

# BUILDING CHARACTER THROUGH STORY TELLING IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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**Abstract :** One of literary works that can be used for building children's character is literature story telling. Variety of interesting stories from a fairy tale, a child can begin to understand what friendship is, and feelings of affection punishment that can be obtained from antagonists. Story telling with children's Literature can develop children's knowledge, education and critical thinking. Good ethical and moral values can be embedded automatically spur child development. Making children more confident in socializing by fostering children's creative imagination in critical thinking so that children will be accustomed to doing things that behave positively because of character education provided by parents without realizing the child. Story of the mouse deer stealing cucumber which teaches the value of honesty, strategy or tactics for the cleverness of the mouse deer when tricking the dog, until the punishment value or punishment must be received by the mouse deer when caught by farmers using scarecrows. Children's education can begin to be implanted since children are in their golden age, so that Children's literature can instill, grow, and develop an important role in the character of children.

**Keywords :** *Building Character, Story Telling, Children's Literature*

One way to build positive characters in a fun way for children or students is through fairy tales. The cultivation of characters juxtaposed with fairy tales will become increasingly fun, and the atmosphere of the school environment will be more exciting. The storytelling tradition from the ancestors for generations turns out to have a tremendous impact on the development of the child's personality after they grow up. Tales are traditions and heritage of people throughout the ages. This shows that the fairy tale tradition is the most important and inseparable part of human life in creating a better nation's personality. According to American psychologist Lawrence Kutner, "Tales are important for children to enter their life without risk. Children can overcome the problem by identifying themselves with the characters of the story. Storytelling becomes a flavoring ingredient in concocting a teaching material in school. Learning while telling stories, educating children while telling stories will make the atmosphere more wise and enjoyable. In fact, subjects that are considered complicated will be very enjoyable, if delivered through the technique of storytelling or tucked away in fairy tales in learning. Fairy tales can be used as a tool or bridge to achieve the vision and mission of character education. Storytelling can hone children's imagination and fantasy. When children's imagination and fantasy are honed, the ability of the right brain will naturally be honed and its performance will be maximized.

Story telling can be a very effective method of delivering moral messages. Not only that, storytelling is also the best way to refresh the learning process so that it is not boring. The teacher can insert fairy tales related to the subjects he teaches. The fairy tale can be in the form of own essays, folklore, animal stories both domestically and abroad. Storytelling can bring the relationship between the teacher and students in school closer, bring closer the love relationship between parents and children, increase critical attitude, increase imagination, improve fantasy and develop children's softness. The role of fairy tales in supporting the building character movement must be taken into account and must continue to be realized by getting back to storytelling, both at school and at home. Tales have an important role in realizing character education. Fairy tales can be a bridge of effective communication in delivering teaching to children, both at home and at school. Children are taken to a nature where they have never experienced it. There they laughed, cried, cheered, clapped, saw the uniqueness of a million abundant meanings, which were reflected

on a visual screen that they created themselves in their minds. The fairy tale can create good fantasy because fairy tales are very close to the world of imagination. Therefore, being selective in choosing fairy tales is a factor that determines whether a child will imagine and fantasize well or not.

### **Building Children's Character**

Character education is the term used to describe teaching children about the traits that are essential to building good character (Sanchez & Stewart, 2006). Character education has also been described as the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue; thus, character education requires deliberate planning (Prestwich, 2004, p. 140). Teachers and administrators who wish to employ character education often emphasize traits that can help an individual become successful in society, such as trust, integrity, loyalty, honesty, fairness, respect, ethics, and citizenship (Katilmis, Eksi, & rk, 2011; Sanchez & Stewart, 2006).

There are also many other reasons schools should continue to teach character education. From a legal perspective, schools teach character education because some states require schools to teach it, and also because schools are obligated to impact civic values and a unifying moral code (O'Sullivan, 2004, pp. 640-641). Therefore, schools should teach character education because it helps students become good people and citizens; it is important to be a good citizen because "democracy is not possible with an uneducated and morally corrupt set of people" (O'Sullivan, 2004, p. 640). Richardson (2009) also found character education to be important in a democratic society because it allowed individuals to develop the necessary skills, such as justice, fairness and trust, to think democratically. Lastly, schools should be concerned about the moral values of their students, and thus should want to teach character education to instill good values in their students (O'Sullivan, 2004). These reasons for teaching character education may seem extreme, but they relate to developing moral students who will be prepared to live in a democratic society.

Abdullah (2015, p.122) revealed in a published book *The Character of Character Cities* (2006) character is motivation inward to do right whatever the "price" must be paid. This understanding, character is associated with deeds contains values, morals, or ethics in life like honesty, patience, loyalty, discipline and so forth. From some understanding it was concluded character education need to be implanted as early as possible, as a provision for interacting children and communicate with diverse communities. Therefore the role of the teacher as a model that is very close to the child becomes very important through habituation activities at school. Children have the strong memory in memorize. With that ability, the child looks often memorize words that he doesn't understand, for example memorizing songs, pat, even imitating the words of an adult he heard that surprised the person who heard it. For that reason, the potential of children memorize needs to be directed as well as possible by teacher by paying attention to easy and interesting rote techniques for children. The activity of building the character of children is by inviting them to explore value in relation with developing skills related to values, for example playing hand puppets to demonstrate the character like it. As for developing social emotional emphasis on conflict resolution through various games and cooperation. (Mulyasa; 2010,p.78). In developing children character education will run effectively and have an impact on changes in children's behavior, if exemplary through habituation is supported by all that is, teacher, parents by creating a conducive environment.

Character development through story telling has the following objectives:

1. Embed hidden characters "hidden models" in children's minds. The character identical or strongly present certain characters. The hidden figure expected to provide strength, direction and guidance on the behavior of everyday children. For example children who like to help, the delivery of stories about children it helps others, will direct the child to duplicate the character they heard through the story.
2. Improving children's exploration capabilities through searching for other examples character in story of everyday life. If in the mind the child is embedded duplication of the character, then child will try to find other similar characters from around him. The child will match what he hears with what he sees or know. If he feels that the figure is helpful he sees fit, then there has been a strengthening of the nature of help.

3. Building analytical skills and problem solving skills related to character behavior. At this stage, if the child finds a case, where he needs it applying the character is helpful so he can make it happen.
4. Improve the ability of children to implement the concept of inner characters everyday life. Children are expected to show real concepts and actions character in everyday life. At this stage the nature of helping in children it has happened "automatically" because of the reinforcement he received and what he did know or see has been well established.
5. Building analytical skills and evaluating the benefits of character and impact behavior negative characterless behavior. At this stage, if the child is faced with a problem, for example, seeing a friend who doesn't want to help, then he can take a stand for example by giving his friend a statement through affirmative sentences, for example, let's help our friend who falls. So the characters are helpful the child spreads to another friend.

### **Engaging Story Telling Activities**

Story telling is a method that is widely used by teachers in teaching story to children, storytelling is an activity that children enjoy. Almost all children in this world are happy to listen the stories, especially if it presented interestingly. Understanding storytelling put forward by Dhieni, et al (2005) which is an activity that done someone verbally to others with tools about what is must be delivered in the form of messages, information or just a fairy tale for heard with a pleasant feeling because of the person who told the story present it interestingly. In kindergarten the most popular stories of children are generally shaped fairy tales because fairy tales can bring children to fantasize without limitation. Besides that, fairy tales can dramatized in such a way that it becomes very attractive to children. Regarding the definition of Story telling, Dhieni ( 2005) said that the method of telling stories is a way of delivering or presenting learning material orally in the form of stories from teachers to the children. The delivery of this story is usually done at the core or closing activities, that is when children are getting tired of doing various things activity. In the story telling activity there must be an element of beauty, warmth, and imagination. Because storytelling can enter the subconscious, where the subconscious is what then most play a role in shaping the character or character of a child. So if it's a fairy tale it is told continuously, the more it enters the subconscious. Well, if the story is good, then what goes into his subconscious is certainly the good one also. If what the teacher tells the stories of heroism, kindness, friendship, then it will like that the nature of the child later.

Through activities story telling, the children know, recognize and understand various alternatives non aggression conflict resolution. The story is a depiction of something verbal. Stories can be used as a tool to stimulate aspects child development because stories and storytelling activities are identical with children. It is doubtful to remember that the story has many benefits for children. Musfiroh (2005,p.59), the world of children is different from the world of adults, the world of children is the world of play, the world full of imagination, developing world of motor activity, and physical development, the world get to know new concepts and develops morals and emotions. The children get some benefits through stories between others, honing children's imagination, developing language skills, developing aspects social, developing moral aspects, developing emotional aspects, fostering enthusiasm achieving, and training children's concentration (Musfiroh. et al. 2005, p.78).

Story telling is a fundamental method for sharing knowledge among people as it allows participants to be transported to another time and place. Through the use of descriptive oral language, students are able to have an enhanced experience with literature (Eisner, 1985). Before the teacher tells a story to students should read the whole and understand the suitability of the message moral with their age. Because not all the fairy tales can be told or understood, like the love story of Sangkuriang, Roro Mendut, cunning nature The mouse deer stole the cucumber and similar fables. Al-Qudsy's opinion (2010, p.113) various stories which is appropriate for children are related to public trust, animal world, solace, ancestral beliefs and folklore. Many kinds of stories have moral message or value in a fairy tale that can directing children's attitudes as forming positive characters between other; the value of friendship, the message do not do evil, the value of the consequences of disobedience to parents and the value of heroism and struggle. After knowing

the power of fairy tales for education early childhood, as teachers and parents should also prepare to be a storyteller that children like.

According to Gunawan (2007: p.24-45) in principle there are three important elements that need to be prepared, they are story material, story telling skills, and props that support the story. The step that must prepare in story telling:

1. The story material, namely pre preparation, once the story material has been selected some important things that must be done, namely reviewing the content and mission of the story, making storyline, as well as designing the opening and closing of the story.
2. Review the story, that is a storyteller must read the story that has been chosen several times, and several aspects that need to be considered, namely setting goals specific to the age of the child who is the audience; recognize characters in the story; pay attention to the time, location and type of event; choose the appropriate sentence and and easy to observe; determine which aids (costumes and props) will used.
3. Make a storyline, that is a storyteller or storyteller needs to make a summary story order to make it easier to tell stories. If the story will be delivered long, it is very necessary to keep attention child.
4. Designing the opening and closing of the story. Opening the story with something different and creative will make children interested in listening and listening stories, for example beginning with magic, imitating sounds, dramatizing, so that children pay attention, and with hide a character. Besides designing the opening, a storyteller must also designing the story cover. A story requires an interesting cover. Cover the story becomes so important because that's where the message can be inserted. The storyteller must avoid closing with abstract messages in other words the narrator must provide an operational explanation for the listener.
5. Storytelling skills, a storyteller must have deep skills telling stories, especially for early childhood, so that stories can be understood by children. Skills what the storyteller must have, including physical exercise, sound processing, music, and car to win the child.
6. Props that support the story. The use of props is very necessary, not only to attract children's attention, but also to help children remember, digest and understand the story conveyed.

In presenting a story a storyteller must learn techniques in presenting it. Musfiroh (2008: 119- 145) suggests that the story presentation technique is as follows:

1. Choosing and preparing a place. Story telling activity does not have to be done at in class. Story activities can be done anywhere, provided they meet the criteria cleanliness, safety and comfort. The chosen place must be arranged in such a way so that all children can see the teacher who is telling stories.
2. Tell stories with teaching aids, namely stories can be done with various tools which is called storytelling with props. The props used in the story are such as books, pictures, panel boards, puppets and silent films. All props requires special skills that allow the use of props function optimally.
3. Storytelling without teaching aids. Telling stories without teaching aids is also said to tell stories directly relying on sound quality, facial expressions and hand gestures and body.
4. Expressing character figures. Characters can be expressed in various ways, among others through visual expression (facial features, mouth, eyes, face, hands) and voice expression character. Character traits such as character traits, character feelings and emotions can be known by expressing characters. Not all character traits can expressed through advance features. Nevertheless the teacher can develop expression of characters through three basic expressions namely sad expression, happy expression and angry expressions.
5. Imitating sounds and character sounds. Sound has an important meaning in the story, and the sound in the story is an essential sound that has no meaning linguistics. The sounds give an overview of events that can make a story more dramatic and interesting. To express the voice of the teacher needs to know the characteristics prosody, namely pressure (words and sentences), intonation, also pattern, melody and time.
6. Turn on the atmosphere of the story. The atmosphere is very determined by storyteller expertise. The atmosphere of the story is defined as the condition that accompanies the process storytelling by the teacher. Techniques to turn on the story include optimizing the dialogue of story characters, optimizing the climax of the story, evoke humor on the sidelines of the story,

involving the child in the story through questions and reprimands, improvisation and interpolation or preparation of elements lingual like words or sentences.

### **Using Children's Literature to Teach and Implement Character Education**

Children's literature is a great resource because it can be used to teach a variety of topics (Prestwich, 2004). Children's literature helps students begin to discuss and think about character education, but has been found that having discussions after reading the selected books can improve the books' effectiveness on the students' attitudes about character traits (Auciello, 2006; Clare & Gallimore, 1996; O'Sullivan, 2004; Smith-D'Arezzo & Moore-Thomas, 2010). Despite seeming to be a method, children's literature should be used to teach character education because internalizing behaviors were more common as well at the elementary and high school levels" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 21). Thus, teaching children to empathize and problem solve through literature selections that have specific morals may help to decrease the number of students who internalize such behaviors. Literature can be a good way to teach character education because literature lends itself to the teaching of specific moral dilemmas and the examining of specific character traits (Prestwich, 2004, p.143). Students are able to empathize with the characters and understand character traits better than just being told information about each trait, also known as catharsis, or the connection between the reader and the characters (Lowe, 2009; Prestwich, 2004).

Children's stories do not only present stories aimed at provide entertainment solely, but children's stories are also present for give something that is new and beneficial to the reader. Element the imagination contained in fantasy stories can help stimulate child's imagination. Children will also gain knowledge and experience new presented by the author through the storyline as contained in various other children's stories. That experience and knowledge will increase after children read different types of children's fantasies. Children's fantasy stories have several types, namely simple fantasy for children's readers, folklore, animals with special abilities, strange creatures, humans with special abilities, toys and puppets that can speak, magical objects, journey through time and space, fantasy levels, and evil forces (Stewig, 1980, p. 409-442). With these types of fantasy stories, children free to choose they like. Stewig (1980, p.415) states a kind of fantasy that captures and holds children's attention is the literary folktale. These tales follow the pattern set by oral tradition of folk literature but are written by an identifiable author. According to him, the type of fantasy that is interesting and attention-grabbing children are folklore. This folklore follows a determined pattern by oral traditions of folklore, but written by known authors.

Literature can provide students with emotional and social support for things they might also be going through; thus, the use of literature may be a useful method to discuss difficult topics (Jalongo, 2004; Lowe, 2009). Moreover, Bibliotherapy, or therapeutic reading, can help students cope with emotions and problems they are facing because expression through text offers readers of all ages the opportunity to find solutions through the character and conflicts within a story, and thus within themselves (Lowe, 2009, p.1). In addition, and perhaps most importantly, children's literature should be used to teach character education because picture books attract children, communicate ideas, and the visual images leave the most indelible impression (Jalongo, 2004, p.38). The students often relate to the characters and pictures in these books rather than non-picture books, which adds to their effectiveness. The pictures aide the students in understanding the abstract concepts taught in character education stories, which is another reason why picture books are beneficial for teaching character education to young children. Furthermore, children are more likely to respond to storytelling because it is seen as a gift from the teacher (Sanchez & Stewart, 2006). Thus, students are more likely to internalize and remember the lessons that they learn from these stories. There are many benefits to using children's literature to teach character education to all grade levels. Children's literature is a valuable tool to connect the students to what is being taught as well as to make a lasting impression of positive traits. Children's literature is extremely easy to access and should be utilized as much as possible with all subject matter. Character education has proven to be an effective tool in developing moral of the children.

### **Conclusion**

One effective way in building the children's character is with tell stories. The contents of the story can influence children deeply, the story must contains interesting moral messages that will

encourage children to imitate characters in the story. Teachers or parents must be able to convey the contents of the story well, style, expression, intonation, setting, and the time of story telling influences the child's absorption of the story. Tale is part of Indonesian folk culture, it become a good story for story telling. The influence of story telling with children's literature on morality and character of children strongly support the making of fairy tales as stories character support. A story telling can be given as a step to socialize the children's character that will be taught in school.

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