access article under the CC BY license.



Corresponding Author:

Qori Islami Aris,

Faculty of Humanities, University of Lancang Kuning, Riau, Indonesia,

Jl. Yos Sudarso No.KM. 8, Umban Sari, Kec. Rumbai, Kota Pekanbaru, Riau 28266

Email: qoriislamibintiaris@unilak.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Upin dan Ipin is a popular animated movie produced by Les' Copaque in Malaysia and has also gained popularity in Indonesia and other countries. The movie was released on September 14, 2017, to educate children. In their episodes, Upin dan Ipin movie covers a wide range of topics, from daily life to technological developments such as robots and superpowers. To keep the audience interested, Upin dan Ipin's stories have a creative variety of topics. Les' Copaque encourages its creative team to follow current trends, one of which is anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is a way to incorporate human characters into non-human objects or creatures such as animals or plants (Bruni, Perconti, & Plebe, 2018). This is seen in works Tom and Jerry, Mickey Mouse, and other fables. Les' Copaque also created several episodes that humanize non-human objects, such as pencils and clocks, in the episodes *Aku Sebatang Pensil* and *Aku Sebuah Jam*. This paper analyzes both episodes in the context of anthropomorphism.

Moreover, studies related to children's literature have been conducted. A study by Yeganeh Khodaparast from the University of Cologne, Munich showed that anthropomorphic stories do not increase children's knowledge of real animals, but provide unrealistic images. Another study on anthropomorphism in Gotouchi-Kyara Funassyi characters also showed that anthropomorphic behavior increased the character's popularity in Japan (Marsyaulina, 2018).

Another article titled "The Development of Anthropomorphism in Intersubjectivity, Imagination, and Theory of Mind" by Gabriella Airenti from the University of Turin, Italy revealed that anthropomorphism is based on interaction, not a specific belief system (Airenti, 2018).

In brief, Upin dan Ipin is a popular animated movie that successfully presents interesting topics to its audience. Les' Copaque uses anthropomorphism in some episodes to create human characters in non-human objects. Research on children's literature also provides insight into the influence of anthropomorphic stories on children's learning and the popularity of anthropomorphic characters in different cultures.

2. METHODS

This study is a descriptive analysis that aims to describe existing phenomena. In this case, this study described the anthropomorphism found in the Upin dan Ipin stories. Furthermore, in collecting the results of the study, conclusions are drawn inductively in which specific descriptions presented lead to a general description.

Data were collected by using observation and note-taking techniques. Observation is a method of collecting data by directly observing the topic. This method is used to get accurate results. According to Guba and Lincoln in Moleong (Moleong, 2021), observation techniques are carried out for several reasons; 1. Observation is carried out because the researcher directly experiences the observed problem, 2. Researchers can do note-taking as it happens in actual circumstances, 3. Observation can be directly related to propositional knowledge, 4. Observation can reduce doubts by checking data, 5. Observation can be a solution to understanding complicated situations or complex behavior, 6. Observation can be an appropriate alternative when dealing with certain cases and other communication techniques are not possible. Thus, the observation technique optimizes the researcher's ability to capture a phenomenon and feel what the subject feels.

In this study, the observation used is non-participant observation since the researcher is not involved and is only an independent observer (Sugiono, 2017). In applying observation techniques, it needs to be combined with recording techniques so

that the results of observations can be documented in the recording. Thus, overlapping recording techniques apply documentation techniques that collect data and information in the form of books, archives, documents, and reports to support research.

Related to the explanation above, this analysis used several steps as follows: First, it identifies anthropomorphism in the Upin and Ipin story by focusing on the content of the story. Second, it categorized the parts that show anthropomorphism. Third, it describes the parts that show anthropomorphism in the Upin dan Ipin story. Finally, the results of the analysis are presented using the descriptive method.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some popular children's stories have animal characters. These anthropomorphic animals have human characteristics: they wear clothes, talk, go to work, and even have feelings, and other human characteristics. These anthropomorphic allow children to understand complex issues because these issues are adapted to the world of children (Chen, 2018).

In the beginning, anthropomorphic stories were meant for a more significant purpose than just entertaining children. Anthropomorphic characters were used to teach moral values humorously and creatively by presenting appropriate manners and behaviors (Hafi, 2020). Thus, messages and ideas are conveyed through analogies, where animal characters are given the same characters and feelings that children experience, making the stories more accessible to child readers (Nurgiantoro, 2021).

3.1. Anthromorphomics in Aku Sebatang Pensil Episode

The episode Aku Sebatang Pensil consists of 3 (three) parts that are interconnected until the end of the story. Anthropomorphic elements are found in the episode Aku Sebatang Pensil in the form of pencils and the scenes in this episode show the pencils behaving and doing activities that only humans can do. These scenes be discussed one by one.

3.1.1. The Talking Pencil

This episode of Aku Sebatang Pensil consists of 2 (two) parts. The story begins with a conversation between Upin Pencil, Ipin Pencil, and their friends. They are talking about Aris, who is the owner of the pencils and whom they refer to as "master." They see Aris coming with the stationery and it worries them because with the new stationery, they feel that Aris will no longer use them. The conversation of these pencils shows an anthropomorphic element because the pencils can speak. The talking pencils show anthropomorphic elements, namely behavior, and emotions. Talking is not a normal thing for a pencil to do, but it is a human activity, while the emotion in this scene shows the worry about the pencils when they are no longer used or replaced with new pencils and the anger of Fizi pencil when teased by her friends because they are already in short size.

3.1.2. The Showing Off Pencil

The togetherness of the pencils is disrupted by the arrival of colored pencils, especially jumbo-colored pencils that are bigger than other writing pencils. This makes the colored pencil feel special and he arrogantly shows off his specialness. The behavior of the colored pencil showing off its specialness shows anthropomorphic elements. The colored pencil feels proud of its specialness and shows off in front of the other pencils. The behavior of the colored pencil talking and showing off resembles human behavior. Thus, this scene has elements of behavior, emotion, and character. Behavior is shown from the activity of talking and showing off, emotion is shown from feeling happy because

it feels special which causes other pencils to feel amazed by its color and large size. And the characteristics that can be seen are arrogance and showing off.

3.1.3. The Fighting Pencil

The pencils in this episode not only talk but also fight. Their quarrel was triggered by their feelings of being useful. When Aris used the pencils, they felt useful because they were being used by Aris. The writing pencils felt useful because they were used by Aris to write calculations and to do other school work such as filling in forms, but the colored pencils felt more useful because Aris used the colored pencils more often. This is what makes writing pencils and colored pencils fight. The quarrel between the writing pencils and colored pencils shows the anthropomorphic elements of behavior, emotion, and character. Behavior is shown from the quarrels that occur like humans, emotions are shown from the anger and annoyance that triggered the quarrel. They are considered useless; they show emotions of anger or annoyance that eventually trigger the fight. While the character is shown by the arrogant nature of the colored pencils who feel more useful.

3.1.4. The Helping Pencil

Another scene shows how writing pencils help their friend. Ehsan's pencil felt sad because Aris never used it, Ehsan's pencil thought Aris didn't love him anymore. As a pencil that is rather large and newly purchased, Ehsan has never been used by Aris, this makes Ehsan feel sad and useless. Seeing his sadness, Upin and his friends planned something to help Ehsan. Then, when Aris came, the pencils hidden and left Ehsan's pencil alone. When Aris wanted to write, he couldn't find a single pencil, except for Ehsan's pencil. He decided to use Ehsan's pencil. Finally, Ehsan's pencil was happy because it became useful. In this scene, anthropomorphic elements are found in behavior, emotion, and character. The behavior of the pencils in planning and helping Ehsan's pencil is a behavior that cannot normally be done by a pencil. While emotions are reflected in the happiness Ehsan feels. Meanwhile, the character displayed is helpful, caring, and empathetic to the sadness of others.

3.2. Anthropomorphic in the Episode Aku Sebuah Jam

The episode Aku Sebuah Jam only has one part. It tells the story of Upin and his friends in the form of a clock in a clock shop owned by Ah Tong, a Chinese merchant. This episode shows the adventures of Upin and his friends as the clocks. Because Upin and his friends are in the form of clocks, the anthropomorphic elements are visible.

3.2.1. The Clocks Speak and Share Experiences

The story begins with a conversation between Upin and his friends who invite their friends to show off the sound of the clock they each have with a specific sound. Upin challenges his friends to compete for the best sound. Then, Upin started to play his voice along with Ipin. In this scene, Upin and his friends talk like humans who gather with their friends and talk about things that interest them. These clocks tell stories to each other. When Ah Tong is not around, they tell each other stories. Susanti tells her experience when she used to be a trendy clock because of her beautiful and up-to-date shape, but when she was old and out of date, she was no longer interesting to the consumers.

In another part, Tuk Dalang also talks about his experience of once belonging to a rich man before he was sold. Tuk Dalang telling the story of his experience shows the behavior of humans who share their experiences, as parents share their life experiences with the younger generation. Anthropomorphic elements in this scene are found in behavior and emotions. The behavior that the clocks do is talking and sharing experiences, while the emotion shown is a feeling of sadness because they are no longer a favorite clock, and because they are old, they feel wasted.

3.2.2. The Clocks Show Care

Ehsan, as a clock was bought by a child. The other clocks felt sad that Ehsan was no longer with them. Suddenly, Ehsan was returned in a broken state. Ah Tong complained about not being able to fix Ehsan, which made all the clocks feel sad. Fizi even expressed his sadness by crying and lamenting the state of Ehsan. The sadness shown by the clocks shows their concern for their friends. Fortunately, Ah Tong was able to fix Ehsan and all the clocks were happy. The anthropomorphic elements in this scene are shown in behavior, emotion, and character. Behavior can be seen from the concern of Upin and his friends for the sadness felt by Ehsan. Meanwhile, emotion is shown from the feeling of sadness and character is depicted from their behavior that empathizes with others.

3.2.3. The Clock Dances

When Ehsan was repaired, Ehsan and his friends told a happy story. Ehsan remembered its master (the little boy who bought it). Ehsan felt that he had lost his master because he had parted with him. However, Ehsan was happy because he had gathered with his friends. Then, they express their joy by dancing together.

The anthropomorphic elements in this scene are behavior and emotion. Behavior is shown from their storytelling and dancing behavior while emotion is shown from the joy of being reunited and the loss that Ehsan feels towards the little boy who bought it.

3.3. Anthropomorphic and the Nature of Human Beings

In creating Upin and Ipin's text, especially the episodes *Aku Sebatang Pensil* and *Aku Sebuah Jam*, anthropomorphic elements are used as an attempt to develop the imagination of the audience, especially children. These anthropomorphic elements bring the audience into the nonhuman world so that the audience understands the world outside the human world. These texts attach human traits and attributes to nonhuman entities, in this study, a pencil and a clock (Katz-Buonincontro & Anderson, 2020).

Anthropomorphism not only attaches human characteristics or attributes to non-human entities in the form of inanimate objects such as pencils and clocks but also to other entities outside humans such as animals and plants. By doing so, it is hoped that children can understand the message that the text is trying to convey (Murakami, 2015).

On the other hand, this effort concealed the nature and essence of each different creature that has a different nature and essence. By attaching human characteristics and attributes to animals, plants, and other inanimate objects, children do not see any difference in the essence of the different entities so the different entities are considered the same (Latifah, Munajah, & Hasanah, 2010). Thus, anthropomorphic texts obscure the nature and essence of humans with their roles, responsibilities, characteristics, and traits, which are of course different from the nature of plants, animals, or other inanimate objects. Therefore, anthropomorphism enlivens children's imagination (Toha-Sarumpaet, 2010; You, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

Anthropomorphic studies in the Upin and Ipin movie, especially in the episodes *Aku Sebatang Pensil* dan *Aku Sebuah Jam* highlight human behavior attached to non-human entities. In the Upin dan Ipin movie, the pencil and clock behave like humans. Anthropomorphic objects such as clocks, and pencils behave like humans who have human personalities and perform human-like activities. Anthropomorphic includes 3 (three) elements, namely human character, emotions (feelings), and human behavior. In

both episodes of *Aku Sebatang Pensil* and *Aku Sebuah Jam*, these three anthropomorphic elements appear.

In the episode *Aku Sebatang Pensil*, human behaviors performed with pencils and colored pencils appear, such as talking, showing off, fighting, and helping. In addition, emotions or feelings as humans feel are also found in this text such as feelings of sadness, joy, and arrogance, while the main character has human characteristics such as being helpful, optimistic, loving, and caring. Thus, three anthropomorphic elements appear in this episode of *Aku Sebatang Pensil*.

In the episode *Aku Sebuah Jam*, these three anthropomorphic elements also appear. Human-like behavior is depicted when the clock characters talk and share experiences, dance, and show concern for friends. In addition, emotions are shown with feelings of pride, arrogance, sadness, and joy. The human character is depicted in the main character who has a helpful, kind, and cheerful character.

By attaching human characteristics to pencils and clocks, these two pencils try to enhance children's imagination so that the characters of these clocks and pencils come to life. On the other hand, the children who enjoy these texts do not get the right knowledge about the differences and characteristics between humans and non-humans, so the nature of humans and non-humans is confusing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our highest appreciation and gratitude to the Faculty of Humanities, Lancang Kuning University for the support during conducting this research. We would like to thank our fellow lecturers who have provided valuable insights, inputs, and discussions in enriching our understanding of this research topic. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to all parties who have provided support, input, and moral encouragement in carrying out this research.

REFERENCES

- Airenti, G. (2018). The development of anthropomorphism in interaction: Intersubjectivity, imagination, and theory of mind. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 2136.
- Bruni, D., Perconti, P., & Plebe, A. (2018). Anti-anthropomorphism and its limits. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 2205.
- Chen, S. (2018). Anthropomorphic animals in children's literature. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 44(2), 65–78.
- Hafi, I. Y. (2020). Mengembangkan Kepribadian Anak Melalui Sastra Anak (Dongeng). *PENAOQ: Jurnal Sastra, Budaya Dan Pariwisata*, 1(1), 63–68.
- Katz-Buonincontro, J., & Anderson, R. C. (2020). A review of articles using observation methods to study creativity in education (1980--2018). *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 54(3), 508–524.
- Latifah, N., Munajah, R., & Hasanah, U. (2010). *PENGANTAR SASTRA ANAK*. Universitas Trilogi.
- Marsyaulina, A. (2018). *Antropomorfisme Pada Gotouchi-Kyara Funasshi*. Universitas Indonesia.
- Moleong, L. J. (2021). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Murakami, T. (2015). Anthropomorphism as a communicative strategy in advertising: The effect of using human-like animals on product and brand evaluations. *Journal of Advertising*, 44(1), 37–46.
- Nurgiantoro, B. (2021). *Sastra anak: pengantar pemahaman dunia anak*. Ugm Press.
- Sugiono. (2017). *Memahami Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R & D*. Jakarta: Alfabeta.

- Toha-Sarumpaet, R. K. (2010). *Pedoman penelitian sastra anak*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- You, C. (2021). The necessity of an anthropomorphic approach to children's literature. *Children's Literature in Education*, 52(2), 183–199.