# **Chapter I**

# **Introduction**

## **Research Background**

*The Twelve Dancing Princesses* is one of the fairy tales from the collection *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, which was published in 1815 and written by the Grimm Brothers. The Grimm Brothers themselves were two German authors who created many famous fairy tales that continue to be well-known today. They typically wrote fairy tales intended for adults, incorporating dark elements such as violence and sexuality. Many of The Grimm Brothers' tales have been rewritten by various authors from different countries in various versions. One of their tales that has been widely rewritten is *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.

*The Twelve Dancing Princesses* tells the story of a king who has 12 daughters. He confines his 12 daughters and never allows them to leave at night, but strangely, every morning their shoes appear worn out. The king then announces a challenge: anyone who can discover where his 12 daughters go at night will become the king in his absence, and if unsuccessful, that person will be killed. This tale has nearly 20 different versions from different countries. Each with a different number of princesses and ways to solve the problem. There is one version with three princesses who wear their shoes every night, and another version with just one princess who wears twelve pairs every night. Numerous adaptations of the story have been made, including musicals and theatrical plays.

Some interesting versions according to researcher, aside from the original version written by the Grimm Brothers, include the Scottish version collected by Andrew Lang titled *Kate Crackernuts*, the Russian version written by Alexander Nikolayevich Afanasyev titled *The Midnight Dance*, the French version by Charles Deulin titled *Les Douze Princesses Dansantes*, and the Portuguese version by Consiglieri Pedroso titled *The Seven Iron Slippers*. Although these stories have the same core storyline, there are definitely differences in each version result in variations in characters, story structure, and cultural elements.

Therefore the researcher is interested in investigating the differences among these four versions and comparing them with the version from The Grimm Brothers. This research aims to conduct a comparative analysis of five versions of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* to identify variations, differences, and similarities in the story structure and characters. Previously, there have not been many studies comparing the story of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* in various versions. The previous research that serves as the basis for this research is titled *A Comparative Study: The Folktale of Jaka Tarub (Indonesia) and Tanabata (Japan)* written by Ratu Wardarita and Guruh Puspo Negoro (2017). Similarly, this research aims to understand the similarities and differences in the story structure and cultural elements of both folktales. The results of this research indicate that there are similarities between them and differences in story structure and cultural elements. However, both *Jaka Tarub* and *Tanabata* do not influence each other because they represent their respective characteristics that describe the societies from which they originated.

There is also a study titled *Babandingan Dongéng Sang Raja Putri Sareng Sadérékna Duawelas Karya Lasminingrat, The Twelve Brothers,* jeung *Dua Belas Bersaudara KARYA Jacob Grimm (Ulikan Struktural jeung Sastra Bandingan)’* written by Santiah (2021). This research aims to compare the structure of the tales titled *Sang Raja Putri sareng Sadérékna Duawelas* by Lasminingrat, *The Twelve Brothers* by Jack Zipes, and *Dua Belas Bersaudara* by Kuncoro and Audrey. The results of this res1earch indicate that the three tales had the same storyline from the first to the fourth part. The difference was, the storyline of *Sang Raja Putri sareng Sadérékna Duawelas* was more detailed than others followed by an additional part and ended with a happy ending story. Meanwhile, *The Twelve Brothers* was more sadistic and the story was simpler than others.

This research uses a comparative study approach in French literature and Variation Theory, emphasizing comparative literary works between two or more pieces. Data collection involved reading five versions of the story and comparing them to analyze the differences and similarities in the five versions of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* from German, French, Russia, Scottish, and Portuguese using close reading method and then presenting them in the form of a qualitative approach method. The research analyzed the story structure by applying Vladimir Propp's theory of function analysis as the grand theory. He states that there is a series of fundamental narrative functions that occur in many fairy tales, regardless of the differences within the stories themselves. This research also analyzed the characters and the cultural variation of these five versions. All versions of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* that researcher analyzed are versions that have been translated into English.

This research is limited to the five versions of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, which are the German version, French version, Russian version, Scottish version, and Portuguese version. Therefore, based on the research objectives, the researcher has chosen the title *Exploring Folklore Variation in 'The Twelve Dancing Princesses' Fairy Tales Across Different Versions.*

## **Identification of the Study**

Folktales have their own allure within our culture as they reveal diverse themes, values, and problem-solving solutions in different versions over time. One such popular tale is *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*. As explained in the research background, the tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* by The Grimm Brothers has numerous versions created by various authors from different countries with distinct cultures. Due to this, the researcher examined a selection of versions of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* representing various regions and cultures. The selection process might involve subjectivity and may not encompass the entirety of story variations across different regions and cultures. The versions chosen by the researcher include the original which is German version, then Scottish version, Russian version, French version, and Portuguese version. These five versions are the English translation versions. There have not been many studies investigating the differences among these fairy tales, particularly the five versions selected by the researcher.

The researcher identified variations, differences, and similarities in the story structure and characters using Theory of Function by Vladimir Propp (1968). The researcher analyzed these five texts to discover their differences, similarities, and cultural variations in each version. The researcher hopes that the outcomes of this research provided deeper information and understanding regarding the differences in *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* across five versions.

## **Research Problems**

The researcher determined the problems in the research and formulate them based on the circumstances mentioned above, such as:

1. What are the differences and similarities of the five versions of the fairy tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* in terms of story structure and characters?
2. How are cultural variations manifested in each version of the fairy tale "The Twelve Dancing Princesses"?

## **Objective of the Study**

Based on the stated of research problems above, the objectives of this research are:

1. Comparing the differences and similarities among the five versions of the fairy tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.
2. Comparing elements of cultural variation in each version of the fairy tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.

## **Significance of the Study**

1. Theoretical Significance

By comparing *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* in various versions, this research advanced the field of comparative literature. The study demonstrated the similarities and differences in story structure and characters across different places and civilizations. The findings of this research enhanced understanding of the cultural relevance of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* and its diversity in various locations and societies. Through its insights into the comparative examination of literary works in many locations and civilizations, this research seeks to further contribute to the theoretical growth of comparative literature.

1. Practical Significance

The practical implications of the research findings felt by literature students. This research highlighted the cultural relevance of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* and its differences in other version and cultures. This knowledge can be utilized to create culturally sensitive and relevant curricula and teaching materials. Moreover, the research offered a framework for comparative analysis of literary works from various cultural contexts, which can be used by academics and literature students to evaluate other literary works.

## **Limitation of the Study**

This research limited to a comparative study of five versions of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, namely the Scottish version collected by Andrew Lang titled *Kate Crackernuts*, the Russian version written by Alexander Nikolayevich Afanasyev titled *The Midnight Dance*, the French version by Charles Deulin titled *Les Douze Princesses Dansantes*, and the Portuguese version by Consiglieri Pedroso titled *The Seven Iron Slippers*. However, due to the numerous versions of the story across various regions and cultures, it is not feasible to analyze all of them. Therefore, this research focused on a selected five versions above.

Furthermore, this research did not examine the historical context or background of each story's creation. The focus of the study is on the similarities and differences in story structure, and characters, as well as how cultural variation elements manifest in each version.