Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra
Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1909

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

Representation of Cleverness and Power in Cross-Country Folklores: The Story of *Kecerdikan Zibong* & The Tale of the *Kancil Melawan Harimau*

Naya Nabila[1]*, Patimatuz Zahro[2], Rifa Fathurrizqiyyah[3], Wardah Laeli[4], Yeti Heryati[5]
[1235]Prodi Tadris Bahasa Indonesia, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Jawa Barat, Indonesia
[4]Prodi Tadris Bahasa Indonesia, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jawa Barat, Indonesia
*E-mail: nayanabila836@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
This study aims to examine comparative literature by describing the representation of cleverness and power in the Korean folklore of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* and the Indonesian folklore *Kancil Melawan Harimau* through intrinsic elements, including plot, setting, diction, characterization, and moral messages. The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* is taken from a collection of *Cerita Rakyat Jepang dan Korea*, while The *Kancil Melawan Harimau* is taken from the book *Si Kancil yang Cerdik*. These two folktales share similarities that can be analyzed in depth. The research instrument is the human instrument, in which the researcher acts as the main instrument throughout the research process. The method used is descriptive qualitative research with content analysis. Data collection employs purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the research focus. The findings show that cleverness is reflected in the characters' ability to develop strategies and exploit the weaknesses of other characters, while power is reflected in their ability to influence the thoughts and actions of others. These findings are identified through the analysis of intrinsic elements, which reveals differences in the representation of cleverness and power. The two folktales have different purposes. Zibong tends to use his cleverness for personal gain without considering the possible consequences, whereas the Kancil uses cleverness to save himself from trouble. In terms of power, Zibong uses his influence to save himself and persuade several people to follow his wishes, while the Kancil focuses on using his power to influence the Harimau.

Keywords: cleverness, power, folklores, comparative literature

Representasi Kecerdikan dan Kekuasaan dalam Dongeng Lintas Negara: Kisah *Kecerdikan Zibong* & Dongeng *Kancil Melawan Harimau*

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji sastra bandingan dengan mendeskripsikan representasi kecerdikan dan kekuasaan dalam dongeng Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong dari Korea dan dongeng Kancil Melawan Harimau dari Indonesia melalui unsur intrinsik berupa alur, latar, diksi, penokohan, dan pesan moral. Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong diambil dari kumpulan Cerita Rakyat Jepang dan Korea dan Kancil Melawan harimau diambil dari buku Si Kancil yang Cerdik. Kedua dongeng ini memiliki persamaan yang dapat dianalisis secara mendalam. Instrumen penelitian berupa human instrumen yakni peneliti bertindak sebagai alat utama dalam proses penelitian. Sedangkan metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif menggunakan analisis konten. Teknik pengambilan data menggunakan purposive sampling yang disesuaikan dengan kriteria fokus kajian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kecerdikan tampak pada kemampuan tokoh menyusun strategi dan memanfaatkan kelemahan tokoh lain, sedangkan kekuasaan tampak pada kemampuan memengaruhi pikiran dan tindakan tokoh lain. Hasil tersebut ditemukan melalui unsur intrinsik yang menghasilkan temuan berupa perbedaan representasi kecerdikan dan kekuasaan. Kedua dongeng memilki tujuan yang berbeda, Zibong cenderung menggunakan kecerdikan untuk keuntungan dirinya sendiri tanpa mempertimbangkan dampak yang akan terjadi. Sedangkan Kancil menggunakan kecerdikan untuk menyelamatkan dirinya dari masalah. Dalam kekuasaan, Zibong memanfaatkan pengaruhnya untuk menyelamatkan dirinya dan memengaruhi beberapa orang untuk mengikuti keinginan nya. Sedangkan Kancil memanfaatkan kekuasaan berfokus untuk memengaruhi Harimau.

Kata kunci: kecerdikan, kekuasaan, dongeng, sastra bandingan

Submitted	Accepted	Published
17/10/2026	27/10/2026	05/11/2026

Citation	Nabila, N., Fathurrizqiyyah, R., Laeli, W., Heryati, Y. (2026). Representation of Cleverness and Power in Cross-Country Folktales: The Story of Kecerdikan Zibong & The Tale of the Kancil Melawan Harimau. *Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra, Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026, 4963-4974*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1909

Publisher
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355
Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra
Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1909

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are products of society's culture that reflect the behavior of the people who create them (Mahayana, 2012). As literary works, folktales are passed down from generation to generation, reflecting the values and views of life held by society during a particular period (Prasetyanawati, 2012). Therefore, folktales, as reflections of a society's life, can be applied to everyday life. Based on this phenomenon, folktales are universal because they can be found in various parts of the world. Every country and region has its own cultural traditions that are believed to contain life lessons that can be practiced by the local community (Kim et al., 2025). In reality, literary works from different parts of the world share similarities in their narrative elements and structural components, which have led to the development of cross-national literary studies, known as comparative literature. Comparative literature is a field of study that focuses on comparing one literary work with another or with disciplines outside literature (Zahro, 2021). Furthermore, comparative literature enables researchers to explore the similarities and differences between different literary works (Widyaningrum & Sondari, 2022).

One aspect of comparative literature that can be analyzed is the personalities of characters in folktales. Authors portray different personalities through their characters so that readers can understand the characteristics of the figures in the stories they read (Kristantiningtyas & Pernaningroem, 2025). Cleverness and power are among the personality traits represented in folktales, and these two aspects are considered important because they influence one another. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), the word clever has two meanings: being quick to understand a situation and being skillful at finding solutions. In addition, cleverness is associated with resourcefulness, which can also represent cunning behavior. Meanwhile, power has two definitions. First, power is a concept of social relations found in everyday life, including personal relationships between two individuals who interact with an object over which one exercises control. Second, power refers to the ability to carry out one's own will despite opposition, regardless of the basis of that ability (Cahyono et al., 2023).

Based on this explanation, the researchers are interested in comparing folktales from Indonesia and Korea because the two countries are considered to share several similarities in the narrative elements of their literary works. This can be seen in previous studies on comparative literature between Indonesia and Korea. One study analyzed the similarities in the intrinsic elements of the Indonesian novel Orang-orang Kalah and the Korean novel The Hole to reveal the social realities presented in both novels (Kurniasih & Hartati, 2023). Another study focused on the structural elements of poetry from Indonesia and Korea, comparing the Indonesian poem Padamu Jua by Amir Hamzah with the Korean poem Chahan by Kim Sowol (Diana et al., 2025). In addition, a study examined the similarities and differences in the presentation of the theme of romance in the Indonesian folktale Keong Mas and the Korean myth Snail Bride (Ratulangi & Punomo, 2022). These three studies compare Indonesian and Korean literature through various literary forms, including novels, poetry, and myths. Therefore, the novelty of the present study lies in its focus on cleverness and power in folktales from different countries. Accordingly, the research question is: How are cleverness and power represented in two different folktales from Indonesia and Korea based on the intrinsic elements of literary works?

The purpose of this study is to describe the representation of cleverness and power in The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* and The *Kancil Melawan Harimau*. These representations are examined through intrinsic elements, including plot, setting, diction, and characterization, as well as the moral messages related to the cleverness and power possessed by the characters. In fiction studies, commonly examined elements include

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

characters and characterization, setting, point of view, and language. Meanwhile, the intrinsic elements of folktales generally include characters, setting, theme, moral message, and plot. These elements explain how cleverness is used by characters to deal with problems and how power is portrayed through their actions and influence over other characters (Santika et al., 2023).

This study is expected to provide theoretical benefits by contributing to comparative literature studies, particularly in analyzing the representation of cleverness and power in folktales from different countries. Furthermore, this research is expected to serve as a reference for future researchers conducting comparative literature studies, especially those examining intrinsic elements to reveal the cleverness and power possessed by characters in folktales.

METHOD

The research method used in this article is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Furthermore, the data analysis is conducted inductively, with an emphasis on revealing deeper meanings rather than merely making generalizations (Safarudin et al., 2023). In addition, the definition of the qualitative approach, particularly in literature reviews, explains that qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words. This approach focuses on developing an in-depth understanding of a problem, tends to use analytical methods, and emphasizes the process of meaning-making (Prayogi & Kurniawan, 2024).

The research subjects are the short story *Kancil Melawan Harimau*, taken from the collection *Si Kancil yang Cerdik* (Firdaus, 2018, pp. 27-33) and The *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong*, taken from the book *Kumpulan Lengkap Cerita Rakyat Jepang dan Korea* (Hanafi, 2020, pp. 110-115). Meanwhile, the object of this study is the intrinsic elements of the short stories that represent cleverness and power.

The analytical method used is content analysis, which aims to identify comparative patterns in the intrinsic elements, including plot, setting, diction, characterization, and moral messages found in the narratives of the folktales. These elements serve as data representing cleverness and power in the two stories. Content analysis, also known as textual analysis, is a method used to examine the contents of documents objectively and systematically (Hendry & Manongga, 2024). This method was selected because the research object meets the criteria for content analysis, namely documented materials, including books and manuscripts (Sitasari, 2022).

The data sources in this study were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique based on specific considerations or criteria related to the research objectives. This technique was chosen to ensure that the data obtained would be more representative of the research problem being examined (Salamanang & Nurdiarti, 2023).

The sample selection was also based on Michael Patton's concept, which emphasizes the selection of information-rich cases. In this approach, subjects are deliberately selected for in-depth examination to develop a comprehensive understanding (Lenaini, 2021). Based on these considerations, the selection of reading materials as data sources for the study entitled "The Representation of Cleverness and Power in Cross-National Folktales: The *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* and The *Kancil Melawan Harimau*" was based on the following specific criteria: (1) the book or folktale text explicitly contains The Tale of Zibong's Cleverness and Kancil Melawan Harimau as representations of cross-national literary works; and (2) the reading materials contain narrative elements, plot, and character traits that clearly represent the theme of cleverness in confronting power or stronger opponents.

RESULT

Based on the literature review and the considered data selection, this study examines the representation of cleverness and power in the folktales The *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* and The

Kancil Melawan Harimau. The study consists of 59 data units selected based on their relevance to the research focus, namely cleverness and power in both folktales. The analysis is conducted through five intrinsic elements: plot, setting, diction, characterization, and moral messages. The findings are presented in two tables: Table 1 contains the analysis of the representation of cleverness, while Table 2 presents the analysis of the representation of power.

1. Intrinsic Element of Cleverness

A comparison of the intrinsic elements cleverness regarding the aspect of cunning—between "Zibong's Cunning" and "The Mouse-Deer Outwits the Tiger"—is presented in the table below.

Table-1
Analysis of Cleverness

Intrinsic Elements of Kecerdikan Zibong	Intrinsic Elements of Kancil Melawan Harimau
1. Plot "Sorry, sir, I just spat randomly and it fell into the cup. That's why I tried to get it out." Obviously Zibong... The old nobleman didn't know this" (p. 110) "Wow, Zibong this letter ordered the mistress to kill you, the old man said honestly... Zibong was shocked. He ordered the old man to replace the letter." (p. 111) "Catch Zibong and tie him up, put him in a sack and throw him into the sea... But now I can't get out. Let's untie the rope of this sack. After that, you can go in and your eye disease will be cured." (p. 112) 2. Setting "On the way to Seoul, the master sent Zibong to a shop to buy a cup of wine." (p. 110) "From between the woven sacks, he saw a blind man walking with a stick, he called him" (p. 112) "Catch Zibong and tie him up, put him in a sack and throw him into the sea" (p. 112) "Zibong reappeared at his master's house and everyone was shocked" (p. 113)	1. Plot "Finally, the mouse-deer realized that the tiger had deceived him." (p. 30) "Then, the mouse-deer walked ahead, while the tiger followed behind." (p. 31) "Before long, they arrived at the well... 'We've arrived. This is the well I was talking about. Go over there and look inside—there's a tiger in there.'" (p. 31) 2. Setting "Then, he walked off in search of a nearby lake to get a drink." (p. 27) "In truth, the mouse-deer could not run very fast. He hid behind some bushes so the tiger would not pursue him any further." (p. 28) "Oh no... I'm done for. The tiger is surely going to come after me." (p. 29) "'The tiger lives inside a well at the edge of this forest,' the mouse-deer replied... 'There—did you hear that? He's roaring back. It sounds like he wants to fight you,' the mouse-deer said, stoking the tiger's temper." (p. 31)

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

3. Diction indicating verbal strategis
"Sorry, sir, I spat carelessly and it fell into this cup. That's why I tried to get it out." (p. 110)

"I was blind before I got into this magic sack." (p. 112)

“A shaman gave me this sack and after entering it I could see again.” (p. 112)

"After that, you can come in and your eye disease will be cured." (p. 112)

4. Characterization
Sorry, sir, I spat carelessly and it fell into this cup. ...Obviously Zibong lied" (p. 110)

"Yes, he still made many more things along the way to Seoul" (p. 111)

"This is certainly the result of Zibong's machinations" (p. 112)

"But his cunning behavior disgusted the youngest" (p. 115)

5. Moral message
"Zibong had been targeting the youngest for a long time. However, his cunning behavior made the youngest sick. He pushed Zibong as hard as he could until the cunning creature fell and drowned with his master" (p. 115)

3. Diction indicating verbal strategis
“‘Fine. You’ve caught me, and there’s nothing I can do.’” (p. 30)

“‘Before I headed to the lake, I ran into another tiger—not you. He was larger than you, and surely much stronger.’” (p. 30)

“‘That tiger lives inside a well at the edge of this forest.’” (p. 31)

“‘There—did you hear that? He’s roaring back. It sounds like he wants to fight you.’” (p. 31)

“‘If you win, then you are the true King of the Forest.’” (p. 32)

4. Characterization
“Very well. You have caught me, and there is nothing I can do,” said the Mouse Deer, feigning resignation. “But... in truth, you are not the only ‘King of the Jungle’ in these woods.” (p. 30)

“Before I headed to the lake, I encountered another tiger—one even larger than you, and surely much stronger, too.” (p. 30)

5. Moral message
“In reality, the Mouse Deer cannot run very fast.” (p. 28)

“However, being a clever creature, the Mouse Deer immediately devised a plan to escape from the tiger.” (p. 30)

2. Intrinsic Element of Power

A comparison of the intrinsic elements of power regarding the aspect of cunning—between "Zibong’s Cunning" and "The Mouse-Deer Outwits the Tiger"—is presented in the table below.

Table-2
Analysis of Power

Intrinsic Elements of Kecerdikan Zibong	Kancil Melawan Harimau
1. Plot "He ordered the old man to replace the letter and write a new one—a letter instructing the mistress of the house to give her youngest daughter's hand in marriage to Zibong, as a reward for all his past services." (p. 111) "Oh, I am so glad we have the chance to enter the Dragon Palace beneath the sea. It is a grand palace, indeed... Let us go there and live happily ever after. Everyone was captivated by his words. Each person took a pair of fans, and together they headed toward the sea." (p. 113) "Upon arriving there, Zibong said, 'Father, you must go first; we shall follow behind.'" (p. 114) 2. Setting "The following month, Zibong reappeared at his master's house, leaving everyone in complete shock... Each person took a pair of fans, and together they headed toward the sea." (p. 113) "Upon arriving there, Zibong said, 'Father, you must go first; we shall follow behind.'" (p. 114) 3. Diction indicating verbal strategies "After that, you can go inside, and your eye ailment will be cured." (p. 112) "Let us go there and live happily ever after. We need only bring a pair of fans to use as oars." (p. 113) "'Father, you must go first; we shall follow behind.'" (p. 114) "Hey, look at Father! He is waving his fan, beckoning us to join him. Let's hurry!" (p. 114)	1. Plot "But... actually, you aren't the only 'King of the Jungle'... if you want to eat my flesh, you must defeat him..." "Very well, I shall defeat him." (pp. 30-31) "We have arrived; this is the well I was talking about. Go over there and look inside... The tiger approached the edge of the well." (p. 31) "Did you hear that? He's roaring back, too. What are you waiting for? Defeat him. If you win, then you are the true King of the Jungle." (p. 32) 2. Setting "We have arrived. This is the well I was talking about. Go over there and look inside—there is a tiger in there." Then, the tiger approached the edge of the well. He immediately peered inside. (p. 31) 3. Diction indicating verbal strategies "But, in truth, you aren't the only 'King of the Jungle' in this forest." (p. 30) "So, if you want to eat my flesh, defeat him." (p. 30) "It seems he wants to challenge you." (p. 31) "What are you waiting for? Defeat him. If you win, then you are the true King of the Jungle." (p. 32) 4. Characterization "So, if you want to eat my flesh, defeat him." (p. 30)

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

4. Characterization
"He ordered the old man to replace the letter and write a new one—a letter instructing the mistress of the house to give her youngest daughter's hand in marriage to Zibong, as a reward for all his past services." (p. 111)

"Oh, how wonderful it would be to enter the Dragon Palace beneath the sea! Let us go there and live happily ever after." Everyone was captivated by his words. Each of them took a pair of fans, and together they headed toward the sea. (p. 113)

"Upon arriving, Zibong said, 'Father, you must go first; we shall follow behind.'" (p. 114)

5. Moral message
One by one, they displayed their recklessness. Since none of them knew how to swim, they nearly drowned. Finally, the youngest daughter—the most beautiful of them all—prepared to follow. (p. 114)

"Don't, my dear! Can't you see? They are all going to drown!" (p. 115)

Zibong had long set his sights on the youngest daughter, but his cunning behavior filled her with disgust. She pushed Zibong with all her might, causing the devious creature to fall and drown along with his master. (p. 115)

"We have arrived. ... Go over there and look inside..."
(p. 31)

"What are you waiting for? Defeat him."
"If you win, then you are the true King of the Jungle," (p. 32)

5. Moral message
"That is your reward, for failing to keep your own promise," said the mouse deer with satisfaction. "Don't leave, Cil! Please, save me!" (p. 32)

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal differences in the traits of cleverness and power presented in two folktales from different countries. These differences can be identified through various intrinsic elements, including plot, setting, diction, characterization, and moral messages.

Analysis of Cleverness

Cleverness is one of the personality traits commonly found in stories, including The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* and The *Kancil Melawan Harimau*, both of which contain elements that strengthen the representation of cleverness. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), cleverness refers to the ability to understand situations quickly and solve problems effectively. Another perspective defines cleverness as the ability to think intelligently and respond quickly when dealing with problems (Gafar & Sari, 2021). Therefore, cleverness in this study refers to the ability to solve problems.

Cleverness in The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* is portrayed through various elements. First, the chronological plot presents a series of events that demonstrate Zibong's cleverness, beginning with the emergence of an idea and continuing through the implementation of that idea. The chronological

plot in The Tale of Zibong's Cleverness can be identified through three quotations in the findings. One example is the following quotation kutipan *"Maaf, Tuan, saya tadi meludah sembarang dan ternyata jatuh di dalam cawan. Maka itulah saya berusaha mengeluarkannya." Jelas Zibong ... Bangsawan tua itu tak tahu hal ini."* (p. 110). This quotation represents the chronological plot used in the story because it contains a stage in the process of carrying out a clever scheme.

Second, the setting supports the representation of cleverness because it provides the places where the schemes take place. In The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong*, the settings include an inn, inside a sack, at sea, and at the master's house.

Third, the diction used in The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* also contributes to the portrayal of cleverness, as shown in the following character dialogues:

"Maaf, Tuan, saya tadi meludah sembarangan dan ternyata jatuh di dalam cawan ini. Maka itulah saya berusaha mengeluarkannya." (p. 110). In the first quotation, Zibong's cleverness is demonstrated by his ability to quickly make an excuse to cover up his actions and find a way out of a situation that puts him at a disadvantage.

"Aku dulu juga buta sebelum masuk ke dalam karung ajaib ini." (p. 112). This quotation represents Zibong's cleverness when he invents a false story about a magic sack as a strategy to escape from the sack and persuade the blind man to believe his fabricated story.

"Seorang dukun memberiku karung ini dan setelah masuk aku jadi bisa melihat lagi." (p. 112). The lie in this quotation illustrates Zibong's cleverness in making his false story sound believable to the blind man, allowing his plan to proceed smoothly and deceive him.

"Setelah itu, kau bisa masuk dan nanti penyakit matamu itu sembuh." (p. 112). This sentence illustrates Zibong's cleverness in using deception as a way to save himself from the punishment imposed by his master.

Fourth, the characterization of the main character, Zibong, portrays him as someone who devises numerous schemes whenever he encounters a problem. He can also convince others through his fabricated stories and exploit their weaknesses to trap them in his deception. Therefore, Zibong is portrayed as a highly clever character.

Fifth, Zibong's cleverness has a significant impact on the moral message conveyed by the story. His cleverness enables him to escape the punishment that awaits him. However, cleverness used with bad intentions can bring disaster to others and ultimately to oneself. Thus, cleverness can turn a situation around but may also lead to death and endanger all the characters in the story.

Furthermore, in The *Kancil Melawan Harimau*, cleverness can be identified through the same elements. First, the plot follows a chronological sequence that portrays the Kancil cleverness in confronting the deceitful Harimau. The story progresses in an orderly manner, describing the various ideas the Kancil develops to overcome the problems that threaten him.

Second, cleverness can be seen in the Kancil choice of settings to carry out his schemes, namely the bushes and the well. The Kancil uses the bushes to escape the Harimau's threats and the well as a place to deceive the Harimau. In addition to the physical setting, the emotional atmosphere also supports the portrayal of cleverness, as demonstrated in the quotation, *"Aduh... mati aku. Pasti Harimau akan menghampiriku."* (p. 29). The atmosphere described reflects fear and tension as the Kancil carries out his plan.

Third, the diction strengthens the portrayal of cleverness in the story. The following quotations illustrate the Kancil cleverness:

"Baiklah. Kamu sudah menangkapku dan aku tidak bisa berbuat apa-apa." (p. 30). In this quotation, the Kancil cleverness is demonstrated when he pretends to surrender and appear helpless after being caught by the Harimau, preventing the Harimau from suspecting the plan he is preparing.

"Sebelum aku pergi ke danau, aku bertemu dengan Harimau selain dirimu. Ia lebih besar dari tubuhmu, tentunya ia lebih kuat." (p. 30). The fictional information conveyed by the Kancil represents a clever strategy to deceive his

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

opponent. He provokes the Harimau's curiosity about the existence of another Harimau, which is actually part of the story he has made up.

"Harimau itu tinggal di dalam sumur yang ada di ujung hutan ini." (p. 31). In this quotation, the Kancil uses the well as part of his scheme because he knows the Harimau will be deceived by his own reflection in the water.

"Nah. Kau dengar dia juga ikut meraung. Sepertinya dia ingin melawanmu." (p. 31). This quotation contains a declarative statement intended to make the Harimau increasingly believe that another Harimau is inside the well.

"Jika kamu yang menang, maka kamu adalah Raja Hutan yang sesungguhnya." (p. 32). The conditional sentence in this quotation serves as a means of persuading the Harimau to fall into the Kancil trap. Furthermore, the Harimau's ambition to be recognized as the King of the Jungle is exploited by the Kancil to manipulate the Harimau's perception of the situation.

Fourth, the characterization of the Kancil as the main character portrays him as clever and resourceful. He can devise strategies to deceive his enemy and save himself without relying on physical strength. Instead, he observes the situation and takes advantage of the circumstances, conditions, and weaknesses of his opponent to escape from danger.

Fifth, the Kancil cleverness conveys the moral message that intelligence can be used to solve problems without relying on physical strength. As depicted in the story, the Kancil deceives the Harimau by exploiting the sound of a roar and the reflection in the water, causing the Harimau to become trapped in the well while the Kancil successfully escapes.

Based on the analysis of the two folktales, cleverness is similarly portrayed through the characters' ability to devise strategies to overcome problems. However, the purposes of their strategies differ. Zibong uses deception to escape punishment and fulfill his desires, whereas the Kancil primarily uses cleverness to escape the threat of the Harimau, who intends to eat him. In carrying out their schemes, Zibong deceives several characters through excuses and fabricated stories, while the Kancil exploits the Harimau's curiosity and ambition to become the King of the Jungle. Zibong uses the inn, the sack, and the sea to carry out his deception, while the Kancil uses the bushes to avoid the Harimau and the well to trap him. The consequences of their actions also differ. Initially, Zibong succeeds in saving himself and fulfilling his desires, but his deception ultimately leads to his own death and the deaths of those who follow him into the sea because they believe his story about a dragon's palace that he has invented. In contrast, the Kancil successfully escapes, while the Harimau becomes trapped in the well after being deceived by his own reflection.

Analysis of Power

Another personality trait that can be compared in The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* and The *Kancil Melawan Harimau*. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), power refers to the ability or strength to determine something. Another perspective states that power is the ability to exercise control over and influence others (Rajagukguk et al., 2026). Thus, the power portrayed in these two folktales indicates that characters possessing power can influence other characters. In both folktales examined by the researchers, power is represented by the main characters, Zibong and the Kancil, because both are able to influence their opponents into following their respective schemes.

Power in The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* can be examined through five intrinsic elements. First, the plot influences the representation of power because the story presents a chronological sequence of events in which Zibong exercises power by influencing other characters to follow his directions.

Second, the setting also contributes to strengthening the representation of power associated with Zibong's characterization because it provides the places where power is exercised. The settings that reinforce the representation of power are the master's house and the sea.

Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra
Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1909

Third, the diction used in The Tale of *Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong* also contributes to the portrayal of power in the main character. Through these expressions, power is clearly represented in the story, as shown in the following character dialogues:

"Setelah itu, kau bisa masuk dan nanti penyakit matamu itu sembuh." (p. 112). The lie conveyed in this quotation illustrates Zibong's power because he successfully influences the blind man to enter the sack and take his place.

"Mari kita kesana dan hidup bahagia selamanya. Kita cukup membawa sepasang kipas sebagai dayung." (p. 113). In the second quotation, Zibong demonstrates his power by influencing the people in his master's household through a story about a dragon's palace. This story makes them interested in following his invitation to visit the palace beneath the sea.

"Ayah harus yang paling depan; setelah itu kita mengikuti." (p. 114). The imperative sentence in this quotation demonstrates Zibong's power to influence the nobleman into agreeing to be directed to enter the sea first.

"Oi, lihatlah ayah! Ia melambaikan kipasnya mengajak kita turut serta. Mari bergegas!" (p. 114). This quotation illustrates power through Zibong's ability to twist the situation so that the others interpret the nobleman's waving as an invitation to enter the sea. In fact, the nobleman is actually waving to ask for help.

Fourth, Zibong's characterization as the main character portrays him as possessing considerable power in the story. He can make the people around him believe what he says and follow his directions. This influence emerges through the way Zibong speaks and persuades those around him to believe him, enabling him to direct the people he targets. Fifth, Zibong's power significantly affects his ability to control other characters and make them follow his ideas. However, this power can ultimately harm him if it is not accompanied by caution. Based on the findings of the analysis, the moral message is that power does not necessarily lead someone to achieve what they desire; it must also be accompanied by vigilance.

Furthermore, power in The *Kancil Melawan Harimau can* also be examined through the same five elements. First, the story follows a chronological sequence, showing how the Kancil uses various clever strategies to influence the Harimau. This portrays the Kancil as a powerful character because he can influence another character.

Second, the setting used in The *Kancil Melawan Harimau* is the well. The well becomes the setting in which the Kancil power is demonstrated because the story shows how easily he can trick the Harimau into jumping into it. Thus, the physical setting can reveal which character holds power in the story.

Third, the diction in The Mouse *Kancil Melawan Harimau* also plays a role in showing how the main character establishes power. This power can be identified through the following dialogues:

"Tapi sebenarnya bukan hanya kamu Raja Hutan yang ada di hutan ini." (p. 30). This quotation represents power through the Kancil words, which successfully influence the Harimau's thoughts. As a result, the Harimau becomes curious and begins questioning the existence of the figure described by the Mouse Kancil.

"Jadi kalau kamu ingin memakan dagingku, kalahkan dia." (p. 30). The conditional statement in this quotation directs the Harimau to do something that actually benefits the Kancil.

"Sepertinya dia ingin melawanmu." (p. 31). This quotation can easily influence the Harimau's emotions by provoking his sense of challenge. As a result, the Harimau is influenced and jumps into the well to fight his own reflection.

"Tunggu apa lagi? Kalahkan dia. Jika kamu yang menang, maka kamu adalah Raja Hutan yang sesungguhnya." (p. 32). The question in this quotation illustrates power when the Kancil successfully pushes the Harimau to act by exploiting his ambition to become the King of the Jungle.

Fourth, the Kancil is characterized as the main character who holds considerable power in the story. He can influence others through his words

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

and persuasion. He is able to direct the Harimau's thoughts and actions by exploiting the Harimau's curiosity, anger, and desire to become the King of the Jungle. Through this influence, the Kancil successfully makes the Harimau follow a plan that the Kancil has carefully devised.

Fifth, the Kancil power to influence the Harimau conveys the moral message that lying can lead to trouble and that limitations in status and size are not reasons to accept defeat. In the story, the Kancil power is demonstrated through his exploitation of the Harimau's pride and strong desire to be recognized as the ruler of the forest. As a result, the Harimau acts immediately by following the Kancil directions, eventually being manipulated and falling into the well.

Based on the analysis of the two folktales, power is similarly portrayed through the characters' ability to influence the thoughts and actions of others. However, the purposes of this influence differ. Zibong uses his influence to escape punishment and fulfill his desires, whereas the Kancil uses it to escape the threat of the Harimau, who intends to eat him. Zibong influences several characters, from the blind man to his master's family, through stories and persuasion. In contrast, the Kancil focuses on influencing the Harimau by exploiting his curiosity and ambition to become the King of the Jungle. In carrying out their plans, Zibong uses the inn, the sack, and the sea to facilitate his deception, while the Kancil uses the well to convince the Harimau that there is an opponent he must defeat. The consequences of their actions also differ. Zibong succeeds in saving himself and fulfilling his desires, but his deception ultimately leads to his own death and the deaths of those who follow him into the sea because they believe his story about the dragon's palace. In contrast, the Kancil successfully escapes, while the Harimau becomes trapped in the well after being deceived by his own reflection.

Based on the discussion presented above, one strength of this article is its novel contribution to cross-national comparative literature by examining cleverness and power in folktales from Indonesia and Korea. This study specifically demonstrates the differences in how cleverness is used in the two folktales. The Kancil exploits the situation to manipulate the Harimau's thoughts so that he can escape and save himself. Meanwhile, Zibong uses deception that ultimately brings disaster to the people around him. One limitation that future researchers could address is the need for additional supporting theories to provide a deeper understanding of the findings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, The Tale of Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong and The Kancil Melawan Harimau portray cleverness and power through several elements, including plot, setting, diction, characterization, and the moral messages conveyed by the characters' actions. Cleverness is demonstrated through the characters' ability to devise strategies, take advantage of situations, and recognize the weaknesses of other characters to achieve their goals. Zibong uses various forms of deception and excuses to escape the problems he faces. Meanwhile, the Kancil exploits the Harimau's curiosity and ambition to become the King of the Jungle as part of his plan to escape the threat.

Power in both folktales is demonstrated through the characters' ability to influence the thoughts and actions of others through words, persuasion, and directions. Zibong manages to make other characters believe what he says and follow the plans he has devised. Meanwhile, the Kancil successfully directs the Harimau's actions by exploiting his desire to become the ruler of the forest. This shows that the ability to influence others can be a form of power used to achieve certain goals. The research findings also show that cleverness and power affect the characters' actions and fates. Zibong succeeds in saving himself from his problems through deception, but his actions also lead to his own death and the deaths of other characters. Meanwhile, the Kancil manages to escape from the Harimau, who becomes trapped by his own curiosity and ambition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Indonesian Language Education Study Program for the moral, academic, and financial support provided throughout the preparation and completion of this journal article. This support has been a valuable source of encouragement for the authors in conducting and completing this research successfully. The authors would also like to thank all parties who have contributed their assistance and suggestions to improve this article.

REFERENCES

Cahyono, S. P., Setyawarni, T., Mulyana, A. I., & Bayu, A. A. (2023). Hubungan Hukum dan Kekuasaan dalam Sistem Hukum di Indonesia. *Dinamika Hukum & Masyarakat*, *6*(1), 23–48. https://doi.org/10.30737/dhm.v6i1.4661

Diana, A., Ferdiansyah, R., Nadifah, A., & Rizki, M. (2025). Kajian Sastra Perbandingan Puisi Padamu Jua Karya Amir Hamzah dan Puisi Chancan Karya Kim Sowol. *Journal Penelitian Nusantara*, *1*(November), 97–102. https://doi.org/10.59435/menulis.v1i11.722

Firdaus, M. (2018). Kancil Melawan Harimau. In *Si Kancil yang Cerdik.* Pekanbaru: Dian Prima Lestari.

Gafar, A., & Sari, K. (2021). Watak tokoh Protagonis dalam Novel Guru Aini Karya Andrea Hirata. *Aksara: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, *5*(2), 158–164. https://doi.org/10.33087/aksara.v5i2.262

Hanafi, N. (2020). Kisah Kecerdikan Zibong. In *Kumpulan Lengkap Cerita Rakyat jepang dan Korea*. Yogyakarta: Alexander Books.

Hendry, & Manongga, D. H. (2024). *Analisis Konten Berbasis Grounded Theory*. Semarang: Yayasan Prima Agus Teknik.

Kim, B., Haris, A., & Kim, D. (2025). Representasi Jangsanbeom dan Konstruksi Makna Budaya dalam Media Populer di Busan. *Mimesis*, *6*(2), 205–217. https://doi.org/10.12928/mms.v6i2.14174

Kristantiningtyas, F. D., & Pernaningroem, R. R. D. W. (2025). Penokohan Tokoh Binatang dalam Dongeng Die Dremer Stadtmusikanten. *Gerbang: Jurnal Bahasa, sasatra, dan Budaya Jerman*, *14*(1), 86–95. https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/gerbang/article/view/71016

Kurniasih, K., & Hartati, D. (2023). Realitas Sosial dalam Novel Indonesia Orang-Orang Kalah dan Novel Korea the Hole. *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, dan Sastra*, *9*(1), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v9i1.2142

Lenaini, I. (2021). Teknik Pengambilan Sampel Purposive dan Snowball Sampling. *Historis: Jurnal kajian, penelitian & Pengembangan Pendidikan Sejarah*, *6*(1), 33–39. https://doi.org/10.31764/historis.vXiY.4075

Mahayana, M. S. (2012). Cerita Rakyat Korea-Indonesia sebagai Pembentuk Karakter. *Tuturan*, *1*(2), 97–112. https://doi.org/10.33603/jt.v1i2.1093

Prasetyanawati, A. (2012). *Nilai Moral dalam Kumpulan Dongeng Makhluk Berkedip*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.

Prayogi, A., & Kurniawan, M. A. (2024). *Pendekatan Kualitatif dan Kuantitatif/ : Suatu Telaah*. *1*(2), 30–37. https://doi.org/10.66341/complex.v1i2.7

Rajagukguk, P. S., Hutabarat, H., Sinaga, R., & Gusar, M. R. S. (2026). Konstruksi Makna Kekuasaan melalui Majas Simbolik dalam Novel Berjudul Mahkota yang Terbelah 4. *Boraspati Journal: Journal of Bilingualism, Organization, Research, Articles, Studies in Pedagogy, Anthropology, Theory, and Indigenous Cultures*, *2*(3), 419–429.