

Research article

Character Building for Elementary School Students Through Children's Literature

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Abstract.

The purpose of this paper was to learn about culture and character values in elementary school students' language learning. This topic was chosen due to the problems that Indonesians are facing in this era, such as a decline in people's morals and character, both in society and in government. Character development should begin at a young age, during the learning process in elementary school. As a result, character development has become one of the most important issues that the Government is concerned about these days. We conducted a literature review of the cultural and character values implied in children's literature, as well as on the importance of instilling character values in elementary school students. The conclusion of this article is that children's literature is one of the media that parents and teachers can use to help children develop cultural and character values.

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1. Introduction

The progress of a nation is determined by the quality of its young generation. While the quality of the younger generation is not only influenced by intellectual intelligence, but also influenced by moral intelligence and character possessed. As said by [1] that the progress of a nation is very dependent on the quality and character of the young generation as the successor to the continuity of the nation. Elneri[2] also explained that the main purpose of education is to produce a mature human personality intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

At this time, technological advances are very fast and increasingly sophisticated. This makes it easier for someone to find information or knowledge they want to know by accessing it anywhere and anytime with the technology they have. However, with technological advances, it can also be negative for today's young generation. Technology is free to be used by anyone and the network is getting stronger, making the younger generation sometimes unable to distinguish between good and true information and

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causes abuse. This can be seen from the current moral degradation, the phenomenon of children playing truant because of games, child care, murder, decreased politeness due to the influence of the videos watched, the use of rude and unkind words. This phenomenon shows the erosion of moral intelligence and national character.

Therefore, character education is important to be instilled in the younger generation from an early age, both in the family environment and in formal schools. It is at this time that children begin to imitate everything around them. That way the responsibility of instilling moral education is not only by the teacher but also the family. Parents are needed to instill character values for their children.

Planting character values can be done in various ways, one of which is through reading (fairy tales). Getting used to reading children's readings before going to bed and getting used to reading children's stories at school is one way to instill character values little by little to children. Therefore, the focus of this research is to discuss about character building for elementary school children through children's reading literacy.

2. Method

The study on character building for elementary school student through children's language literacy was a qualitative research with descriptive methods. Data collection techniques used in research is the method of documentation. The data required in this study is obtained from various literature such as books, research reports, journals and proceedings relevant. This research data is described in words that can be formulated as character value education.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Character education

Character learning is learning that aims to guide students to instill and improve the values and personality contained in them. Character learning can be defined as learning that improves the noble character (character) of students who can practice and direct moral and civilized values in making decisions about God. Raharjo[3] also reported that personality learning is a holistic learning process that connects moral standards with the social level in the lives of students as the basis for making quality generations who can live independently and have accountable principles of truth. Personality learning in Indonesia is based on the 9 bottom pillars of personality. For the Ministry of Education

and Culture, these 9 characters include (1) love for God Almighty and the universe and its contents, (2) responsibility, discipline, and independence, (3) honesty, (4) respect and courtesy, (5) love, caring, and cooperative, (6) self-confident, creative, hardworking, and unyielding, (7) justice and leadership, (8) kind and humble, and (9) tolerance, peace, and unity[4].

3.2. The value of character education in children's reading

Character is a belief and habit that directs an individual's actions. One way to instill a positive character that pleases children or students is through reading habituation activities, one of which is reading children's readings. Reading stories is considered fun by children, because in addition to interesting stories, usually the language and characters in the stories are the main attraction for students.

According to 9. Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan RIset Kurikulum[5], The objectives of character education are as follows:

1. Developing the potential of students' character as human beings as well as citizens who have cultural values and national character
2. Develop student habits to behave commendably and in accordance with universal values (pembukaan UUD 1945) of the nation's religious cultural traditions.
3. Instilling the spirit of leadership and responsibility to students as the next generation of the nation.
4. Develop student competencies to become independent, creative, and national-minded human beings.
5. Creating a school environment as a safe, honest, creative and friendly learning environment.

There are many methods of instilling learning in schools. Initially, as an educator (teacher) we should be obliged to be an example of a good personality for students. Teachers are required to be wise in maintaining attitudes, behavior and speech. Second, teachers in educating students are not only concerned with academic values but also appreciate the efforts of their students. Teacher appreciation for student results such as giving praise to students who submit assignments on time, asserting without blaming when students make mistakes in doing school, and so on can make children have a desire to learn and improve themselves. Third, directing manners at every opportunity, even if it is merely a word of thanks and apologies. Fourth, share opportunities for each

child to learn to be a leader. Examples such as preparing alternate prayers every day or preparing a line when they want to enter class in the morning. This simple activity can train the courage and spirit of a child's leader. Fifth, directing moral values in each lesson. This is the review in this paper so that we can use the children's stories contained in the lesson novels as one of the facilities in instilling personality values for children. So that the purpose of education in schools is not only focused on academic values, but also how the impact on children's moral values.

Below are some examples of character values contained in children's book literacy

3.2.1. Lover for God and the universe Its contents.

Love for God and the universe and its contents is an attitude or behavior related to religion such as. One example of the attitude of love to God is in 3rd grade student reading books tema 4 (*kewajiban dan Hakku*) subtema 2 (*Kewajiban dan Hakku di Sekolah*)[6]:

"Setiap orang wajib menjalankan ajaran agamanya. Udin dan kawan-kawannya selalu taat menjalankan ajaran agamanya. Setia sore Udin mengaji di masjid...."

Part of the story shows the religious attitude (love for God) shown by Udin and his friends.

3.2.2. Care

According to [7], caring is an attitude and action that always wants to help other people and communities in need. One example of the value of caring characters in student reading is seen in the grade 3 student book theme 2 sub-theme 2 (*Manfaat Hewan bagi Kehidupan Manusia*)[6]

"..... Semut menyadari bahaya yang membayangi merpati yang telah menolongnya tadi. Ia segera berlari mendekati pemburu dan menggigit kaki sang pemburu....."

In the passage above, it contains an attitude of concern for others when there is danger. This is shown by the ant that saves the bird from the hunter by biting its leg.

3.2.3. Nationalism

One example of an attitude of love for God is in a grade 3 student book reading theme 4 (*Kewajiban dan Hakku*) sub-theme 2 (*Kewajibanku dan Hakku di Sekolah*)[6]:

"Sebentar lagi. hari. kemerdekaan. Indonesia Sekolah Edo juga ikut merayakan....."

Part of the story shows that there is an attitude of nationalism. Shown by the attitude of Edo and his friends in celebrating Indonesia's independence day.

Based on several analyzes of character values in the 2013 curriculum, it can be seen that each reading contains character values which are the goals of education in Indonesia. Now it's just the role of the teacher so that the readings (children's stories) that have been prepared by implementing these character values can be conveyed properly to children in the learning process.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

Character education is education that aims to provide guidance to students to instill and develop the values and characters that exist within themselves. Character education can help shape one's character by involving all parties. One that can be used to build student character is to maximize the means of children's reading texts in student books. The teacher plays an important role so that the values contained in children's reading in student books can be conveyed and embedded in each student.

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that character education is very important for the progress of the nation's generation. And the more advanced the nation's generation, the more advanced the nation itself. Character education can be instilled through reading habits both at home and at school. In the habit of reading at school, one of them is with student books which are a source of learning that contains various character values in the form of being religious, responsible, disciplined, independent, honest, respectful, polite, compassionate, caring, and so on.

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