

**The Role of Literature in Early Childhood Education  
(Case Study of Kindergarten X Bekasi)**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Published:</b> 11 March 2024	<i>Literature is not just for adults. Literature can be introduced to children. The role of literature is very important in cultivating positive traits in the future. This study uses a qualitative method. Data was taken by interviews and observations at one of the kindergarten schools in Bekasi. Respondents consisted of school principals, teachers, parents and extracurricular teachers. The aim of this research is to determine the role of literature in early childhood. The results of the research show that the role of literature is to entertain and shape the character of early childhood. Teachers and parents can be important actors in children's character growth, and play an active role in introducing children to literature from an early age</i>
<b>Keywords:</b> : roles, literature, children	
	<b>ABSTRAK</b>  <i>Sastra tidak hanya untuk orang dewasa. Sastra dapat diperkenalkan kepada anak. Peran sastra sangat penting dalam menumbuhkan sifat positif dimasa depan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data diambil dengan wawancara dan observasi pada salah satu sekolah taman kanak kanak di Bekasi. Responden terdiri dari kepala sekolah, guru, orang tua murid dan guru ekstrakurikuler. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui peran sastra pada anak usia dini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peran sastra menjadi hiburan dan pembentuk karakter anak usia dini. Guru dan orang tua dapat menjadi actor penting dalam pertumbuhan karakter anak, dan berperan aktif dalam pengenalan sastra anak sejak usia dini.</i>

## INTRODUCTION

The values contained in literary works are absorbed by children and subconsciously reconstruct their attitudes and personalities. Apart from instilling values and character, literary works also stimulate children's imagination, creativity, critical thinking through curiosity about the story line and the metaphors contained therein. Adequate literary appreciation capital will certainly create wiser and wiser educational output. In this context, literature becomes very important. Literature not only plays a role in cultivating the foundations of nobility of character, but also plays a role in forming honest character from an early age. Through intensive struggle and encounters with literary texts, children will gain in-depth knowledge about humans, life and life, as well as various complexities of life's dimensions of problems. The variety of virtual impacts encourages the need for children's literature that is good, touching and can be used as a lesson and role model for children.

The content of good character values in children's literature should be read by children. In line with what Sarumpaet (2010) stated, literary works that are pro-child are not literary works that force and regulate, but should be able to explore and understand children's thoughts and conditions. Good children's literature books should contain life values that can build children's souls and encourage children to become honest, humble, intelligent, independent, responsible and highly disciplined individuals. Due to limitations in choosing reading books, a child will read whatever literature he comes across without paying attention to whether or not the reading is suitable for him. It is the parents or adults around them who must care about the reading that the child will read because reading that is appropriate and appropriate for the child will encourage the child's personal growth and development. Care is also needed in selecting children's reading books. According to Edwards (2004:89) the choice of reading needs to consider cultural factors because children grow and learn not in a cultural vacuum, but children are raised and taught by their families in customs, habits, behavior and so on. Efforts to introduce children's literature are thought to be able to foster a culture of reading and writing literacy in children. When reading children's literature, children will be invited to imagine through story characters about new experiences that are in accordance with the child's point of view. This reading habit will later encourage children's interest in writing.

This effort to introduce and socialize children's literature is in line with the community service master plan of the Faculty of Letters, Culture and Communication in the field of Literature, a literary interest and talent training program. The service master plan states that the activity of introducing and socializing children's literature is to instill a love of the world of literature in children. One of the kindergartens that actively emphasizes play and fun patterns is TK X in Bekasi. The game starts with wayang orang or dolls dressed in regional traditions such as Central Java. Based on the description above, the author asks the research question, what is the role of literature in early childhood education? Meanwhile, the aim of the research is to determine the role of literature in early childhood education.

## METHOD

The method used is a qualitative method. The research design includes: data collection, data processing, data analysis and conclusion drawing. The research sample consisted of 5 people consisting of teachers, school principals, parents and extracurricular teachers. Data collection by interviews and observations.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Literature as Character Formation

The younger generation is the generation that will continue the journey in the future. Meanwhile, the role of literature in shaping future generations that the world hopes for also needs to be realized. Therefore, parents and teachers are obliged to guide children's development in a positive direction so that they will become good and useful members of society in life. One means to achieve this goal is literature that is appropriate to children's development. Children's literature is images and/or metaphors of life conveyed to children that involve aspects of emotions, feelings, thoughts, sensory nerves, and moral experiences, and are expressed in linguistic forms that can be reached and understood by child readers. So, a book can be seen as children's literature if the images and metaphors of life narrated are good in terms of content (emotions, feelings, thoughts, sensory nerves, and moral experiences). According to the results of interviews and observations, researchers stated that literature is able to change the nature or character of children to become more refined in their language and actions. Because teachers are able to provide lessons to students when telling stories and explaining various characters that exist in this world.

The importance of character education in the current era is still a topic that is often discussed in all educational institutions. It is as if there is something wrong with the implementation of character education in Indonesia. Often, educators are trapped in the term character that can be formed. Basically, character can only be built or instilled in children. If we quote the opinion of Masnur Muslich (2014:67), character education is education that leads to the achievement of the formation of students' character and noble morals in a complete, integrated and balanced manner. Children's character education can use their knowledge into character values and noble morals so that they are manifested in everyday behavior. Agus Wibowo in Syamsul Kurniawan (2013:31) defines character education as education that instills and develops noble characters in students so that they have noble characters so that they have these noble characters, apply and practice them in their lives, whether in the family, as members of society and citizens

Children's literature can support children's language, cognitive, personality and social development (Juanda, J. 2012). Literature can also play on feelings dramatically in the development of personal concepts or self-concepts and rich feelings of self. Children's literature is considered to be able to form character effectively (Luthfiyanti, L., & Nisa, F. (2017). The values and morals contained in literary works are not conveyed directly, but through stories and metaphors so that the educational process is enjoyable and not patronizing. The values contained in literary works are perceived by children and subconsciously reconstruct their attitudes and personalities (Resmini, 2010). Apart from instilling values and character, literary works will also stimulate children's creative imagination and critical thinking. through curiosity about the storyline and the metaphors contained in it (Syihabuddin, S., et al, 2018).

## Literature as Entertainment

The entertainment provided by literature is different from mass entertainment which is packaged in performance business and sophisticated technology, such as magic, magic, music and acrobatics. Literature provides entertainment that contains exciting inner games. Literary works can also be staged as entertaining performances, such as musicalizing poetry, dramatizing poetry, reading short stories, or staging fragments of novels or folk tales, and literary works can even be converted into soap operas or films. However, do not combine literary works with other arts, such as the addition of music, lighting, clothing, stage design and staging, to interfere with conveying the meaning of literary works which are entertaining and useful for the survival of life. Literature that provides mental entertainment that plays with our minds or souls must remain alive even if it is combined with various other arts such as wayang (Pramulia, 2018). Literature can also introduce children to regional traditions (Paramita, I. B. G., & Arini, 2020). Introduction to literature can also be represented by reading comics (Sundusiah, S., & Yulianeta, 2009).



Picture 1. Children get to know the culture

Literature actually provides various kinds of entertainment. The type or kinds of entertainment contained in literary works also really depend on the sensitivity and sharpness of the reader's intuition (Citraningtyas, 2011). Readers who are sensitive and have sharp intuition will be able to capture entertaining things contained in literary works. When someone is reading and understanding literary works, he will find symptoms that are entertaining. For example, most traditional communities in rural areas consider that literature (oral stories, fairy tales, legends, myths, epics, fables, solace, limericks and folk theater) functions as entertainment.

## CONCLUSION

Literature can be a source of learning for children at home and at school. Literature has the function of forming character and entertainment for children. The role of literature is not limited to just character building and entertainment but has other benefits, such as training reading and writing. The themes used by teachers are animal stories or famous cartoon characters.

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