

FORMULA ANALYSIS OF SOCCER THEMED MOVIES: A STUDY OF CONVENTION AND INVENTION IN POPULAR LITERATURE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the narrative structure or formula in several soccer-themed movies; namely *Garuda di Dadaku*, *Shaolin Soccer*, *Bend it Like Beckham*, *Barefoot Dreams*, and *Air Bud 3: World Pup*. The writers try to see the convention in the entire movies and show up the invention that makes the movie different from each other. In analyzing, the writers use the descriptive method and structuralism theory as the approach of popular literature. The result shows that there are six conventions; the introduction of the main character that have problems, the main character's initiative to solve problems, the problem is slightly solved, the suspense of success, the increasingly complex problem in the climax, and happy ending. Meanwhile, the inventions contained in the movies are more about culture. The producers try to combine this ball theme with a culture that is prevalent in the community so that it feels more familiar with the audience being the target market.

Keywords: convention, invention, soccer-themed movies, popular literature

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Introduction

This study aims to analyze the structure or formula contained in soccer-themed movies. The object of this research is several movies taken from various cultures and countries; Indonesia, Korea, China, Britain and America. The presence of popular literature in recent years has proven to be able to begin shifting the position of high literature which is considered to be weightier and requires a higher ability to think in examining its meaning. Popular literature mostly in the form novels, short stories even comics were started to attract many movie producers' attention to make them into the movie so that the reader can see visually the things depicted in the story.

The writer sees the shifting of society taste towards this type of literature as a continues phenomenon. Although popular literature was initially considered 'marginalized' literature, described by Jatmiko (2015) is a literature that is out of the institution or literary legitimacy agent but is widely

circulated in the community, however, there are definite trends indicating that many tried to study and produce this kind of literature.

Literary sociologist, Bourdieu (2010, p. 17) mentions that popular literature basically uses the principle of autonomous hierarchy. The point is a principle uses the parameters of success that can be measured using a specific index, such as the book sales. Therefore it can be said that the more a book (or one that has been movied) is sold, the more popular it becomes.

Popular literature from time to time is close to people. Thus, this type of literature raises social and cultural issues which genuinely present during the problems of human life. Experts consider that popular culture is a community phenomenon (Adi, 2011: 70). This illustrates that popular literary works are more often in the form of reflection or reflection of the community that existed at the time the popular literature born, although sometimes for certain cases, the works are more

directed to the expectations or images desired by the reader or the audience. The birth of a popular literary work can not be separated from the cultural phenomenon that currently happened. He tried to capture popular events and photographed them directly and wrote his works similarly.

Soccer considers as a popular sport in the world, both for men and women. in line with the statement of Gema, et al. (2016) that soccer is a popular sport that attracts the attention of the world community regardless of age, gender, and social status. Michailidis (2013) added that "soccer is the most popular sport in the world with millions of people involved in amateur and professional levels". unsurprisingly, this sport is then often used as a significant theme in a variety of popular literary works, especially in the form of a movie. The author observed the phenomenon when all the public attention is focused on soccer events, and there are many movie producers produce soccer themed movies. The emerge of those movies are mostly in the drama genre, but some movies have comedy genre, are quite capable of drawing the attention of movie lovers both in Indonesia and abroad. Just call it Goal!, The Dream Begins and Goal! 2: Living the Dream. Those movies tell about the struggle of Santiago Muñez (Kuno Becker) in his soccer career.

Soccer will not be exciting without the presence of the supporters with all their various behaviour. *Looking for Eric* tells a middle-aged man who admires Eric Cantona with all his problems and escapes the problem by having an imaginary conversation with Eric Cantona. Soccer club supporters are known for their great solidarity which sometimes seems shallow. In *Looking for Eric*, supporters work together to help solve their partner's problems.

Still about supporters. Indonesia does not want to be outdone by making 2 movies about football fans. Like *The Conductors* who used a documentary approach to highlight supporter coordinators, not much different from the conductor of music, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the director picked a classic love story full of tragedy between two hostile fanatical supporters. The director packed it quickly and filled with scenes of violence, plus the insertion of one of the most "burning" scenes in the history of Indonesian movie.

Football for some people will be more exciting if followed by betting action. Sports gambling is actually able to drag people who like to do it, dragged into various problems, especially financial problems. Because of losing bets, Winky Wiryawan and Herjunot Ali were dragged into a confusing and chaotic conflict maze.

Furthermore, the inventions that were carried out were also broad like the story of someone who had aspirations to become a footballer. An example is the local movie *Garuda di Dadaku*, played by Emir Mahira, which tells about a child who wants to develop his talent in the field of football. However, he fails to get support from his grandfather he lies.

The storyline or narrative structure depicted in several movies above, shows the similarity of formulas that are repeated even though they raise various issues from the world of football. There is an obvious element of intention in order to reach as many viewers as possible, the producer seems to be free to combine several genres in popular literature, such as drama and children as well as action and comedy. These producers want the prospective audience or reviewers of the movies to know and be more segmented in the selection of works that the audience wants to consume. The main goal is clearly wanting to increase sales figures.

Adin (2011) in *Popular Fiction: Theory and Method of Study* reveals that "because tastes change along with changes and developments in society, surely popular genre fiction changes together with the development of these tastes". Related to this, in analyzing a popular literary work, what needs to be observed is the presence of convention elements in the narrative or what is usually better known as a plot of the story as a reflection that follows the development of a society's tastes. This same narrative structure is reproduced repeatedly with the aim that the audience does not feel strange about the story to be conveyed in the movie. To be more attractive, inventions or new discoveries (innovations) are made which are the ingredients of the story, so that the audience does not get bored with the narrative conventions of the story. Therefore, in this paper the authors tried to analyze the narrative structure in popular literature, the football drama genre movies, which are focused on the *Garuda di dadaku* movie representing local productions, *Shaolin Soccer* which represents the Chinese community, *Barefoot Dream* which represents Korea, *Bend it Like Beckham* with the theme of the lives of Indian girls and *Air Bud 3: Soccer* which is the result of Hollywood movie production, through a structuralism approach. The authors will examine the similarity of the narrative structure of the story (convention) and what inventions are made to differentiate the movie from other movies with similar themes.

Literature Review

According to Frye, literature emanates from the collective subject in the form of the community itself. Therefore, literature can manifest "archetypes" or figures that have universal significance (Eagleton, 2007:

134). While Saussure, the founding father of structuralism, himself has the view that the individual units of any system only have the meaning as a result of their interrelationships with each other (Eagleton, 2007). From these two understandings it can be understood that a literary work must have structures that build a story in it. The structure is interrelated to form a complete narrative story. Literary works can also be understood as archetypes or things that are universal, reflecting the lives of the surrounding community.

Popular literary works in the form of the movie are often based on inventions of conventions or formulas of similar genre that have existed before. In general, the literary formula is a narrative or dramatic convention structure used in a large number of individual works (Cawelti, 1976). In his book, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*, Cawelti said that the formula is a combination or synthesis of a number of certain cultural conventions with a universal form of a story or called archetypes. There was a merger between "formula" and "genre" to design the same thing.

The presence of popular movies often intersects with popular culture that exists in a society or that has even worldwide. Anthropologists define culture in two definitions, namely behavioral definitions that focus on the behavior patterns of a social group and cognitive definitions that focus more on community ideas, beliefs and knowledge (Ida, 2011). Through popular culture that was developing in the community at a particular time, the work tried to invite the reader or audience to enjoy something that was not too familiar to him because the popular culture was a social phenomenon that was around him at that time.

Methodology

This study mainly discussed the narrative formula in some soccer-themed movies, especially analyzing the convention and invention in it. The objects of the study; *Garuda di Dadaku*, *Shaolin Soccer*, *Barefoot Dream*, *Bend it Like Beckham*, and *Air Bud 3: Soccer*, were analyzed by using qualitative method. Qualitative research explained by Shank (2002, p. 5) as a form of systematic empirical enquiry into meaning. It means that a researcher must follow the rules agreed by community and get the data according to the experience.

The writers collected the scenes in the movies showing up the narrative structure. By classifying the plot, started from the introduction part up to the resolution stage, the writers were able to see the formula similarity (convention) in the story and then analyze the invention in each movie which makes the differences in it.

Result and Discussion

According to several sources on the internet, the writers got the popularity information of soccer-themed movies which became the object of this research. From data written by Persada (2016), *Garuda di Dadaku* became one of twenty-four Indonesian movie titles watched by million people that were 1.37 million. Besides, it became the winner of Indonesian movie Festival in some categories, namely Best Children movie, Best Original Story Script Writer, Best Male Actor and Best Music Arranger. Meanwhile, according to *bobotoh.id* (2018) in the article “#Soccermovies *Shaolin Soccer: Pertarungan Pendekar Lapangan Hijau*”, *Shaolin Soccer* successfully got into the United States box office movies and achieved seven winners in Hong Kong movie Awards.

The Korean Production Movie, *Barefoot Dream* got many achievements in its country, among others Best Production (Kim Joon-Jong) – 2010 (47th) Daejong movie Awards - October 29, Best Music (Kim Joon-Suk) – 2010 (47th) Daejong movie, as stated in *asianwiki.com*. Meanwhile, Indian-England production movie, based on data in *imdb.com* (2004), *Bend It Like Beckham* successfully nominated in Golden Globe Awards, by winning 17 appreciations and getting other 18 nominations from other continents awards. Moreover, for the last movie which Hollywood production, *Air Bud 3: World Pup*, successfully ranked in the 7th of Box Office Hollywood in 2000 (*imdb.com*, 2000).

From the data collected by the writers above, there are similar symptoms in the process of popular fiction production, namely based on the cultural phenomena that were loved by many people at that time. The popularity resulted from the cinema tickets sales and ratings on television showing quite high numbers and nominations in various movie awards and even won the awards. The extraordinary success obtained by a soccer-themed movie made some producers try to do a similar repetition to get the same success.

Through a series of activities watching several sports-themed movies, especially soccer, such as *Garuda di Dadaku*, *Shaolin Soccer*, *Barefoot Dream*, *Bend it Like Beckham*, and *Air Bud 3: World Pup*, the writers got the fact that among the five movies have the same narrative structural formula. The narrative structures of the story were:

1. The introduction of the main character in the story that has problems in his or her life.

In *Garuda di Dadaku*, the introduction of character done by the

appearance of a child character named Bayu who secretly escape from the house through his bedroom window to play soccer with some of his friends on the nearby badminton court. When he returns, back through the window, he is called by the Grandfather who reminds him of his painting lessons that afternoon. The figure of the grandfather here is described as someone who hates football so much.

Meanwhile, in the movie *Shaolin Soccer*, Sing, the main character, told as one of the *Shaolin* who has the extraordinary kicking ability. However, this ability is no longer useful because at that time no more people who want to hire a *Shaolin* even just to show in cafes. Therefore he lives in poverty and only earns his life as a scavenger.

In the movie *Barefoot Dream*, in 2003, depicted a former South Korean soccer player named Kim Won-kang (Park Hie-soon) trying his luck by doing business in Indonesia. Unfortunately, he always fails. Until one day, when stranded in Medan, North Sumatra, Kim decides to try his luck in East Timor, a country that had just gained its independence. Unfortunately, the sports shop that he opened is hardly noticed by buyers. Until one day he sees a group of children playing ball with bare feet. Then the idea arises to give "installments" shoes to the children.

Meanwhile, in the movie *Bend it Like Beckham* tells the life story of a girl named Jess, who lives in London. Since childhood, Jess is still introduced to Indian culture by her parents. Mixing the culture seems to make Jess live in two different worlds. On the one hand, she must continue to maintain the culture of her ancestors; on the other hand she lives in modern British culture. Jess is very fond of soccer, but her family, especially her mother, is very much against it.

In the movie *Air Bud 3: World Pup*, the character Buddy, a remarkable

dog, is reintroduced as a dog that is loyal to his master and capable of many things. At the first time, he is underestimated by a group of people on the soccer team because he is considered only to be able to play basketball (a story from the previous series) and will not be able to play soccer like humans.

2. The main character's initiative to solve or get out of the faced problem. This effort is related to things related to soccer, such as quiet training or even looking for luck fortune through football.

Bayu, in *Garuda di Dadaku*, seeks to practice quietly behind his grandfather, assisted by his close friend, Heri, who has high hopes for Bayu to be Indonesian national team player one day. Bayu denies his grandfather's dislike of football by watching the U-13 teen league final match in Indonesian soccer.

Another case is in *Shaolin Soccer*. The character Sing met with the Coach. They take the initiative to create a great soccer team group which existed in the world at that time. Sing finally gathered one by one of his friends who used to go to college with him in *Shaolin*. At that time, his friends refused to join, but Sing did not give up and kept trying to invite them to join. Unnoticed by Sing, his friends come and agree to join him. Finally, a martial arts soccer team is formed in the world today.

In the movie *Barefoot Dream*, Coach Kim is trying to get out of the hardships of economic life. He has the idea of selling shoes to a group of young children who often play soccer in sandy fields but without shoes. Nevertheless, because his soul feels getting called, he decides to train these children as well. The children's shoes debt must be collected (in installments) when the training session ends while in *Bend it Like Beckham*, Jess Bhamra, who is

closely guarded by her parents, tries to avoid the arranged marriage that is being worked on by her family. She expels the Indian tradition, which is strongly opposed to a girl to be in the scope of things related to "male", by practising soccer with some of her male friends. It is until finally, she gets an offer from a girl to enter the women's soccer club.

In *Air Bud 3: World Pup*, the character Buddy, an extraordinary dog, cared for and taken care of by a child who is very fond of him, tries to show his ability to play football and his ability can amaze the other team players. He is accepted to enter the team and become an attacker with the coach's permission.

3. The problem is slightly solved because the efforts of the main character have a significant impact.

An exciting offer is given to Bayu (*Garuda di Dadaku*) to enter the SSI arsenal by a coach, although he has to face several obstacles, such as difficulties in finding a soccer field. However, in the end, he succeeded in penetrating the scholarship selection given by SSI whereas, in *Shaolin Soccer*, with the formation of a team consisting of members of his school, Sing manages to win several matches through the ability of *Kung Fu*.

In the movie *Barefoot Dream*, it is depicted by Coach Kim, who began to crawl from the adversity of business to improve his economic conditions. His businesses began to run smoothly because many children were interested to practice soccer with him and were willing to pay off the shoes in his shop. He also managed to form a core team and focused on training these children.

Whereas in *Bend it Like Beckham*, Jess made it into the women's soccer team in her city and practised routinely in the actual place to practice, no longer in the park with her male friends like she

usually did. His hopes to become a professional player began to emerge, and his coach gave a positive response to Jess's ability on the field.

In *Air Bud 3: World Pup*, Buddy is well received and entered a soccer competition by the whole team. Buddy becomes an extraordinary dog in the tournament because it helped the team win several soccer matches. The public well knows him at large through the news in several local media.

4. The Suspense of Main Character's Success. It is sometimes because contradicted to fundamental reason; mostly regarding principle.

Bayu has difficulty in practising football in order to enter the scholarship selection. It is because his grandfather stuffs him with various lessons, such as drum lessons, painting, English and mathematics. The time limitation made Bayu changes his mind so that he can get enough time and get through the SSI selection.

In *Shaolin Soccer*, Sing and his team have to face some complicated problems because of the existence of a solid team which is the defending champion. The love conflict between Sing and the female character also loses the spirit of the main character to compete in a soccer match at the time.

In *Barefoot Dream*, Coach Kim encounters difficulties with the appearance of opposition from some local youth who thought that he overused young children by repaying the soccer shoes he was selling. The children also have limited access to get income to repay the shoes. It makes the children simultaneously return the shoes to Kim. It is also caused by Kim's anger that scolding them for the arrears of shoe installments. Kim finally realizes when a child brings him a chicken to pay for the shoes.

Jess Bhamra is finally caught up with her parents because her sister tells her training schedule. This is triggered by the cancellation of her sister's marriage because the groom's parents saw Jess as if she was kissing an English man. It is her female teammate, and it happens when they wanted to visit the residence of Jess and her family.

Buddy in *Air Bud 3*, also experiences the same thing because a dog catcher constrains it. Its freedom is threatened because the hunter's selfishness to catch all the stray dogs in the city. It also feels sad when its girlfriend, the female dog of the other owner, is caught by the dog catcher. Buddy also tries to release its girlfriend.

5. The climax shows the increasingly complex problem faced by the main character and almost makes him or her give up.

Due to hard efforts and never give up, Bayu finally entered as one of the nominations for the U-13 national team selection players as aspired by himself and his best friend. However, problems arise due to Bayu's openness to his grandfather about the training and selection he is involved in. The grandfather, who thinks that Bayu's natural talent is in the field of painting, feels shocked and gets a heart attack when he sees his grandson kicking the ball in the field. His grandfather's condition finally makes Bayu gives up on the soccer and refuses Heri's persuading to remain in the national team selection.

Another case in *Shaolin Soccer*, prolonged conflict and declining spirit of teammates makes the *Shaolin Soccer* team weak when competing. They also have to fight tooth and nail against the opposing team that is very tough.

In *Barefoot Dream*, Coach Kim has to give up his dream of competing in

the children league in Japan because of the broke out conflict in Timor Leste. The riots forced the coach to return to Korea, his home country, to save his life. Besides, the lack of funds for the team departure makes him desperate and wants to go back to Korea, including closing his shoe store.

Jess Bhamra in *Bend it Like Beckham* surrenders to her dream because her father is sick and tells her to marry a man of choice from her parents, following the tradition that has been passed down through generations in Indian families. This climax occurs when the father learns of Jess's departure with the team to Germany to take part in a friendly match with the home team. She is increasingly restrained and may not leave the house.

In *Air Bud 3: World Pup*, Buddy is finally caught by a dog hunter while trying to save his girlfriend. The Buddy arrest is a barrier to the team's success in final match. The entire team, the coaches and supporters of the Werewolf team feel anxious and disappointed with Buddy's absence in this crucial match.

6. Happy ending; the main character wins the battle and fulfil his or her desire.

The entire five soccer-themed movies have a happy ending; Bayu successfully enters the U-13 national team, Sing and friends win the match after working hard and Coach Kim win the youth league match with the Timor Leste children team whom he trained in Japan. Besides, Jess is finally allowed to go to America and compete in more professional American women's soccer league, and lastly Buddy successfully supports Werewolf team to win the soccer match in the final round.

The Invention in the Movies

As far as the writer's observation, the inventions contained in the movies are more about culture. The producers try to combine this ball theme with a culture that is prevalent in the community so that it feels more familiar with the audience being the target market.

Local wisdom, which becomes the minor theme, is strong so that the audience feels interested and considers the problems that occur to the main characters to be part of their problems as well.

In the movie *Garuda di Dadaku*, the complexity of Indonesian education, which requires that an individual can master many things, brilliant in academics, is a central issue in the conflict of the story. The game of football is only considered a trivial matter and will not provide a future for someone who is persevering. Meanwhile, the Sing character in *Shaolin Soccer* has successfully brought the image of a *shaolin*, a *kung fu* master of China.

Bend it Like Beckham tries to elevate the life side of Indian immigrants living in London. The dual identity issue; being a native Indian or hybrid western, is indeed central issue in the life of this community. Not infrequently the clash happens between the elders who want to keep their original culture with young people who feel traditional culture is an old fashioned thing and is not following the Western society's culture.

In *Barefoot Dreams*, the audience was invited to get to know the human side of a Korean citizen who helped the local community in Papua New Guinea to achieve their dreams. Soccer itself has been thriving in this country since Korea became the third winner in the 2002 World Cup.

Last but not least, the pride of having a smart pet is a common thing for Americans. Many people are competing to train their pets to be able to do many things like humans do. Hence, a fantasy that a dog can play football like humans is not a strange thing for them. This phenomenon is what happens in the movie *Air Bud 3: World Pup*. Unconsciously the audience was invited to have a dream that they could have pets as smart as *Buddy*.

Conclusion

According to the analysis, the writers can conclude that there are similarities in the narrative structure of the story in the movie *Garuda di Dadaku*, *Shaolin Soccer*, *Barefoot Dream*, *Bend It Like Beckham* and *Air Bud 3: World Pup*. The narrative structure similarity is the main character introduction in the story that has problems in his or her life, the main character's initiative to solve or get out of the problem he is experiencing. This is related to things related to football, such as quiet training or even seeking fortune through football, the problem that is slightly solved because the efforts made by the main character have a significant impact, the character's suspense of success in achieving his goals because contradicted to basic reason, mostly regarding to the principle, the climax shows the increasingly complex problem faced by the main character and almost makes him or her give up. Moreover, the happy ending, the main character wins the battle and fulfils his or her desire.

Meanwhile, the invention done in the movies refers to the cultural issues that are close to the community. This is done so that the viewers who become the target movie market feel closer to the raised issues and have a more emotional closeness in them.

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