

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Tai Lung is the antagonist in *Kung Fu Panda 1* movie which was written by Ethan Reiff and Cyrus Voris in 2008. He is a complex character because the writers portrayed him as a character who had a complete arc through his desire, his need, and his motivation. According to Weiland (2016: 13), a character's desire refers to the things a character wants; a character's need means the things a character fails to realize due to their desire, and a character's motivation is the things driving a character to achieve their desire. These aspects then transform a character for the better or the worst.

In Tai Lung's case, he started as a good guy who wanted to be the Dragon Warrior, and his desire was driven by Shifu's expectations and his idea of power. However, his desire blinded him from seeing what he actually needed, a sense of gratitude for the things he had achieved, and it transformed him into the bad guy.

His complexity makes Tai Lung an interesting character to study. However, there is no linguistic research to study Tai Lung in *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008). The majority of research in the movie uses literary approaches (Chen, 2017; Wang, 2017; Wibawa, 2021) and cultural approaches (Yi, et al, 2015; Wang, 2016). There are also linguistic studies (Hamani and Puluhulawa, 2019; Lailiyah and Novitasari, 2018), but they are not concerned with the characters in the movie.

The absence of linguistic research to study Tai Lung in *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008) had encouraged me to conduct a study on Tai Lung using a linguistic

approach. The approach that I employ in this work is transitivity theory (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, 2014) because the concepts of process types, participants, and circumstances allow me to explore Tai Lung's features encoded in the clauses which represent his experiences in the external and internal worlds.

In this research, I focus on analyzing utterances and narratives in the script that reveal Tai Lung's characterization, relationship with Shifu that reveals his reason for becoming evil, and influence on Tigress. I studied his reasons for becoming evil since it shows the source of his motivation in achieving his desire and his influence on Tigress to show the extent of his complexity as a character. Meantime, I specifically examine Tai Lung's influence on Tigress because Tigress was more personally influenced by Tai Lung's presence in the story as both of them shared a long history with Shifu, their master.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The objective of this research is to analyze utterances and narratives in Kung Fu Panda 1 (2008) movie script to study Tai Lung's characterization, relationship with Shifu that reveal his reason for becoming evil, and influence on Tigress using transitivity theory.

## **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The data are restricted to clauses in which Tai Lung is an agent, a medium, or a circumstance of transitivity processes. These clauses can be Tai Lung's utterances, other characters' utterances, or the descriptions/narratives in the *action* section of the screenplay. The clauses are chosen based on their relevance to the research objective.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this research is in the form of practical contribution since it fills the gap in the linguistics research studying Kung Fu Panda movies.

#### **1.5 Previous Studies**

Some research has been conducted to study different aspects of *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008) using various approaches. I found three research which belong to the domain of literature study, Chen (2017), Wang (2017), and Wibawa (2021), yet the discussions in these papers are distinct. Chen (2017) studied the representation of the New Age beliefs in *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008) and *Kung Fu Panda 2* (2011) as they argued that the ideological messages of believing nothingness and inner peace in both films promoted the New Age spirituality. Meanwhile, using the orientalism theory by Said (1994), Wang (2017) focused on the manifestation of structural themes of orientalism in the movie. They examined the Western values which were manifested in *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008) in many ways such as through the selection of locations and characters although the movie represented Chinese culture. On the other hand, Wibawa (2021) was not concerned with any kind of representation since Wibawa studied the characterization of Po using Egri's (1987) theory; they described Po's characterization from psychological, physiological, and sociological viewpoints.

Furthermore, Yi, et al (2015) and Wang (2016) studied the Chinese cultural elements in *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008). Yi, et al (2015) analyzed the Chinese non-material culture of ecological philosophy in the movie; they explored the concepts of 'tao' or harmony between men and nature, and 'zen' or the idea of believing in

oneself. Nevertheless, Wang (2016) analyzed Chinese material culture which was expressed in the characters' designs, settings, clothing, props, and music in *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008).

Regarding linguistic studies, Hamani and Puluhalawa (2019) and Lailiyah and Novitasari (2018) utilized pragmatic approaches to study *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008). Using Grice's and Cutting's theories (2002), Hanami and Puluhalawa (2019) analyzed the maxim flouting of the main characters and the implications of the dominant types of maxim flouting. On the other hand, Lailiyah and Novitasari (2018) used the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) to analyze the positive politeness strategy and the negative politeness strategy in the movie by examining the features of both strategies.

From the studies that I have discussed so far, the need to conduct a linguistic study on *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008) is apparent since there are only a few linguistic research in the past ten years, and it tends to use the same approach. Therefore, to fill the gap, I present a study using the transitivity theory by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014) to analyze Tai Lung, a character in *Kung Fu Panda 1* (2008). Obviously, transitivity theory has been applied to study motion pictures and other literary works.

Istriningsih and Ekawati (2022), Shihura (2019), and Weng (2022) employed the transitivity system in their research; however, the first two papers studied fictional movies, and the last paper analyzed documentary films. Istriningsih and Ekawati (2022) analyzed the process types based on the transitivity theory by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) in *Crazy Rich Asian* (2018) and

measured the high or low effectiveness of the transitivity processes according to Hopper's and Thompson's theory (1980). They restricted the data to include the dialogue of the movie only. Next, Shihura (2019) conducted a transitivity study of the animated movie *Frozen* (2013) with Martin's, Matthiessen's, and Painter's theory (1997) to discover the dominant process used by the writers in the movie. Meantime, Weng (2022) studied two documentary films that were shot to promote Xi'an and San Francisco; they examined the function of transitivity processes to show the cities' images, for instance, they found that both films used material processes to describe nature, history, and culture of the cities.

Transitivity theory is widely used to analyze characters in literary works such as novels and short stories. Nevertheless, most of the research only applies this theory to study the characterization of a character, typically the main character. Elsa (2019), Nurhayati (2018), Rahmadanty and Subiyanto (2021), and Rauf and Salem (2021) employed transitivity theory to study Beatrice, Mother and Emily, Eleanor, and Mariam, the main characters of *Divergent* (2011), *I Stand Here Ironing* (1961), *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* (2017), and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). Yet, Elsa (2019) and Rahmadanty and Subiyanto (2021) used corpus linguistics as a method to deal with abundant data while Rauf and Salem (2021) also examined the changes in Mariam's personality from her childhood to adulthood reflected in her transitivity processes.

## **1.6 Writing Organization**

This study is deciphered into five chapters through the following structure:

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

Chapter I consists of the background of this study, research questions, the purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, previous studies, and the writing organization of this study.

**CHAPTER II : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Chapter II incorporates the concepts of characterization and transitivity system.

**CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHOD**

Chapter III presents the research design of this study, the data, data source, population, sampling technique, methods of collecting data, and methods of analyzing data.

**CHAPTER IV : RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Chapter IV explains the data, containing Tai Lung as a participant and/or a circumstance, that accords with the research questions of this study, from the perspective of transitivity theory.

**CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION**

Chapter V contains the conclusion which is drawn from the result and the discussion of this study.