The Availability of Online-Based East Kalimantan Folktales: A Call for Preservation

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Abstract:
Up until today, most people living in East Kalimantan still have a little knowledge and understanding about their folktales. This might be caused by the limited availability of the stories everywhere, including on the internet. This paper aims to report on the availability of online-based East Kalimantan folktales by searching on the web, utilizing the most commonly used search engines in Indonesia. The search found that only 17 folktales are available worldwide, and most of these texts and non-texts materials have yet to exist in decent or official forms. This calls for a quick action of preservation in order not to let these cultural assets to extinct in the middle of the threat from the vast growing internet and mainstream entertainment.

Keywords: folktales, folktale preservation, East Kalimantan folktales, online folktales

INTRODUCTION

It is so unfortunate to see a lot of citizens that were being born and raised in East Kalimantan grow up and live without knowing the folktales from the region they live in. It is almost considered too common to be raised in East Kalimantan but find oneself to be more familiar with stories or folktales from other places in Indonesia. For instance, the physical book contained an anthology of Indonesian folktales I had back then when I was a little kid was—as far as I can remember—predominated by stories from Java or Sumatera. The very limited encounter with local stories sometimes makes the people in East Kalimantan to be well-acquainted with characters like Malin Kundang, Timun Mas or Jaka Tarub; compared to knowing names like Aji Batara Agung Dewa Sakti or Putri Karang Melenu.

The less exposure to the diversity of stories is rather disappointing, since Indonesia is known to be one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Indonesia owns more than 1300 ethnicities (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2015); logically, this fact should correspond to the high diversity of stories in the form of oral traditions like folktales. However, various reasons might influence the fact that only a few stories remain popular and survive. Indeed, in the near future these reasons are worth to be found out through research, along with attempting to trace why some of the folktales from certain regions made it to the "popular" list and why the remaining regions did not. Specifically speaking, East Kalimantan definitely possesses rich cultural heritage, for it is one of the most historical regions in the country. East Kalimantan is best known to be the province in which the first and the oldest Hindu kingdom, Kerajaan Kutai, ever existed. Yet sadly, folktales from this region are barely brought to light.

There is already an apparent effort to save the existing folktales from Indonesia. These days, different folktales from this culturally diverse country can be found through surfing on the web. They appear in the forms of video and audio, as well as in texts. Yet the irony remains. Until today, on a quick search of folktales online, the story of Malin Kundang still appears as the most popular one among the bunch. This leaves a serious question about the availability of other folktales, especially those from East Kalimantan as one of the most historical regions in the country; and as the soon to be "popular" region, since in the next few years, the province will be the face of the country as it holds the new capital city.

This paper aims to report on the availability of online-based East Kalimantan folktales. Attention is specifically given to the stories from this region, since as previously mentioned, the existence of this cultural assets is almost unknown even to the locals. There is an urge to find out how far an effort to preserve this priceless intangible cultural heritage has been done so far, to predict what efforts are possible to be done in days to come. This paper also aims to list titles that are available and free to be accessed, along with the forms in which those stories are presented; text or non-text.

LITERATURE REVIEW

FOLKTALES AND PRESERVATION ATTEMPTS

There is no doubt that cultural diversity is one of the biggest assets for a country. UNESCO has also actively called for a sustainable protection, which includes the protection of the intangible cultural heritage. This contains the preservation of oral traditions and expressions as one of the intangible assets (UNESCO, 2003). This speaks volumes to Indonesia and its rich culture. If done properly, the preservation of the oral traditions in Indonesia will allow the future generations to be exposed to different kinds of stories; hundreds or might be thousands in number.

The demand to preserve local folktales is even more urgent now, as more people realize the importance of maintaining the complexity of one culture. For generations, folktales have carried the lineage of ancestors from the past, teaching the past wisdom and the way of living to the younger generations (Harun and Jamaludin, 2013). Especially these days, the

existence of folktales is even more in danger due to the rapidly growing mainstream media, commercial entertainment and globalization (Dorji, 2010). In other words, the popular folktales are already in the threat of extinction; the less popular ones are in a more alarming situation.

To archive the stories by using digital technology is one way to make sure the long availability of the local folktales (Dorji, 2010, p. 20). Providing accessible resources in the form of text, video or audio might be able to offer diverse possibilities in how those cultural assets can be used in the future. Folktale has always been a form of entertainment or education, but having it accessible to an unlimited audience should also offer huge opportunities for more critical approaches—like research, for example. Not only that they can be great sources for entertainment, education or research, an idea of rewriting and reconstructing folktales as proposed by Citraningtyas et al. (2014) as an attempt to see how a culture is moving overtime is a prospect worth considering.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To see the availability of the online-based East Kalimantan folktales, several steps focusing on online research were done. The first were determining the search engines to be used in browsing the folktales. The three most popular search engines in Indonesia listed by GlobalStats (2021) were used in this research, based on the consideration that in the similar occasion when locals search for the online-based folktales they might use the same engines. The search engines used were Google, Yahoo! and Bing. This research is based on the data obtained per December 2021. The next step was the search process. All search conducted in the aforementioned search engines were using the same keywords; it was "*cerita rakyat Kalimatan Timur*" (translated into English is "East Kalimantan folktales"). The following processes were the collection of data by listing the available folktales, and the classification of the obtained data into categories to be presented in the findings and discussion section. Finally, conclusion was drawn based on the existing data

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The search on the available online-based folktales from East Kalimantan per December 2021 notes some important facts that are open for further actions and discussions. First, there are only 17 folktales from East Kalimantan that are available on the internet. Secondly, most of the folktales found are in the forms of text. Yet sadly, most texts are not archived properly or officially by the government. Last, all folktales are being written and/or being told in Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of the country.

To begin, the three search engines commonly used in Indonesia (i.e., Google, Yahoo! and Bing) all provide different results on the number of folktales found using the same keyword search. The table below provides the rough result of the keyword search in each engine, and the actual amount of folktales found after further investigations by seeing each suggested page one by one.

Table: 1 Result of the search in three search engines

Search Engine Used	Keyword Search Result	Folktales Found
Google	About 1,850,000 results	17 Titles
Yahoo!	About 386,000 results	11 Titles
Bing	About 254,000 results	11 Titles

After being carefully checked one by one, there are 17 titles of East Kalimantan folktales found. In details, the 11 titles seen in Yahoo! and Bing are all the repetitions that can also be found using Google. In short, there might only be 17 folktales from East Kalimantan that are available on the internet.

Next, the presentation or the form of these stories is also important to be discussed. As mentioned, the folktales exist in the form of text and non-text. The result also shows that there are stories that exist on both forms, but there are also stories that only have either the text version or the non-text version only.

Table: 2 The availability of East Kalimantan folktales in text and non-text

Title	Text	Non-Text
Asal-Usul Danau Lipan (The Origin of Danau Lipan)	√	√
Asal-Usul Raja-Raja Suku Tunjung Kutai (The Origin of Tunjung Tribe Kings of Kutai)	√	
Kisah Nyapu dan Moret (The Story of Nyapu and Moret)	√	
Legenda Sungai Kerbau Keramat (The Legend of the Sacred Kerbau River)	√	
Asal-usul Orang Basap (The Origin of Basap People)	√	
Asal Mula Kota Balikpapan (The Origin of Balikpapan)	√	
Asal Mula Anak Sungai Mahakam (The Origin of Mahakam Streams)	√	
Kisah Aji Batara Agung Dewa Sakti (The Story of Aji Batara Agung Dewa Sakti)	√	
Kisah Putri Karang Melenu (The Story of Putri Karang Melenu)	√	√
Asal-Usul Suku Dayak Punan Segah (The Origin of Dayak Punan Segah Tribe)	√	
Si Pak Abad, Pengobat Tradisional (Pak Abad, the Traditional Healer)	√	
Burung Ajaib (The Magic Bird)	√	

Si Kerongo (The Story of Kerongo)	√	
Puan dan Si Taddung (The Story of Puan and Taddung)	√	
Cahaya dan Dusta Si Gunam (The Light and the Lies of Si Gunam)	√	
Asal-usul Ikan Pesut (The Origin of Irrawaddy Dolphin)	√	√
Asal-usul Gagak Berwarna Hitam (The Origin of Dark-feathered Crow)		√

From the 17 titles of East Kalimantan folktales found on the web, 16 exist in the form of text, while 4 only 4 titles appear to have a non-text version. More specifically, only 8 titles have a full e-book version in the form of pdf files. These 8 stories are made available and free by *Laboratorium Kebinekaan Bahasa dan Sastra* and can be accessed through their website. In addition, 11 titles are being recorded in text, however they are written in some random websites or personal blogs that could have taken the stories from unreliable sources.

Perhaps one source that is almost reliable enough is http://ceritarakyatnusantara.com/ . This website holds a record of 9 stories, and interestingly, some of the random websites or personal blogs that were mentioned before seem to copy the text recorded in this website. This website also provides an important information about its founders; that it was created and managed by a NGO called *Balai Kajian dan Pengembangan Budaya Melayu* based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the 4 folktales that appears to have the non-text version are all in the forms of YouTube videos. These videos are all created and managed by one channel. Judging from the content, they are made with the consideration of children being the main viewers. The 4 folktales are all made into animations ranging from 7 to 12 minutes by Kastari Animation, under PT. Kastari Sentra Media, stored in a YouTube channel named "*Dongeng Kita*".

Further, it is also significant to note that all of the folktales through this research are written or being told using Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia. None of the 17 stories found written in another language other than Bahasa Indonesia. This fact can open wider possibilities. First is the challenge to present the stories in other languages—at least English, for example. This can be done with the consideration to broaden the access to learn and understand the cultural heritage from East Kalimantan. Another challenge is to possibly present the stories in local or regional languages. Publishing literature in the original regional language is something rare indeed, not many publishers are interested in it. If done properly, this can be considered as a twofold effort to not only saving the folktales, but also preserving the regional languages that are in the brink of extinction (Bunanta, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The research on the availability of online-based East Kalimantan folktales noted that per December 2021, only 17 folktales from the region have been found on the internet. This should be a concern, especially knowing that East Kalimantan with a rich historical background. This also a call to different regions in Indonesia to monitor and evaluate the existence of folktales as the cultural heritage of each place. At this stage, it is possible to conclude that preservation attempt is needed now. Many factors might bring these traditional assets if actions are not being taken quickly. Nationally speaking, the government have a huge task to provide an accessible location on the web, where all original folktales from the country are properly preserved without putting specific regions being more important than others. In addition, the diversity of forms is also needed. Texts, audio files or video files for folktales can be made into different versions, one being for different age categories. To add, the idea of making the stories in different languages other than the national language should be taken into account; for it will expand the accessibility of this priceless assets for future use, either as entertainment, education, research objects and so much more. At the end of the day, this calls for everyone's effort; the government, the researchers, teachers or lecturers as academicians, or literary enthusiasts in general. Do we answer to the call for preservation, or do we sacrificially let our assets to face extinction?

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